# Strengthening Families and Communities

2009 Resource Guide

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**
1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

## Letter from the Children's Bureau

Dear Colleagues:

Our Nation's children need strong, healthy families that can provide for their physical, emotional, and developmental needs. By recognizing and building on existing strengths within families and communities, we can support all families in providing a safe, loving environment for their children. This work is the theme of the Children's Bureau's 17th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, *Focusing on the Future: Strengthening Families and Communities.*

In support of this theme, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention are pleased to provide the *Strengthening Families and Communities: 2009 Resource Guide*. The resources in this book were developed with input from numerous national organizations, Federal partners, and parents committed to strengthening families and communities. Its goal is to support service providers in their work with parents, caregivers, and their children to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Resource Guide focuses on five important factors that have been shown to protect children from the risk of abuse and neglect. Information about these protective factors is augmented with tools and strategies for integrating these factors into existing community programs and systems. Agencies, policymakers, advocates, and service providers alike will find resources in this book to help them promote these five important factors in families and communities.

We all can play a part in preventing child abuse by strengthening families and communities. Whether you are looking for examples of evidence-informed prevention strategies, talking points for a community presentation, suggestions for working effectively with community partners, or tip sheets to share with families, we hope you will find something useful here to further your work. Thank you for participating in this important effort and for the work you do each day to build promising futures for our Nation's children.

**Children's Bureau**
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**
**Administration for Children and Families**
**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

**Please comment on the 2009 Resource Guide by taking our brief survey. Your answers will help us better meet your future needs.**

**www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/surveys/PreventionGuide.cfm**

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# About the Resource Guide

This Resource Guide was developed to support service providers in their work with parents, caregivers, and their children to prevent child abuse and neglect. It was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. The resources featured represent the work of a broad-based partnership of national organizations, Federal partners, and parents committed to strengthening families and communities.

**What's Inside**

The Resource Guide was created primarily to support community-based child abuse prevention professionals who work to strengthen communities and support parents, caregivers, and their children. However, others such as policymakers, parent educators, family support workers, health care providers, program administrators, teachers, child care providers, mentors, and clergy, also will find the resources useful.

Resources include:

- **Chapter 1: Laying the Groundwork**—Information about the research and theory on which the Resource Guide is based, including protective factors that help reduce child abuse and neglect, strategies for creating lasting change in how communities support families, and evidence-informed practice.
- **Chapter 2: Working With Families: The Five Protective Factors**—Detailed information about each of the protective factors and tips for infusing them into direct practice with families and children.
- **Chapter 3: Engaging Your Community**—Tools and strategies to help build community awareness and support the development of broad-based community partnerships.
- **Chapter 4: Protecting Children**—Information about why child abuse occurs, risk factors, consequences, and identifying and reporting maltreatment.
- **Chapter 5: Resources**—Contact information for private and Federal partners working nationally to strengthen families.
- **Chapter 6: Tip Sheets for Parents and Caregivers**—Strengths-based tip sheets on specific parenting topics that can be used in discussions or visits with caregivers.

Many more resources for strengthening families are available from the national organizations and Federal partners listed in our resource directory beginning on page 61.

## About the Resource Guide

**The following are several suggested uses for the Resource Guide:**

- Distribute copies to key community partners working with children and families, including child welfare agencies, child advocacy centers, public health agencies, child care centers, family therapists, media representatives, schools, faith communities, and policymakers.
- Use the Resource Guide as a topic for discussion at an upcoming meeting of your family strengthening community partnership.
- Provide copies to those who regularly offer trainings to family support workers in your community.
- Use the information in the Resource Guide when developing your own media kits, press releases, and other public awareness tools.
- Make the information available to those in your community who are writing grants to support family strengthening work.
- Make copies of the parenting tip sheets (Chapter 6) for use in parent education classes or parent support groups.

Please let us know how you are using this year's Resource Guide and how we can better meet your needs! Take our brief survey: www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/surveys/PreventionGuide.cfm

### On the Web

The Child Welfare Information Gateway website provides links to resources and information about child abuse prevention, family strengthening, family-centered practice, family support, family preservation services, and many related topics. Throughout the Resource Guide, links to related Information Gateway webpages will provide you with a wealth of additional information:

www.childwelfare.gov

This Resource Guide can be ordered or downloaded from the Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect section of the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. Also available on the website are downloadable logos and graphics that may be used to customize Child Abuse Prevention Month resources for local communities:

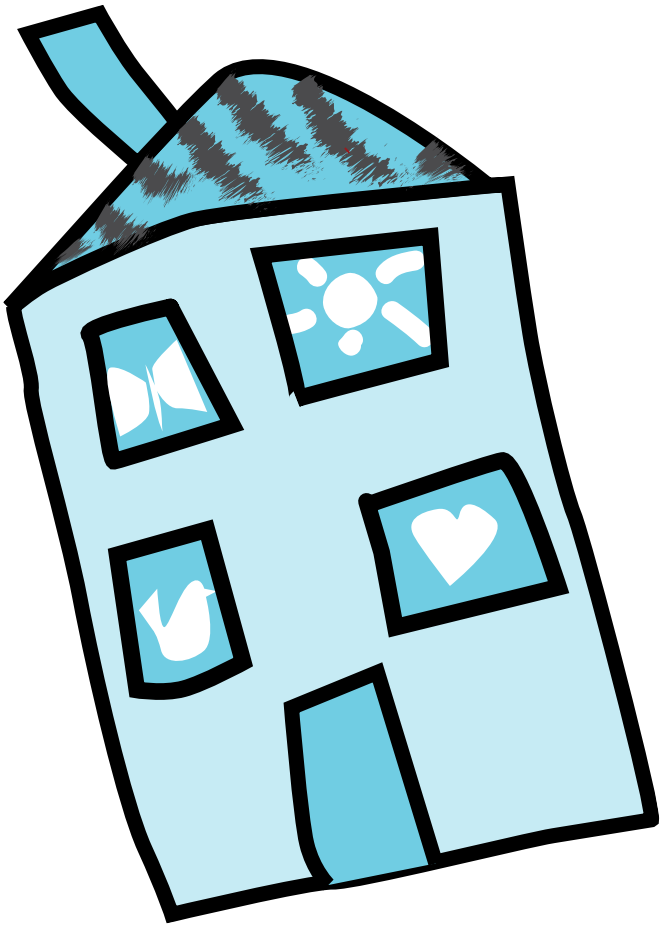
www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth

The FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention website offers information about the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), community-based child abuse prevention priorities, State Lead Agencies, outcome accountability, parent leadership, and other important topics. Also available on the site are an Evaluation Toolkit, archived teleconferences, a link to the FRIENDS Online Training Center, and downloadable FRIENDS factsheets, learning tools, and publications:

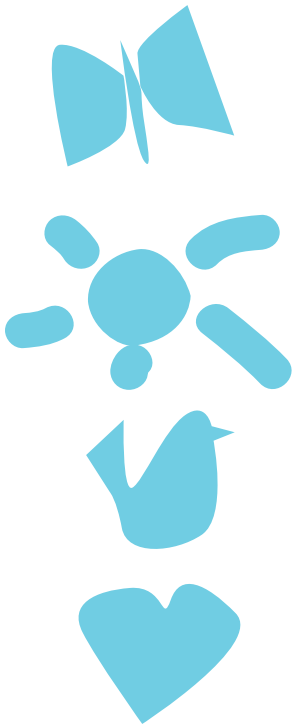
www.friendsnrc.org

Chapter 1

# Laying the Groundwork



# Protective Factors for Strengthening Families



Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. They are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

For years, researchers have been studying both the risk factors common among families experiencing abuse and neglect and those factors that protect families who are under stress. There is growing interest in understanding the complex ways in which these risk and protective factors interact, within the context of a child's family, community, and society, to affect both the incidence and consequences of abuse and neglect.

**Why Focus on Promoting Protective Factors?**

Research has found that successful interventions must both reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the well-being of children and families. Focusing on promoting protective factors is a more productive approach than reducing risk factors alone because:

- Protective factors are positive attributes that strengthen *all* families. A universal approach helps get needed support to families that may not meet the criteria for "at-risk" services, but who are dealing with stressors that could lead them to abuse or neglect.
- Focusing on protective factors, which are attributes that families themselves often want to build, helps service providers develop positive relationships with parents. Parents then feel more comfortable seeking out extra support if needed. This positive relationship is especially critical for parents who may be reluctant to disclose concerns or identify behaviors or circumstances that may place their families at risk.
- When service providers work with families to increase protective factors, they also help families build and draw on natural support networks within their family and community. These networks are critical to families' long-term success.

### Which Protective Factors Are Most Important?

Research has shown that the following protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:

- **Nurturing and Attachment.** A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development.** Discipline is both more effective and more nurturing when parents know how to set and enforce limits and encourage appropriate behaviors based on the child's age and level of development. Parents who understand how children grow and develop can provide an environment where children can live up to their potential. Child abuse and neglect are often associated with a lack of understanding of basic child development or an inability to put that knowledge into action. Timely mentoring, coaching, advice, and practice may be more useful to parents than information alone.
- **Parental Resilience.** Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises. Parents who are emotionally resilient have a positive attitude, creatively solve problems, effectively address challenges, and are less likely to direct anger and frustration at their children. In addition, these parents are aware of their own challenges—for example, those arising from inappropriate parenting they received as children—and accept help and/or counseling when needed.
- **Social Connections.** Evidence links social isolation and perceived lack of support to child maltreatment. Trusted and caring family and friends provide emotional support to parents by offering encouragement and assistance in facing the daily challenges of raising a family. Supportive adults in the family and the community can model alternative parenting styles and can serve as resources for parents when they need help.
- **Concrete Supports for Parents.** Many factors beyond the parent-child relationship affect a family's ability to care for their children. Parents need basic resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and access to essential services that address family-specific needs (such as child care and health care) to ensure the health and well-being of their children. Some families may also need support connecting to social services such as alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. Providing or connecting families to the concrete supports that families need is critical. These combined efforts help families cope with stress and prevent situations where maltreatment could occur.

## Protective Factors for Strengthening Families

These protective factors are critical for all parents and caregivers, regardless of the child's age, sex, ethnicity or racial heritage, economic status, special needs, or whether he or she is raised by a single, married, or divorced parent or other caregivers. All of these factors work together to reinforce each other; for example, parents are more likely to be resilient in times of stress when they have social connections and a strong attachment to their child. Protective factors can provide a helpful conceptual framework for guiding any provider's work with children and their families.

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# Levers for Change

## Deepening and Sustaining a Protective-Factors Approach

*Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families Initiative*

Implementing a protective-factors approach to child abuse and neglect prevention is more than just implementing a model or starting a new prevention program. It means changing the way we think about prevention and inventing new strategies across programs, services, and systems that are already supporting and working with children and families.

To do this, States participating in the Strengthening Families National Network are using five "levers for change." These are high-level approaches to effecting sweeping changes in how we support communities and families to become stronger and better able to provide children with safe and happy childhoods. The five levers for change are:

- Parent partnerships
- Infrastructure changes
- Professional development
- Family strengthening child welfare practice
- Cross-systems integration

### Parent Partnerships

Parent partnerships are one way to make sure that prevention strategies are (a) responsive and relevant to all kinds of family needs and choices and (b) model the relationships among families, service providers, and community resources that can promote the best possible environment for children's development. Parent partnerships work when many parents are consistently involved as decision-makers in program planning, implementation, and assessment.

Suggestions for implementing parent partnerships:

- Partner with parent organizations.
- Create and maintain prominent leadership roles for parents.
- Provide leadership training and support for parents.
- Designate specific resources for parent engagement, participation, and leadership.

**Illinois** and **Washington** have invested resources for parents to play an active role in community dialogues regarding protective factors. Called Parent Cafés in Illinois and Community Cafés in Washington, these parent-led efforts emphasize parent-friendly language and parent-to-parent dialogue.

## Levers for Change

### Infrastructure Changes

Integrating a protective-factors approach into regulations and procedures that govern everyday practice in child and family services can be an important way to create broad and sustainable change. Infrastructure changes create the scaffolding for a shift in the values, beliefs, and practice of people who work with children and families at all levels.

Potential infrastructure changes:

- Integrate the protective factors into performance standards, agency evaluations, and licensing standards.
- Develop memoranda of understanding and contracts between agencies that encourage family-strengthening approaches.
- Create specialized staff positions and job requirements that incorporate family strengthening principles.
- Revise tools, assessment forms, and performance contracts to reflect a protective-factors approach to working with children and families.

**Georgia** has trained all of its early childhood licensing staff on a protective-factors approach. As part of their licensing visits to programs, these staff also provide technical assistance on adopting this approach.

### Professional Development

Training and learning opportunities that educate professionals about the protective-factors produce a workforce with a common goal and language. Professionals at every level, from frontline workers to supervisors and administrators, require protective-factors training that is tailored to their role. Such training should impart a cohesive message focused on strengthening families.

Strategies for enhancing professional development:

- Integrate strengthening families themes and the protective factors into college, continuing education, and certificate programs for those working with children and families.
- Incorporate family strengthening concepts into new worker trainings.
- Develop online training and distance learning opportunities.
- Provide training at conferences and meetings.
- Reinforce family strengthening training with structured mechanisms for continued support, such as reflective supervision and ongoing mentoring.

The **New Hampshire** Strengthening Families Initiative has worked with all State universities and community colleges to cross-walk existing coursework to the protective factors. In **Alaska**, protective factors are being integrated into the social work and early childhood coursework at two universities.

**Family Strengthening Child Welfare Practice**

Infusing the everyday practices and policies of child welfare agencies with family strengthening themes has the potential to transform practice, especially in the area of child abuse and neglect prevention. The emphasis on partnering with families to support and build families' protective factors allows child welfare workers to engage families in ways that support children's safety and also strengthen the family. This approach provides continuity of family strengthening practice across a continuum that extends from prevention into the child welfare system.

Ways to incorporate family strengthening into child welfare policy and practice:

- Integrate the protective factors into new and established child welfare practices, such as differential response systems, family team meetings, and family decision-making models.
- Incorporate the protective factors into the family assessment process so that assessment focuses on both risk and mediating factors.
- Enhance mandated reporter training to include information about identifying protective factors and supporting families at risk of abuse and neglect before it occurs.
- Train foster care families, kinship families, and other caregivers on family strengthening principles.

In **New Jersey**, the protective factors are being used to create a common frame for practice across agencies participating in a differential response pilot.

## Levers for Change

### Cross-Systems Integration

An effective protective-factors approach includes coordination across diverse initiatives, using common language and goals for families in all community systems. Such a broad-based community effort requires coordination so that the family strengthening message is clearly understood and promoted in each venue. Building protective factors in families for the optimal development of children becomes the focal point.

Strategies for promoting cross-systems integration:

- Create multidisciplinary leadership teams and governing structures for prevention efforts.
- Identify a shared set of desired outcomes for families across systems and disciplines.
- Identify the State agencies that fund early childhood initiatives and engage these agencies in planning and implementing family strengthening activities.
- Use a protective-factors approach to evaluate existing initiatives and help them meet goals and requirements.

A partnership between **Nebraska**'s Children and Families Foundation and its Department of Health and Human Services uses the protective factors as the foundation for an array of collaborative early childhood family support initiatives, including home visitation, respite, parent education, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. **Hawaii**'s broad-based Early Childhood Comprehensive System has teamed with its Children's Trust Fund Partnership to create a common understanding of the protective factors and better coordinate efforts for child safety, child abuse and neglect prevention, parenting support, and community building.

# Using Evidence to Support Efforts to Strengthen Families

Evidence-based family strengthening practice involves identifying, assessing, and implementing strategies that are supported by scientific research as being effective. Just as we expect our family physician to keep abreast of which treatment options work best, we want to use evidence in our own work to:

- Ensure we are integrating the best available research with current child abuse prevention program expertise to guide our work with children and families.
- Invest our limited dollars in programs and practices backed by evidence that shows they produce positive outcomes for children and families.
- Become more informed funders, consumers, and community partners to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Foster a culture of continuous quality improvement by promoting ongoing evaluation and quality assurance activities across all prevention and family support programs.

The terms "evidence-based" and "evidence-informed" are defined differently in different contexts. Evidence-based *practices* are approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. This includes findings established through controlled clinical studies, but other methods of establishing evidence are valid as well. Evidence-based *programs* use a defined curriculum or set of services that, when implemented with fidelity as a whole, has been validated by some form of scientific evidence. Evidence-based practices and programs may be described as "supported" or "well-supported," depending on the strength of the research design.

Evidence-*informed* practices use the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. This informed practice allows for innovation while incorporating the lessons learned from the existing research literature (FRIENDS Discussion Tool, 2008). Ideally, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices should be responsive to families' cultural backgrounds, community values, and individual preferences (Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2007).

## Using Evidence to Support Efforts to Strengthen Families

This section of the Resource Guide identifies family strengthening programs and practices that have been evaluated by researchers and shown to be effective, in some form, for reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect. It also includes information about selecting and implementing specific evidence-based programs.

### Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Programs and Practices for Family Strengthening and Child Abuse Prevention

Research has identified a number of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices that strengthen families and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. National registries and websites provide more detailed information about particular programs. This section highlights some of the overarching program types that may be implemented in many different ways, with varying degrees of effectiveness. Readers are encouraged to evaluate the level of evidence available for any specific program, as well as to consider its appropriateness for specific families and communities.

**Family-centered interventions.** The most effective prevention programs are alert to the entire family situation and view children in the context of their families. These programs focus on the relationships between the child's emotional needs and the parents' mental health, coping abilities, and social and economic resources (Schorr, 1997).

**Individualized community supports.** Community-based supports such as child care and respite care services, pre-kindergarten and preschool programs, information and job referral assistance, and adult educational opportunities can help strengthen and support at-risk families. The type of services and resources needed will depend on family circumstances. An individualized approach contributes to family well-being and health while strengthening client-provider relationships (Dunst & Trivette, 2001).

**In-home services.** Programs that provide in-home services to new and expectant parents promote positive parenting and prevent child maltreatment. Research on some home visitation programs has shown improvements in parenting attitudes, the home environment, birth outcomes, maternal depression, short- and long-term child health and development, family economic well-being, and in many cases, child maltreatment rates (Harding, Galano, Martin, Huntington, & Schellenbach, 2007; Gomby, Culross, & Behrman, 1999).

**Family-centered community building.** Community building is a collaborative effort that brings together community leaders, families, and other stakeholders to coordinate services that support and strengthen families. A study of several Chicago neighborhoods found that community building initiatives that engage family residents and community stakeholders in sustained collaborative efforts have a positive impact on long-term family outcomes. These efforts may include family mentoring services, training programs for mentors, working with faith-based communities, and partnerships with local businesses (Family Strengthening Policy Center, 2005).

**Parent education.** Successful parent education programs help parents acquire and internalize parenting and problem-solving skills necessary to build a healthy family. Research has shown that effective parent training and family interventions promote protective factors and lead to positive outcomes for both parents and children. Other research points to the importance of skill-based parent education programs that provide opportunities for parents to practice with their children and receive feedback and coaching (Lundahl & Harris, 2006; Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008).

**Selecting and Implementing Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Programs and Practices**

Selecting and implementing the appropriate evidence-based or evidence-informed programs and practices can be daunting. The FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, with the help of State and national partners, developed *Integrating Evidence-Based Practices into CBCAP Programs: A Tool for Critical Discussions.* This Discussion Tool was designed to promote conversations and careful thought to guide child abuse and neglect prevention programs in the selection, implementation, documentation, and evaluation of evidence-based or evidence-informed programs and practices.

The Discussion Tool was developed for use in a training environment with a skilled technical assistance provider. However, FRIENDS has made the Discussion Tool's Introduction and Appendices available on its website.

For more information about the Discussion Tool, visit:
www.friendsnrc.org/resources/evidence.htm#reslink

The following online resources identify evidence-based programs. This is not an endorsement or an exhaustive list of such resources. It is important to note that each registry may use different criteria to evaluate the strength of a program's supporting evidence.

Blueprints for Violence Prevention (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence)
www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org

*Guide for Child Welfare Administrators on Evidence Based Practice*
(National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators)
www.aphsa.org/home/doc/Guide-for-Evidence-Based-Practice.pdf

Model Programs Guide (The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)
www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5

National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/

Promising Practices Network
www.promisingpractices.net/about_ppn.asp

In addition, *Identifying and Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions*, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, offers guidance on how to determine which evidence-based practices and programs are the best fit for a specific organization's goals:

http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/csap/spfsig/Final_SPFGuidance_Jan04_2007.pdf

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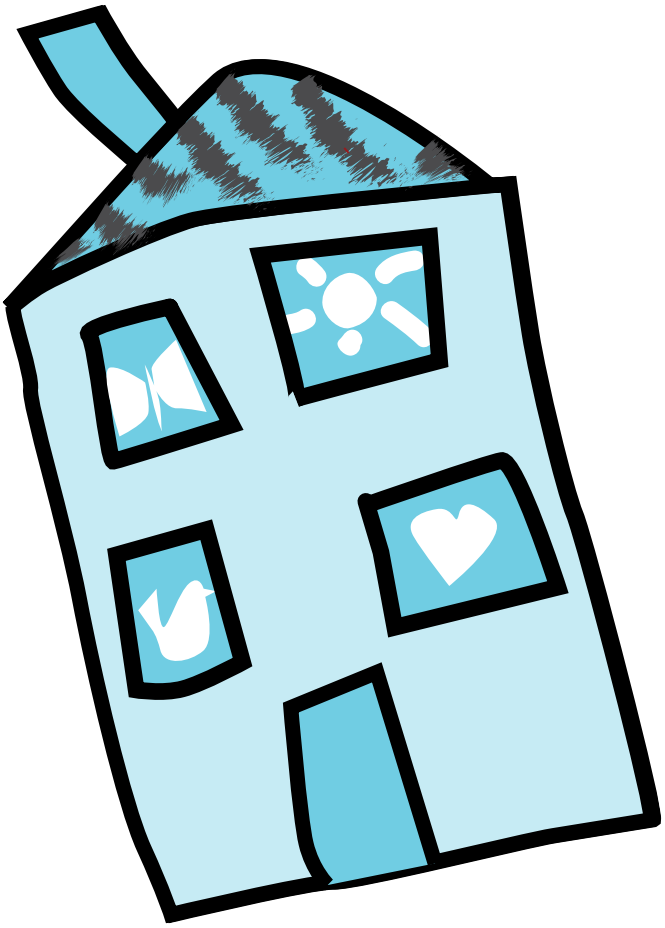
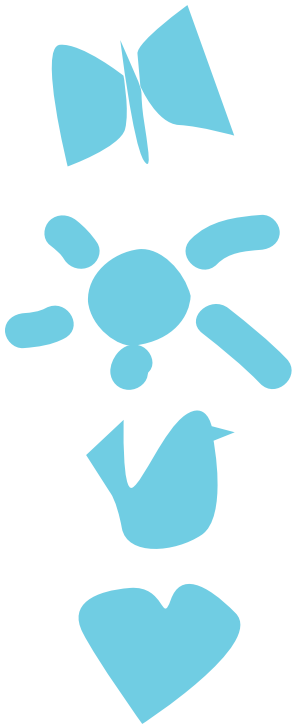
Chapter 2

# Working With Families: The Five Protective Factors



# Promoting the Five Protective Factors



This chapter provides background and guidance for service providers and others on exploring the five protective factors with parents. For each protective factor, you will find:

- Brief background on why the protective factor is important for strengthening families and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect
- Suggested areas to explore and language to use as you partner with parents to identify family strengths and needs
- Strategies and resources that may serve to strengthen families

For each protective factor, the focus is on helping parents identify and build on their own strengths and on empowering them to identify the best strategies to help them enhance their parenting capacity. This gives the provider a foundation for working in partnership with the parent and family to explore opportunities for growth and support.

The five protective factors covered in this chapter are:

- **Nurturing and attachment—**Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to, and communicate with their children.
- **Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development—**Parents learn what to look for at each age and how to help their children reach their full potential.
- **Parental resilience—**Recognizing the signs of stress and enhancing problem-solving skills can help parents build their capacity to cope.
- **Social connections—**Parents with an extensive network of family, friends, and neighbors have better support in times of need.
- **Concrete supports for parents—**Caregivers with access to financial, housing, and other concrete resources and services that help them meet their basic needs can better attend to their role as parents.

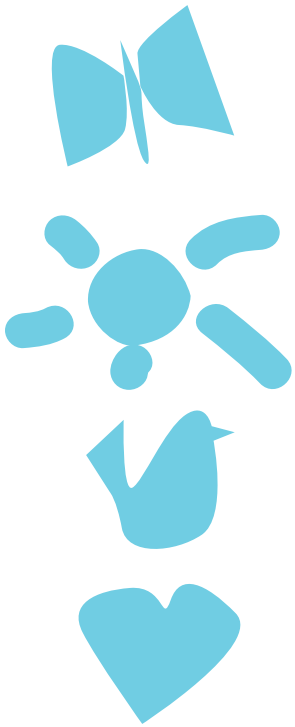
The words used with parents have a powerful impact on our ability to connect. Providers are encouraged to engage community members in identifying ways to describe the protective factors that speak to that community. For example, a group of parents from the Nisqually Nation in Washington State suggested, "Compassion, freedom, hope, community, and health."[1]

The resources and suggestions provided in this chapter are just a starting point for developing the parent-provider partnership. Other considerations are equally important. For example, the parent and provider should find a mutually comfortable place to meet, such as the parent's home, a coffee shop, a picnic bench in a nearby park, or at a religious institution or school. A casual setting may facilitate a more friendly and informal discussion.

For more information on protective factors that reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway webpage—Enhancing Protective Factors: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/protectfactors

1 This and other examples of parent-friendly language included in this Resource Guide were provided by the Washington and Illinois Strengthening Families Initiatives.

# Nurturing and Attachment



Parents today have a lot on their plates. Juggling the demands of work, home, and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children. But even small acts of kindness, protection, and caring—a hug, a smile, or loving words—make a big difference to children. Research consistently shows that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens, and adults who are happy, healthy, and competent. Research also shows that a relationship with a consistent, stable, and caring adult in the early years is associated in later life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.

Infant brains develop best when a few stable caregivers work to understand and meet their needs for love, affection, and stimulation, or provide comfort when they are hungry, bored, tired, wet, or cold. Conversely, neglectful and abusive parenting can have a negative effect on brain development. Research shows that a lack of contact or interaction with a caregiver can change the infant's body chemistry, resulting in a reduction in the growth hormones essential for brain and heart development. Furthermore, the ability to feel remorse and empathy are built on experience. Children who lack early emotional attachments or who grow up fearful and expecting to be hurt will have a difficult time relating to peers.

As children grow, nurturing by parents and other caregivers remains important for healthy physical and emotional development. While physical contact may become less important, listening and talking are always vital to the relationship. Parents nurture their older children by making time to listen to them, being involved and interested in the child's school and other activities, staying aware of the child or teen's interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for the child when necessary.

When parents spend time and energy discovering and paying attention to their children's needs, they are rewarded with positive, open, and trusting relationships with their children. Parents who develop the ability to respond sensitively to the needs of their child, no matter what age, will find parenting easier and more enjoyable.

### Exploring Strengths and Needs

Regardless of the child's age, parents can take advantage of opportunities in their sometimes hectic lives to listen and respond to their child in a nurturing way. Even a few minutes of quality time in the car, at the store, or while cooking dinner mean so much to a child. Your role as a partner with the parent is to model and acknowledge nurturing behaviors as parents make connections with their baby, child, or teen.

Some parents have chosen to communicate the importance of nurturing and attachment in terms of the desired outcomes: "My children feel loved, believe they matter, and can get along with others." Or simply, "My child(ren) and I regularly show each other how much we love each other."

| In order to explore . . . | Ask the parent . . . |
|---|---|
| • How the parent observes and attends to the child<br>• Specific play or stimulation behaviors | • How much time are you able to spend with your child or teen?<br>• When you spend time with your child or teen, what do you like to do together?<br>• How do you engage your child or teen during everyday activities (diapering, meals, driving in the car)?<br>• What games or activities does your child or teen like? |
| • How the parent responds to the child's behavior | • What does your child or teen do when he/she is sad, angry, tired?<br>• What happens when your child (cries for a long time, has a tantrum, wets the bed, skips school)? |
| • How the parent responds to emotional needs | • How do you know when your child or teen is happy? Sad? Lonely? Hurt?<br>• How do you comfort your child? |
| • How the parent demonstrates affection<br>• How the parent models caring behavior | • How do you show affection in your family?<br>• How do you let your child know that you love him or her? |
| • How the parent recognizes accomplishments | • What are your child's greatest gifts and talents?<br>• How do you encourage these talents?<br>• What do you do when your child does something great? |
| • How the parent provides a safe and stable home and family environment | • How many people provide care for your baby or toddler? How often do these people change?<br>• What routines do you keep in caring for your young child?<br>• All families experience conflict from time to time. What happens when there is conflict in your house?<br>• How do you keep your child or teen safe at home? In your neighborhood or community? |

## Nurturing and Attachment

**Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Nurturing and Attachment**

You can share resources available from your agency and throughout the community on how parents can connect with their children, listen to them, and become more involved in their lives. It is important to note that bonding is a two-way street. As children grow and develop the ability to socialize, relate, and communicate, it is easier for parents to respond positively to them. When a child does not show a positive response to the parent (due to age, a disability, or other factors), the parent may need additional support.

Resources to promote nurturing may include information, examples, and opportunities to practice and receive feedback in the areas of:

*Impact of nurturing on development*

- Information about infant and toddler development, including brain development
- The importance of an early secure attachment between parents and young children
- Information on shaken baby syndrome and sudden infant death syndrome
- Examples of secure parent-child attachment at all ages
- Examples of how secure parent-child attachment supports positive child behavior

*Parenting strategies that promote nurturing*

- Infant care and strategies that promote bonding and attachment (e.g., breastfeeding, rocking, using a baby carrier, responding to crying, talking lovingly, consistency within and across caregivers, and stability of primary caregivers)
- Cultural differences in how parents and children show affection
- What to do when your child has an emotional or behavioral disability that limits his or her ability to respond to parental nurturing
- Ways to nurture children at every age
- How fathers nurture children
- Ways to engage other important adults as part of a child's "nurturing network"
- Ways to create and sustain healthy marriages that better support a nurturing home environment for children
- Ways to create quality time to play with children in the context of daily activities
- Communicating effectively with older children and resolving conflicts
- Using positive discipline

Many parents, especially parents of infants, find that home visits are a convenient way to access resources. For providers, home visits allow you to meet with parents in an environment where parents and children may be most comfortable. Home visits also give you a chance to talk to parents about any material or safety needs in the home.

However, some families may not feel comfortable having strangers in their home and may prefer to meet in another setting, such as a church, school, park, or office. For some families, a "neighborhood helper" or other person who shares the family's ethnic and cultural background may provide a bridge for connecting with the parent or caregiver.

# Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development

Parents know their children best—their unique behaviors, interests, and abilities. But no parent can be an expert on all aspects of infant, child, and teenage development or the most effective ways to support a child at each stage. When parents are not aware of normal developmental milestones, interpret their child's behaviors in a negative way, or do not know how to respond to and effectively manage a child's behavior, they can become frustrated and may resort to harsh discipline or emotional withdrawal.

There is extensive research linking healthy child development to effective parenting. Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve. Parenting skills are not static; as children grow and mature, parents need to change the way they respond to their children's needs. In addition, parenting styles need to be adjusted for each child's individual temperament and unique circumstances.

Knowledge of parenting and child development also changes over time. Many parenting practices that were common only a generation ago—laying children to sleep on their stomachs, for example—are not recommended today. New research, social expectations, social structures, and even laws have combined to make parenting a different task than it was even 20 years ago. Parents need access to information that is grounded in the latest research.

### Exploring Strengths and Needs

All parents have questions about raising their children, and they need timely answers and support from someone they trust. One way to describe this is simply to acknowledge, "Parenting is part natural and part learned."

Parents may feel more comfortable voicing concerns and exploring solutions when providers:

- Focus on the parents' own hopes and goals for their children.
- Help parents identify and build on their strengths in parenting.
- Model nurturing behavior by acknowledging frustrations and recognizing the parents' efforts.

| In order to explore . . . | Ask the parent . . . |
|---|---|
| • The parent's view of their child's strengths | • What does your child do best?<br>• What do you like about your child? |
| • How the parent views his/her own role | • What do you like about being a parent of an infant (or preschooler, or teenager)?<br>• What are some of the things that you find challenging as a parent? |
| • How the parent observes and interprets the child's behavior | • What kinds of things make your child happy?<br>• What kinds of things make your child frustrated, sad, or angry?<br>• What does your child do when happy? Frustrated? Sad? Angry?<br>• Why do you think your child (cries, eats slowly, says "no," breaks rules)? |
| • Ways the parent is currently responding to the child's needs and behaviors<br>• How the parent encourages positive behavior through praise and modeling | • What works best for your child when he/she is sad, angry, or frustrated?<br>• How have you let your child know what you expect?<br>• What happens when she/he does what you asked? |
| • Whether the parent can identify alternative solutions for addressing behaviors<br>• Community, cultural, and ethnic expectations and practices about parenting | • How have you seen other parents handle this? What would your parents have done in this situation?<br>• What teaching (discipline) methods work best for you?<br>• How does your child respond? |
| • How the parent understands the child's development<br>• Any parental concern that the child's behavior appears to be outside the normal range | • How do you think your child compares to other children his/her age?<br>• Are there things that worry you about your child?<br>• Have others expressed concern about your child's behavior? |
| • How the parent encourages healthy development | • How do you respond to your baby's attempts to communicate?<br>• How do you encourage your child to explore his/her surroundings, try new things, and do things on his/her own?<br>• What works in encouraging your child to be more independent and competent? |

### Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development

When parents share their concerns and perspectives on their children, there is an opportunity to explore solutions and share resources. Educational materials about parenting and child development may help parents more accurately assess their child's development relative to others of the same age, have realistic expectations for their child's behavior, and explore ways to communicate those expectations effectively.

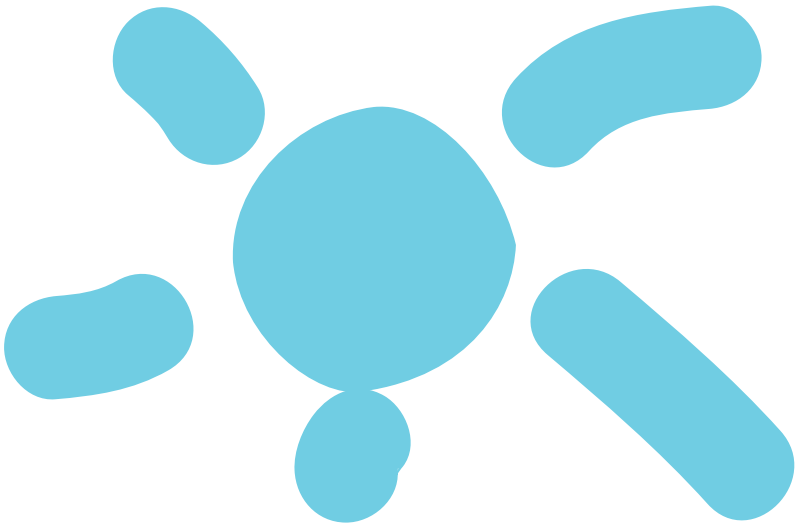
Helpful resources for enhancing parenting knowledge and skills may include information and opportunities to practice in the areas of:

*Child and youth development*

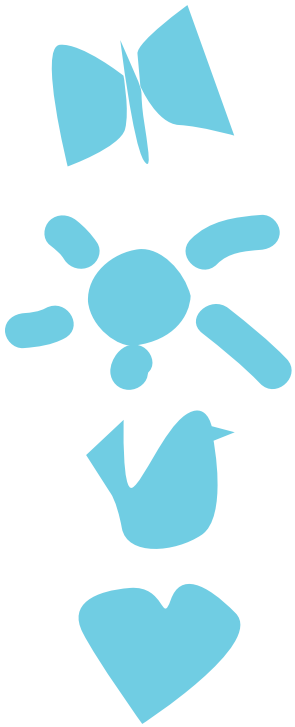
- What parents can expect and look for as the child or youth grows
- The ability of children or teens to understand and control their behavior at different ages
- Addressing developmental challenges such as inconsolable crying, bedwetting, eating or sleeping problems, lying, school issues, problems with peers, and puberty
- How to keep children safe, including information on shaken baby syndrome, sudden infant death syndrome, childproofing strategies, appropriate child care, and safety in the community

*Parenting*

- How a parent can guide a child's behavior and reinforce desired/appropriate behavior
- Ways that a parent can model desirable behavior
- Nonpunitive disciplinary/teaching techniques, such as setting routines and limits, redirecting attention or behavior, and logical consequences for actions



# Parental Resilience



Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are generally able to cope on their own, but they also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, physical and mental health problems, marital conflict, substance abuse, and domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, financial insecurity, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supportive caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed. All of these strengthen the capacity to parent effectively, and they can be nurtured and developed through concrete skill-building activities or through supportive interactions with others. In addition, community services that help families in crisis include mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, family and marital counseling, and special education and treatment programs for children with special needs.

### Exploring Strengths and Needs

The term "resilience" will not resonate with all parents. Explore alternate ways of talking about these skills, such as the affirmation, "I will continue to have courage during stressful times or after a crisis."

By partnering with parents, you can help them pinpoint the factors contributing to their stress, as well as their successful coping strategies and their personal, family, and community resources.

| In order to explore . . . | Ask the parent . . . |
|---|---|
| • What the parent identifies as his or her coping strengths and resilience<br>• The parent's strengths in parenting | • What helps you cope with everyday life?<br>• Where do you draw your strength?<br>• How does this help you in parenting?<br>• What are your dreams for yourself and your family? |
| • What the parent identifies as everyday stressors<br>• Problem-solving skills<br>• Stressors precipitated by crises | • What kinds of frustrations or worries do you deal with during the day?<br>• How do you solve these everyday problems as they come up?<br>• Has something happened recently that has made life more difficult? |
| • Impact of stress on parenting<br>• Impact of parenting on stress | • How are you able to meet your children's needs when you are dealing with stress?<br>• How are your children reacting to (crisis)? |
| • How the parent communicates with his or her spouse or partner<br>• Whether there is marital stress or conflict | • How do you and your spouse communicate about concerns?<br>• How does your spouse or partner support you in times of stress?<br>• How do you and your spouse or partner work together in parenting?<br>• What happens when you and your spouse or partner disagree? |
| • Needs that might be identified by a different family member (not all family members may identify the same needs)<br>• Actions that a parent may need to take when additional needs are identified | • Are other family members experiencing stress or concern?<br>• Has anyone in your family expressed concern about drug or alcohol abuse?<br>• What steps have you taken to address those concerns? |
| • Short-term supports (respite care, help with a new baby, help during an illness)<br>• Long-term strategies (job training, marital counseling) | • When you are under stress, what is most helpful to you?<br>• Are there places in the community where you can find help? |
| • The parent's ability to set and work toward personal goals | • What are your goals for your family or children in the next week (or month)?<br>• What are your long-term goals for yourself? For your children and family?<br>• What steps might you take toward those goals in the next week (or month)? |

### Sharing Strategies and Resources to Promote Parental Resilience

When parents identify and communicate what worries them most, there is an opportunity to offer some coping strategies and resources to begin to deal with the stress. Parents are not always aware how their ability to cope with stress may impact their capacity to parent and their children's development. You can help parents recognize that they can model coping behaviors for their children, since children observe and imitate parents in many ways. Empowering parents to seek help and take steps to combat stress is part of building both resilience and hope.

Some needs are obvious to all family members and to providers. Other needs, such as marital counseling or substance abuse treatment, may become apparent when one family member expresses concern about another. Partnering with the family includes helping all family members translate their concerns into specific needs that can be discussed and resolved. Many community resources and services are available to help families cope. Faith communities, community colleges, self-help groups, and social service agencies can help parents and caregivers develop problem-solving and communication skills that strengthen their ability to deal effectively with crisis, so they can continue to provide for their children.

Resources for building resilience may include information about:

*Stress—causes and results*

- How stress happens, including the "little things" that add up
- Ways to recognize stress and its triggers
- How stress affects health and coping
- How stress affects parenting, marriage, and family life

*Finding ways to build resilience*

- Stress management techniques, such as regular exercise, relaxation to music, and meditation or prayer
- How to prevent stress by planning ahead, anticipating difficulties, and having resources in place
- How to anticipate and minimize everyday stress
- How to handle major stressors, including accessing resources and supports from family, friends, faith communities, and other community resources
- Family management techniques, such as effective ways of communicating needs and concerns
- Programs that offer family-to-family help or mentoring for personalized, intensive, sustained services or support, especially in times of crisis
- Community supports such as mental health and counseling services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, and self-help support groups
- Concrete skill building in areas such as problem solving, goal setting, communication, and self-care

# Social Connections

Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Conversely, research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social-connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills to expand their social networks. Helping parents identify resources and/or providing opportunities for them to make connections within their neighborhood or community may encourage isolated parents to reach out. Often, opportunities exist within faith-based organizations, schools, hospitals, community centers, and other places where support groups or social groups meet.

## Social Connections

### Exploring Strengths and Needs

Identifying and building on parents' current or potential social connections, skills, abilities, and interests can be a great way to partner with them as they expand their social networks. For parents who have difficulty establishing and maintaining social connections, your discussion may help them identify what is holding them back.

Encourage parents to express goals regarding social connections in their own terms, such as, "I have friends and at least one person who supports my parenting."

| In order to explore . . . | Ask the parent . . . |
|---|---|
| • The parent's current social support system, including family, friends, and membership in any formal groups | • Do you have family members or friends nearby who help you out once in a while?<br>• Do you belong to a church, temple, mosque, women's group, men's group?<br>• Do you have a child in the local school or Head Start program? |
| • The parent's social skills and capacity to make and keep friends | • Who can you call for advice or just to talk?<br>• How often do you see them? |
| • The parent's desire for new friends and social connections | • What kinds of things do you like to do for fun or to relax?<br>• Would you be interested in meeting some other moms and dads who also (have a new baby, have a teenager, like to cook, sing in a choir)? |
| • The parent's potential strengths and challenges in making social connections (including concerns such as parent's language, comfort level in groups, access to babysitting and transportation, recent arrival in community) | • What are some benefits of getting out or joining a group?<br>• What kind of support would you need in order to be able to get out for an evening?<br>• How does your spouse or partner help out so that you have some time with friends? |
| • Needs that might be met with better social connections (for instance, respite care, a sympathetic listener, a role model) | • Would it help you to have more friends or acquaintances to call about _____?<br>• Would it help you to know other moms and dads who are dealing with _____? |
| • The parent's interest in starting or facilitating a community group | • What would it take to get a group of parents together to _____? |

**Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Social Connections**

If parents express an interest in making social connections, you may want to offer suggestions, information, or services. Sometimes parents will not identify a lack of social connections or emotional support as an issue. Instead, they may express concern about a child's behavior problem or their own depression. In addressing the parent's concerns, you can also provide information about how these needs might be met by connecting with others (e.g., a support group for parents with similar issues). You can also provide general information on how expanding social connections can reduce isolation and support parents.

Consider sharing the following:

***Benefits of a broad social network***

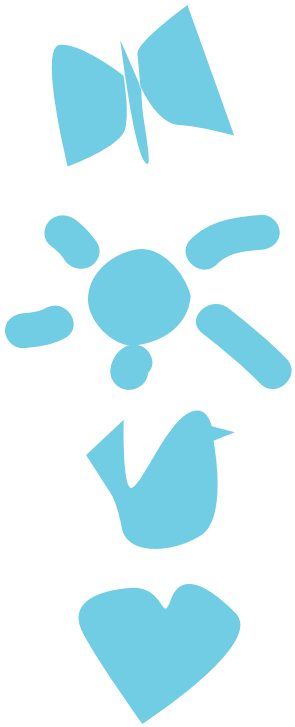
- Helps ease the burden of parenting
- Models positive social interactions for children and gives children access to other supportive adults
- Provides support in crises
- Offers opportunities to help others

***Ways to broaden a social network***

- Overcome transportation, child care, and other barriers—for instance, taking a bus or carpool to a play group or joining a babysitting co-op to meet other parents and have occasional child care
- Access community resources, especially those with which the parent has some experience (a church he or she attended, a Head Start program where the child is enrolled, a cultural center that offers services in the parent's native language)
- Join a parent's group or play group in the neighborhood, or start a new group

Some neighborhoods and communities provide ample opportunities for neighbors to come together and friendships to develop. In other cases, agencies and organizations may welcome help in starting groups that bring families together for mutual support. These groups might start as an outgrowth of a widely recognized need in the community, such as new families that have just moved to the area or concerned citizens working against community violence. Community involvement is critical for these groups to be sustained over time. As a service provider, your role might be bringing individuals together (including parents), providing a meeting place, or simply encouraging a community leader to establish a group to meet a particular need.

# Concrete Supports for Parents



Many factors affect a family's ability to care for their children. Families who can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation—and who know how to access essential services such as child care, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs—are better able to ensure their children's safety and well-being. Some families may also need assistance connecting to social service supports such as alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack health insurance, or suffer a family crisis such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent, their ability to care for their children may be at risk.

Financial insecurity is associated with greater rates of child abuse and neglect, and families living in poverty often benefit from specific concrete supports, such as help with housing, food, transportation, child care, clothing, furniture, and utilities. Partnering with parents to identify and access these resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.

### Exploring Strengths and Needs

Most parents are unlikely to use or identify with the words "concrete supports." Instead, they might express a goal such as, "My family can access services when they need them."

Working with parents to identify their most critical basic needs and locate concrete supports keeps the focus on family-driven solutions. As a partner with the family, your role may simply be making referrals to the essential services, supports, and resources that parents say they need.

| In order to explore… | Ask the parent… |
|---|---|
| • The parent's view of the most immediate need | • What do you need to (stay in your house, keep your job, pay your heating bill)? |
| • Steps the parent has taken to deal with the problem | • How have you handled this?<br>• What kind of response have you gotten?<br>• Why is this working or not working? |
| • Ways the family handles other problems<br>• Current connections that might offer help for the new problem | • What has worked well in the past?<br>• Are there community groups or local services that have been or might be able to offer assistance?<br>• Do you belong to a faith community? Do you have a relationship with a pediatrician? Is your child enrolled at a local school? |
| • Other services and supports that would help the family | • Have you thought about _____ (local program that provides housing or food)?<br>• Did you know that _____ provides (free homework help, meals on weekends, low-cost child care)? |
| • The parent's desire and capacity to receive new services, including completing applications, keeping appointments, and committing to the solution process | • What kind of help do you need to get to these appointments?<br>• When would be a good time for me to give you a call to see how it's going? |

## Concrete Supports for Parents

### Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Concrete Supports

Parents may not always know about community resources that can help meet their basic needs or how to access essential services. Language or cultural barriers may make it difficult for some parents to identify services and make the necessary contacts. Providing information and connections to concrete supports can be a tremendous help to families under stress or in crisis. You might provide contact information (a person's name is most helpful) or help parents make the initial calls or appointments, depending on what parents say they need.

When specific services do not exist in your community, you may be able to work with parents or community leaders to help establish them. Parents can become powerful advocates for a particular cause, such as low-cost, after-school programs or safe transportation for teens, if they know the process for forming groups and creating services.

Your expertise may be most helpful in the following ways:

*Linking families with services*

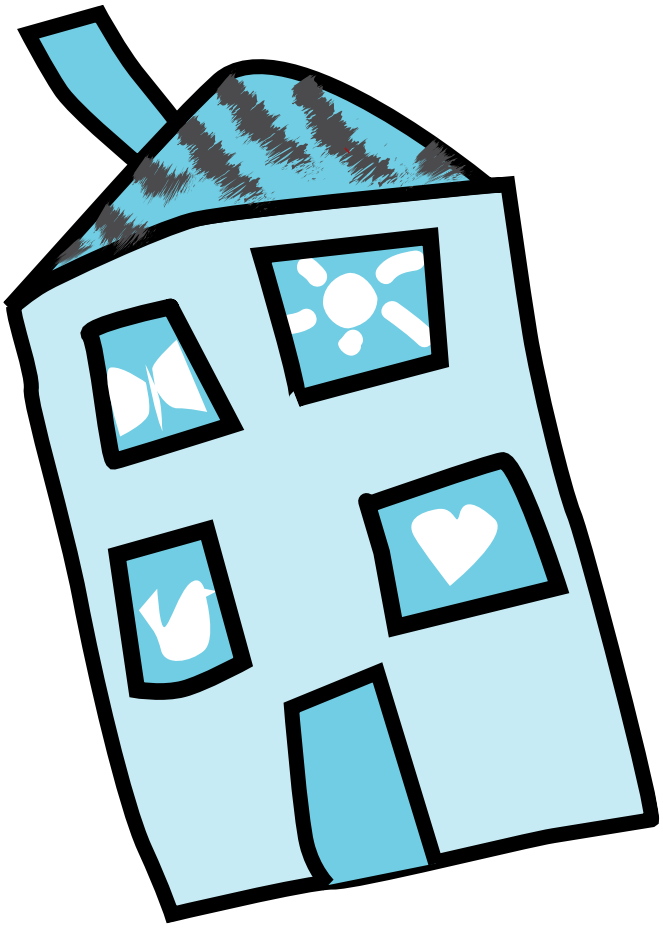
- Parents may not be aware of services that could help. You can let them know about all available resources, so they may select what is most appropriate for their needs.
- Parents are more likely to use culturally appropriate services. If you can link them with a service provider who speaks their language or comes from a similar background, parents may feel more comfortable and experience a greater benefit.
- Parents with many needs may be overwhelmed by the different requirements for accessing various services. A "systems of care" approach may be most useful, in which different helping systems work together to support the family. (See "Engaging Community Partners" in the next chapter.)

*Building community services*

- Linking parents with community leaders and others to organize support, advocacy, and consulting groups gives parents the opportunity to use their experience to help others.
- Parents who go public with their need or cause usually find that they are not alone. The fact that a parent is willing to publicize a need or cause may mobilize the community.
- Parents who are new to advocacy may need help connecting with the media, businesses, funding, and other parts of the community to have their needs heard and identify solutions.

Chapter 3

# Engaging Your Community



# Tools for Engaging Your Community

Strong communities promote strong families. And when families are supported, children are more likely to grow up happy and healthy, free from the risk of maltreatment.

Broad-based partnerships, working across systems, are necessary to create lasting change in how communities think about prevention and support families. Working with others provides greater opportunities to identify strategies for ensuring that all parents in your community have the skills, supports, and resources they need to care for their children.

This chapter offers suggestions, tools, and resources for engaging your community in supporting and strengthening families through the five protective factors. These include:

- Tips for engaging community partners and working with specific groups
- Talking points (English and Spanish)
- Sample press release (English and Spanish)
- Sample public service announcements (PSAs) (English and Spanish)
- Sample letter to legislators

More information about engaging your community is available in the Public Awareness & Creating Supportive Communities section of the Child Welfare Information Gateway website: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/communities

# Engaging Community Partners

*Adapted from the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Strengthening Families Initiative*

Successful family strengthening initiatives involve community leaders, agencies, and families working together to make lasting improvements to the community's infrastructure. Partnerships are a great way to make communities more supportive of families and help ensure family health and safety.

Protective factors can serve as a helpful framework for community partnerships supporting stressed and vulnerable families. Many life events bring stress and risk into a family's life—domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, loss of a job, having a child with special needs, even just the process of entering into parenting. When the community works together to strengthen families by building protective factors, families are better able to create a safe and stable base that allows them to respond more effectively to issues that cause stress.

For example, conversations with families struggling with a child's challenging behavior reveal that they often feel very isolated. Their child's behavior can serve as a barrier to accessing both formal and informal supports and services. Parents may feel depressed or self-critical. In these cases, child-centered therapeutic services may be complemented by a broader array of supports that help the family build protective factors.

This section discusses how protective factors can further community prevention work and suggests some activities to support adoption of a community-wide protective-factors framework. The next section offers tips for engaging specific groups in support of a community-wide effort.

### Using the Protective Factors

The protective factors can support your community-based prevention work in many ways. Protective factors can:

- **Serve as a framework to help community partners understand what you can offer.** Opening the conversation with a discussion around the protective factors will provide an opportunity to identify concrete collaborations that address issues for families under stress.
- **Provide continuity for families.** Families under stress often access services from multiple systems and service providers. When a protective-factors approach is used across these systems, it helps ensure a consistent experience for families.

## Engaging Community Partners

- **Provide a common set of outcomes.** Each service system has its own set of goals for the families they serve and the services they provide. Often these goals are focused on preventing specific negative outcomes. Protective factors can provide a common framework for fostering positive outcomes for families across systems.
- **Define a new audience and environment for prevention and family support activities.** Traditional prevention activities can also help build the capacity of those who work with families on a day-to-day basis. For example, many family resource centers experience low utilization during the daytime, when many parents are working. This could be an ideal time to work with home-based child care providers who may need family support services themselves, and who can serve as an important channel to reach another set of families who may need support.

### Suggested Activities

The following activities may be useful in support of adopting a community-wide protective-factors framework:

- **Cross-training.** Community partners each have their own ways of working with children and families. Training across disciplines can help to create a common understanding of what the protective factors are, which strategies are most effective for strengthening families, and how a protective-factors approach supports each partner's work with children and families.
- **Adapting intake and assessment tools and protocols.** Central to this process is moving from a needs-assessment approach to a more comprehensive assessment that looks at the family's needs, strengths, and protective factors. Encourage community providers to integrate a common set of questions, based on the protective factors, into their intake and assessment tools and protocols. This can help ensure that strategies to build protective factors are an integral part of service planning with all families.
- **Creating a consumer voice in relation to protective factors.** Many Strengthening Families sites have worked to build plain-language tools that help parents understand what the protective factors are, why they are important, and what families can expect from community partners that are committed to a protective-factors approach. These tools help to ensure that protective factors are built *with* families.
- **Creating service collaborations.** While the protective factors are universal to all families, they may need to be augmented or adapted for families experiencing particular stressors or traumas. In these cases, collaborations based on the protective factors may yield the most effective support system for families. For example, an organization that understands social networking might work with a domestic violence shelter to develop a social-connections strategy that is sensitive to safety-planning issues.

# Tips for Working With Specific Groups

Everyone has something to contribute to a community family strengthening effort. The following are suggestions for ways your partnership might engage and collaborate with specific groups.

**Partnering With Faith Communities**

- Attend regularly or make a one-time presentation on protective factors to interfaith groups working on community needs and services. (See Talking Points, page 44.)
- Listen and seek to understand the faith communities' beliefs and values regarding protecting children and strengthening families. Demonstrating respect for their faith is important when approaching religious and lay leaders.
- Train religious and lay leaders about the five protective factors, as well as how to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, work with victims and their families, and make appropriate referrals.
- Organize parent education and support group meetings at faith community facilities.
- Support the development of mentoring programs within congregations for children and families under stress.
- Encourage religious and lay leaders to publicly acknowledge child abuse and neglect as a major concern for the faith community, and affirm that they are dedicated to supporting families and protecting children.

**Partnering With Parents and Caregivers**

- Reach out to community parent councils or forums. Support the development of such councils where they do not currently exist.
- Provide community-based family mentoring services to strengthen family relationships.
- Organize workshops to teach parents how to access services to meet their families' needs, including finding adequate medical care, pursuing educational opportunities, and accessing job information. Include parent leaders as presenters.
- Create opportunities for parent volunteers to participate in community activities such as safety initiatives, after-school programs, mentoring programs, food drives, and other events.
- Ask experienced parent leaders to serve as mentors for family members who are just joining the group.

## Tips for Working With Specific Groups

### Partnering With the Courts

- Provide information, tools, and training about protective factors to judges, guardians *ad litem*, and others involved in making best interests determinations for children.
- Create substantive roles for parents and community stakeholders in the juvenile dependency court system to promote a better understanding of the challenges faced by those who come before the court.
- Set up formal referral systems to direct parents to legal service providers within the community.
- Create support groups among parents currently or previously involved with the court system.

### Partnering With the Media

- Develop a clear communications plan that includes your initiative's key messages, communication objectives, and targeted outreach to media outlets.
- Plan a community-wide campaign that gives increased visibility to community partners and families being served by the community partnership. Use the sample press release and public service announcements on pages 50-53.
- Consider inviting media representatives to participate in your community-wide effort, and keep them informed regularly of your progress and challenges.
- Propose an editorial briefing on the protective factors and how community members can help families stay healthy and strong.
- Offer members of your community partnership as experts on family health and safety, protective factors, and child abuse prevention.

### Partnering With Early Childhood Centers and Schools

- Attend parent meetings or conduct community forums or workshops with early childhood centers and schools to talk with parents about protective factors.
- Schedule joint trainings with staff about the protective factors and child abuse prevention, and how this information can be incorporated into their work with parents.
- Seek opportunities to sponsor joint events with early childhood centers and schools.
- As these relationships develop, you may offer to provide onsite services to children and families. This can be an important first step in building families' comfort with pursuing services.

### Partnering With Business Leaders

- Recruit a high-profile community business leader to serve on the governance board for your community-based partnership. Encourage him or her to challenge other business leaders to contribute to the effort.
- Publicly recognize companies with family-friendly services and policies, such as onsite child care, flexible scheduling, and telecommuting.

- Identify ways that employee volunteer programs could work to support safe and healthy families in the community.
- Partner with businesses to offer workshops for employees on the protective factors, child development, parenting skills, and stress reduction.
- Ask businesses to consider including family-strengthening messages in their advertising or product packaging.

**Partnering With Policymakers**

- Write or call your local legislator and make him or her aware of the research demonstrating how the five protective factors help prevent child abuse and neglect. Briefly point out your community's current strengths and needs. (See the sample letter to legislators on page 54.)
- Host a community event with your legislator at a local school or family center and invite community partners and families.
- Organize a town hall meeting with your legislator and other community leaders to address issues affecting local families.
- Build long-term relationships with your legislator and his or her staff; keep them informed of community issues.

**Partnering With Culturally Diverse Families and Communities**

Partnering with families and communities of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, and beliefs requires an organizational investment in addressing differences in positive and productive ways. Here are a few examples:

- Different cultures define the concept of "family" in very different ways. Respect each family's own definition.
- Begin a workshop or retreat with a demonstration of spirituality drawn from the culture of one or more of the families present. This can prepare participants emotionally and mentally for the activities of the day, while acknowledging a strength of that family's culture to the entire group.
- Classes that introduce traditional child-rearing practices from various cultures may help young parents raise their children in a positive and culturally knowledgeable manner.
- Ethnic street fairs offer families a way to enjoy their cultural heritage in the company of others. Community organizations can provide prevention information and educational materials at booths and through family-friendly activities like parent-child art workshops and puppet shows.

For more information about culturally competent work with families, visit:
www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/cultural/families

# Talking Points

Supporting families by ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need is an effective way to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect. Everyone can play a part in making your community a better place for families to raise healthy children. The following talking points provide ideas for how to share this important message.

These talking points might be useful to those just starting a community-wide strengthening families initiative, or when inviting new partners to join. They can be used with community groups or the media. Each audience will have its own interests, questions, and needs, so tailor your presentation to fit the unique circumstances. Engage your audience throughout your presentation by inviting them to contribute their own ideas about how your community can better support families. Close your presentation with a clear call to action.

**What do we know about protecting children?**

- When a parent treats a child with respect, love, and understanding, it affects the child for a lifetime—making it easier to develop and keep friendships, succeed in school and work, sustain a happy marriage, and parent effectively.
- Unfortunately, many factors can limit parents' ability to protect and nurture their children. These can put families at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Certain factors have been shown to serve as buffers against these risks, enhancing parents' coping skills and helping them to raise happy, healthy children, even under stress.
- On average, children raised in households headed by two parents in a healthy marriage fare better than children who grow up in other family structures.

**What are the protective factors that strengthen families?**

The best thing our community can do to protect children is to help strengthen families by promoting the following five protective factors:

***Nurturing and attachment***

Parents and caregivers who bond with and respond to the basic needs of their babies and young children lay the foundation for a positive and loving

relationship. They also stimulate the growth of their child's brain and help their child learn how to interact in positive ways with others.

Ways our community can promote parental nurturing and attachment:

- Sponsor workshops for caregivers on playing with infants and young children.
- Provide quiet, private places for mothers to breastfeed and for all caregivers to tend to their babies' needs.
- Recognize local businesses with family-friendly policies, such as flexible work schedules, paid maternity/paternity leave, and paid family sick leave, that give parents time to bond with or care for their children.

***Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development***

Helping parents learn about normal infant, childhood, and teen development will help them understand what to anticipate as their children grow and develop, and what types of support and discipline may work best at each stage.

Ways our community can enhance knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development:

- Supply local pediatricians with reproducible factsheets about child development that can be given to parents during well-child exams.
- Sponsor classes and support programs for new parents.
- Offer trainings for child care providers and teachers about key aspects of child development and the relationship between effective parenting and brain development.
- Disseminate information to the community about normal crying and activity levels of children at different ages to increase understanding and help reduce pressures on parents.

***Parental resilience***

Parenting can be stressful, especially when parents are also managing work demands or unemployment, financial worries, illness, or difficulties with a spouse or others. Parents who have support and skills for managing stress will be better able to cope with day-to-day challenges.

Ways our community can strengthen parental resilience:

- Explore how local faith communities organize members to support new parents or other families under stress. Share effective models with other groups.
- Offer free or low-cost stress management classes at local community centers, businesses, or schools.
- Sponsor communication and conflict resolution classes for couples.
- Provide brochures and other resources for teachers and child care providers to share with parents who are under significant stress.

## Talking Points

*Social connections*

For most of us, family, friends, and neighbors form a network that provides social interaction, recreation, advice, and help. When parents have the opportunity to interact with, learn from, and seek the support of other adults, their children benefit.

Ways our community can help parents build social connections:

- Sponsor multigenerational activities like picnics and street fairs that reflect the community's culture through music, food, and games. Involve parents in organizing these events.
- Recruit volunteers for mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Befriend-a-Child, or Family to Family.
- Provide safe, accessible venues for young families to meet and socialize, such as libraries, parks, and preschools.

*Concrete supports for parents*

When parents are not employed or face other challenges, they may need assistance in order to provide adequate food, clothing, housing, and medical care for their children. These supports may reduce the stress parents feel in difficult circumstances, giving them more energy to nurture and support their children.

Ways our community can help ensure adequate concrete supports for families:

- Provide a community-wide "system of care" for families needing services, to ensure they do not fall through the cracks.
- Make information about accessing community resources (e.g., housing, health care, employment assistance) readily available no matter where families initially turn for services.
- Educate candidates and elected officials about issues in our community and the need for services and programs that support healthy and safe children and families.
- Encourage service providers to collaborate, leverage funding, and share resources to address specific needs.

**Call to action: How can we work together to strengthen our community?**

(Mention some of the supports currently available in your community, including the efforts of your community-wide family strengthening partnership, if applicable.)

Anything we do to strengthen and support families in our community helps reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. This month and throughout the year, let's focus our attention on prevention efforts that support parents and create healthier communities for children.

- Which needs are most urgent in our community?
- Which of the ideas we have talked about today would help address those needs?
- How can you help?

# Temas de conversación

Apoyar a las familias dando a los padres la información y los recursos que necesitan es una buena manera de proteger a los niños del riesgo del maltrato de menores. Todos pueden jugar un papel en lograr que la comunidad sea un lugar más seguro para las familias que desean criar niños sanos y seguros. A continuación ofrecemos varios temas de conversación para estimular el diálogo comunitario y dentro de las familias. Estos temas de conversación pueden resultar útiles a la hora de transmitir su mensaje.

Los temas de conversación pueden servir a las personas que apenas comienzan a preparar una iniciativa comunitaria para fortalecer a las familias o a los que buscan nuevos socios comunitarios. Además, los temas pueden servir para dirigirse a diferentes grupos comunitarios o a los medios de comunicación. Cada público tiene sus propios intereses, preguntas y necesidades, y es conveniente que adapte su presentación según las circunstancias. Cuando dé una presentación, deje que los demás participen para que den sus ideas respecto a lo que la comunidad puede hacer para apoyar a las familias. Cierre su presentación haciendo un llamado a la acción.

**¿Qué sabemos sobre la protección de menores?**

- Cuando un padre trata a un niño con respeto, amor y paciencia, esto afecta al niño de por vida facilita su capacidad para desarrollar y cultivar amistades, para sobresalir en la escuela y el trabajo, para mantener un matrimonio feliz y para que un día él sea un buen padre.
- Desgraciadamente, hay muchos factores que limitan la habilidad de los padres para proteger y cuidar a sus hijos. Estos factores ponen a las familias en riesgo de abuso y negligencia de menores.
- No obstante, hay ciertos factores para disminuir estos riesgos y para ayudar a los padres a criar niños sanos y felices sobreponiéndose al estrés o a situaciones difíciles.
- En promedio, les va mejor a los niños que se crían en hogares donde hay matrimonios sanos que aquellos que se crían bajo otras estructuras familiares.

**¿Cuáles son los factores de protección que fortalecen a las familias?**

Lo mejor que puede hacer nuestra comunidad para proteger a los niños es fortalecer a las familias promoviendo estos cinco factores de protección:

***El cariño y la cercanía***

Los padres y cuidadores que desarrollan un lazo afectivo y que satisfacen las necesidades básicas de sus bebés e hijos pequeños establecen las bases de una relación amorosa y positiva. También estimulan el desarrollo del cerebro de sus hijos y los enseñan a relacionarse de manera positiva con los demás.

## Temas de conversación

Lo que nuestra comunidad puede hacer para promover el cariño y la cercanía de los padres:

- Patrocinar talleres para enseñar a los padres o cuidadores cómo jugar con bebés y niños pequeños.
- Disponer de lugares donde las madres puedan dar pecho a sus hijos y donde los cuidadores puedan hacerse cargo de sus bebés.
- Dar reconocimiento a las empresas locales que dispongan de horarios flexibles, beneficios de maternidad o paternidad, o políticas para el bienestar de la familia que permitan a los padres formar un vínculo afectivo con sus hijos.

### *Conocimientos de crianza y del desarrollo infantil y juvenil*

Ayudar a los padres a aprender sobre el desarrollo normal de los bebés, los niños pequeños y los adolescentes los ayudará a entender lo que pueden anticipar conforme sus hijos crecen, y los tipos de ayuda y disciplina más adecuados a cada etapa de desarrollo.

Lo que nuestra comunidad puede hacer para promover los conocimientos de crianza y del desarrollo infantil y juvenil:

- Repartir folletos reproducibles sobre el desarrollo de los niños a los pediatras que tienen consultas frecuentes con familias hispanohablantes.
- Patrocinar clases y programas de apoyo para los padres que esperan su primer bebé.
- Ofrecer entrenamientos para maestros y proveedores de cuidado infantil sobre los aspectos clave del desarrollo de los niños y la relación entre la crianza efectiva y el desarrollo cerebral.
- Difundir información en la comunidad sobre los niveles normales de actividad y de llorar en las diferentes edades para aumentar el entendimiento y ayudar a reducir las presiones en los padres.

### *La capacidad de los padres para salir adelante*

Ser padre o madre puede ser estresante. Sobretodo cuando los padres trabajan o están desempleados o cuando tienen preocupaciones financieras, están enfermos o experimentan dificultades en su matrimonio o con otras personas. Los padres que cuentan con el apoyo para sobreponerse al estrés están en mejor posición para enfrentar retos cotidianos.

Lo que nuestra comunidad puede hacer para fortalecer la capacidad de los padres para salir adelante:

- Aprender de las comunidades religiosas locales que dan apoyo a padres primerizos y otras familias estresadas. Compartir estrategias efectivas con otros grupos.
- Ofrecer clases para controlar el estrés gratuitas o de bajo costo en centros comunitarios, empresas o escuelas.
- Organizar clases de comunicación y resolución de conflictos para las parejas.
- Proveer folletos y otros recursos para maestros y proveedores de cuidado que trabajan con familias hispanohablantes.

### *Vínculos sociales*

La familia, los amigos y los vecinos forman una red de apoyo que beneficia a la familia. Con frecuencia, estos contactos sociales nos proporcionan momentos de diversión, apoyo financiero o información para tomar buenas decisiones. Los niños se benefician cuando los padres se mantienen en contacto con otros adultos o con sus familias.

Lo que nuestra comunidad puede hacer para promover los vínculos sociales de las familias:

- Patrocinar actividades intergeneracionales como picnics o ferias comunitarias que reflejen la cultura de la comunidad por medio de juegos, música o comida. Promover la participación de los padres al organizar estos eventos.
- Reclutar voluntarios para programas de apoyo a la juventud como Big Brothers Big Sisters, Befriend-a-Child o Family to Family.
- Ofrecer lugares seguros y accesibles (bibliotecas, parques, escuelas) donde las familias puedan conocerse y socializar.

*Apoyos concretos para los padres*

Cuando los padres están desempleados o cuando enfrentan otros retos, es posible que necesiten ayuda para que sus hijos cuenten con un lugar para vivir, cuidado médico, una alimentación adecuada, ropa y otras cosas necesarias para su desarrollo. Estos apoyos concretos pueden reducir el estrés de los padres que atraviesan circunstancias difíciles, dándoles más energía para cuidar y apoyar a sus hijos.

Lo que nuestra comunidad puede hacer para proveer apoyos concretos a las familias:

- Ofrecer servicios comunitarios de cuidado y asistencia para las familias que necesiten estos servicios. Asegurarse de que estas familias no queden olvidadas.
- Diseminar y hacer accesible la información sobre los recursos comunitarios (vivienda, cuidado médico, asistencia laboral) sin importar el lugar donde las familias acudan en busca de ayuda.
- Educar a los funcionarios públicos y a los candidatos para puestos públicos sobre temas comunitarios de importancia y la necesidad de servicios y programas para promover familias sanas y seguras.
- Animar a los proveedores de servicio para que colaboren y encuentren opciones de financiamiento y para que compartan los recursos destinados para iniciativas específicas.

**Un llamado a la acción: ¿cómo podemos trabajar juntos para fortalecer a nuestra comunidad?**

(Mencione los apoyos disponibles en su comunidad, incluyendo las iniciativas de su alianza comunitaria para fortalecer a las familias, en caso de haberlas.)

Lo que hagamos juntos para fortalecer a las familias en nuestra comunidad ayudará a reducir la incidencia del maltrato de menores. Durante el mes de abril y en el transcurso del año hay que promover las iniciativas de prevención para apoyar a los padres y crear comunidades sanas y seguras para los niños y la juventud.

- ¿Cuáles son las necesidades urgentes de nuestra comunidad?
- De todas las ideas de las que hemos hablado hoy día, ¿cuáles pueden servir para dar respuesta a estas necesidades urgentes?
- Y usted, ¿cómo puede ayudar?

# Sample Press Release for National Child Abuse Prevention Month

**Release Date:** **[DATE]**
**Contact:** **[NAME & TITLE]**

**Phone:** **[PHONE NUMBER]**
**[CELL PHONE]**
**Email:** **[EMAIL]**

**We All Can Play a Part in Strengthening Families**

April Is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

**CITY, STATE—[MONTH DAY, YEAR]**—[Start with a summary of essential information about your story. This lead paragraph should be brief and answer who, what, when, where, and why questions. Some suggestions: (1) Details of your organization's Child Abuse Prevention Month kickoff event; (2) An upcoming meeting or activity of your community's family-strengthening initiative; (3) How one parent benefited from the assistance of local community organizations.]

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This month and throughout the year, **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making **[COMMUNITY NAME]** a better place for families. By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to care for their children, we can help prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families and communities.

Research shows that five important factors are present in healthy families. Promoting these factors is among the most effective ways to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. They are:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents

"April is a time to celebrate the important role that communities play in protecting children," said **[YOUR SPOKESPERSON'S NAME AND TITLE]**. "Everyone's participation is critical. Focusing on ways to promote the five protective factors, in every interaction with families, is the best thing our community can do to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect."

**[ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT LOCAL EVENTS AND/OR PROGRAMS]**

In support of these efforts, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention have created *Strengthening Families and Communities: 2009 Resource Guide*. The guide, designed for service providers who work throughout the community to strengthen families, is available online at www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res_guide_2009

For more information about child abuse prevention programs and activities during the month of April and throughout the year, contact **[ORGANIZATION'S CONTACT INFORMATION]**.

# Ejemplo de boletín de prensa

**[Incluya su información de contacto]**

**Todos podemos participar en el fortalecimiento de las familias**
Abril es el Mes Nacional para la Prevención del Maltrato de Menores

**Ciudad, Estado—[Día del mes, año]**–[Empiece con un resumen de la información que quiere comunicar. Este párrafo debe ser breve y dar el quién, cuándo, dónde, qué y por qué del asunto. Algunas sugerencias: (1) Dé detalles sobre el evento para la prevención del maltrato de menores que promueve su organización. (2) Hable de una actividad que forme parte de la iniciativa para fortalecer a las familias en su comunidad. (3) Dé el ejemplo de un padre o una familia que se haya beneficiado gracias al trabajo de su organización.]

Abril es el Mes Nacional para la Prevención del Maltrato de Menores. Durante el mes de abril y a lo largo del año, **[nombre de su organización]** seguirá trabajando para que los individuos y las organizaciones jueguen un papel importante en lograr que **[nombre de la comunidad/ciudad]** sea un lugar más seguro para las familias. Podemos ayudar a prevenir el abuso y la negligencia de menores dando a los padres el apoyo que necesitan para cuidar de sus hijos, fortaleciendo a las familias de **[nombre de la comunidad/ciudad]**.

Los expertos en el campo del bienestar de menores identifican cinco factores importantes que caracterizan a las familias sanas. Cuando se promueven dichos factores se reduce el riesgo del abuso y la negligencia de menores. Estos factores son:

- El cariño y la cercanía
- Conocimientos de crianza y del desarrollo infantil y juvenil
- La capacidad de los padres para salir adelante
- Vínculos sociales
- Apoyos concretos para los padres

"El mes de abril es una buena oportunidad para celebrar el papel que juega la comunidad en la prevención del abuso y la negligencia de menores," opinó **[nombre y título del vocero de su organización]**. "La participación de todos es fundamental. Lo mejor que podemos hacer en nuestra comunidad es encontrar estrategias para fortalecer a las familias promoviendo los cinco factores de protección que previenen el abuso y la negligencia de menores."

**[Detalles adicionales sobre eventos locales o programas]**

Para apoyar esta iniciativa, la Oficina para los Niños del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos junto con la Oficina del Abuso y la Negligencia de Menores, Child Welfare Information Gateway y el Centro Nacional de Recursos FRIENDS para las Iniciativas Comunitarias de Prevención, han creado la guía de recursos Strengthening Families and Communities (2009) (incluye secciones en español). La guía fue diseñada para los proveedores de servicio que trabajan en sus comunidades para fortalecer a las familias y a los individuos. Disponible en Internet: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res_guide_2009

Para más información sobre los programas de prevención del abuso y la negligencia de menores durante el mes de abril y a lo largo del año, contacte a **[nombre de su organización]**.

# Sample Public Service Announcements

**[30-second public service announcement aimed at building community involvement, including 10-second tag for local organization identity]**

**Voiceover (:20 sec.):** By working together as a community, we all can play a part in strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During this month and throughout the year, **[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME]** is dedicated to supporting families to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Find out more about how you can play a part and help create positive change in our community.

**Tag (:10 sec.):** Contact **[INSERT LOCAL INFORMATION HERE]** today at **[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]** or go to **[INSERT WEBSITE ADDRESS**] for more information.

**[30-second public service announcement aimed at building parent and caregiver awareness, including 10-second tag for local organization identity]**

**Voiceover (:20 sec.)**: Being the best parent you can be involves taking steps to strengthen your family and finding support when you need it. Parenting isn't something you have to do alone.

When you have the knowledge, skills, and resources you need, you can raise a happy, healthy child. Find out more about activities and programs in your community that support parents and promote healthy families.

**Tag (:10 sec.):** Contact **[INSERT LOCAL INFORMATION HERE]** today at **[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]** or go to **[INSERT WEBSITE ADDRESS]** for more information.

# Ejemplo de anuncio de servicio público para radiodifusión

**[Anuncio de 30 segundos para promover el trabajo comunitario, incluyendo un comentario de 10 segundos para identificar a su organización]**

**Voz (20 segundos):** Trabajando juntos en la comunidad podemos jugar un papel importante en el fortalecimiento de las familias y la prevención del maltrato de menores.

Abril el es Mes Nacional para la Prevención del Maltrato de Menores, y **[nombre de su organización]** está dedicada a apoyar a las familias para reducir el riesgo del abuso y la negligencia de menores.

Usted puede jugar un papel en su comunidad para promover familias sanas y fuertes.

**Comentario (10 segundos):** Comuníquese con **[nombre de su organización]** hoy mismo llamando al **[teléfono]** o visite nuestro sitio de Internet para obtener mas información.

**[Anuncio de 30 segundos para poner de relieve la importancia de los padres y los cuidadores, incluyendo un comentario de 10 segundos para identificar a su organización.]**

**Voz (20 segundos):** Un buen padre o una buena madre busca fortalecer a su familia y no teme buscar ayuda cuando la necesita. Todos los padres y las madres necesitan ayuda.

Para criar hijos sanos y felices los padres necesitan el apoyo y los recursos de su comunidad. Aprenda más sobre los programas y las actividades para promover familias sanas en su comunidad.

**Comentario (10 segundos):** Comuníquese con **[nombre de su organización]** hoy mismo llamando al **[teléfono]** o visite nuestro sitio de Internet para obtener mas información.

# Sample Letter to Legislators

The Honorable **[Legislator's Name]**
**[Office mailing address]**

Dear **[Member of Congress/State Representative/City Council Member]**:

**[Paragraph 1: State purpose of the letter.]**

I would like to encourage you to support initiatives that strengthen families and communities in order to prevent child abuse. This issue is urgent. In 2006, an estimated 905,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect in the United States. Of those, approximately **[insert State statistic from *Child Maltreatment 2006*]** were here in **[your State]**. April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, which calls attention to the importance of preventing all forms of child maltreatment by strengthening families and communities.

**[Paragraph 2: State the position supported.]**

Children thrive when their caregivers have the knowledge, skills, and resources to help them grow and protect them from harm. Research has shown that five factors, when present in families, are effective in protecting children against the risk of child abuse and neglect. These critical protective factors are:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents

The best way to effect lasting change for children and families is to work together in broad-based partnerships that promote these protective factors and make our communities more supportive of parents and caregivers.

**[Paragraph 3: Describe action requested.]**

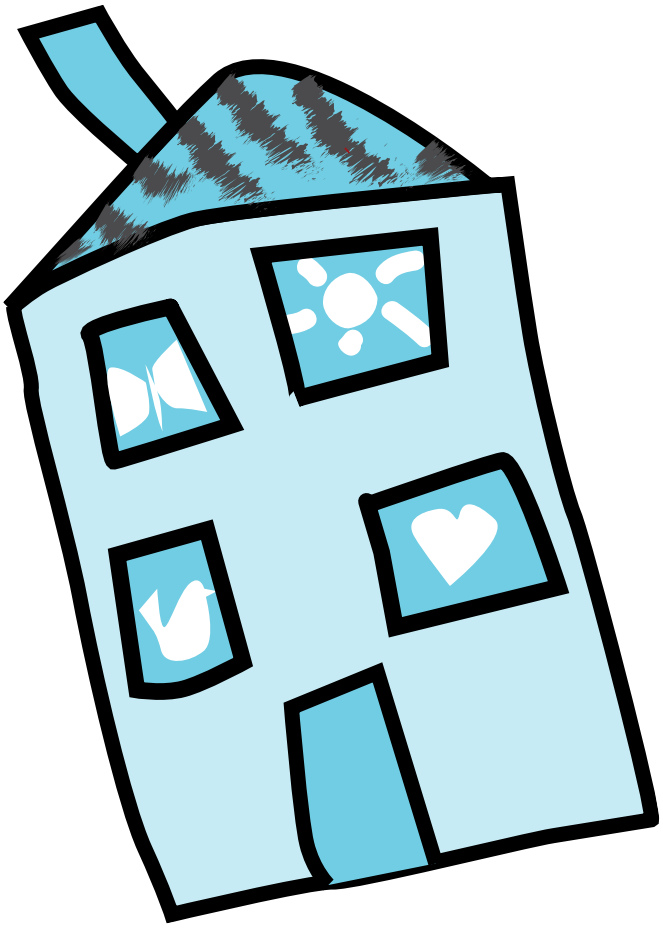
**[Congress/Our State Legislature/Our City Council]** has the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children and families by supporting **[specific community-building activities, bills, or funding initiatives needing immediate support]**. I urge you to voice your support for this important cause not only during National Child Abuse Prevention Month, but throughout the year.

We are sponsoring **[Child Abuse Prevention Month event]** on **[date]** at **[location]**. We welcome your participation. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact me at **[phone number and email address]**. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for all of your work on behalf of our community's children and families.

Sincerely yours,
**[Signature]**

Chapter 4

# Protecting Children



# Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

When children are nurtured, they can grow up to be happy and healthy adults. But when they lack an attachment to a caring adult, receive inconsistent nurturing, or experience harsh discipline, the long-lasting consequences can affect their health, well-being, and relationships with others.

This section provides information to help service providers and others concerned about the health and well-being of children to understand child abuse and neglect, its effects, and what each of us can do to address it when it occurs.

**What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?**

Child abuse and neglect often takes place in the home and comes from a person the child knows well—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family. There are four major types of child maltreatment. Although any of the forms may be found separately, they often occur together.

Each State is responsible for establishing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that meet Federal minimum standards. Most include the following:

- **Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse** is physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.
- **Sexual abuse** is any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.
- **Emotional abuse** is any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats, and rejection.

Find more information on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:

- www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining
- www.childwelfare.gov/can/types

### Why Does Child Abuse Occur?

Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race, and family income level. However, research has identified many factors relating to the child, family, community, and society that are associated with an increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Studies have also shown that when multiple risk factors are present, the risk is greater.

Young mothers and fathers unprepared for the responsibilities of raising a child; overwhelmed single parents with little support; and families placed under stress by poverty, divorce, or a child's disability are all at greater risk. Some families are stressed by worries about employment, health, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, or other problems, or are simply unaware of how to care for their children's basic needs.

These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs.

### How Many Children Are Abused and Neglected in the United States?

In 2006, about 3.3 million reports were made to child protective services concerning the safety and well-being of approximately 6 million children.[1] As a result of these reports, an estimated 905,000 children were found to be victims of child abuse or neglect. Of these, more than 60 percent (64.1%) were neglected, more than 15 percent (16.0%) were physically abused, less than 10 percent (8.8%) were sexually abused, and less than 10 percent (6.6%) were emotionally maltreated.

Child deaths are the most tragic results of maltreatment. In 2006, an estimated 1,530 children died due to abuse or neglect. More than 40 percent (41.1%) of these deaths were attributed to neglect.

1 Statistics on this page are taken from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). *Child Maltreatment 2006.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm06

**What Are the Consequences?**

The impact of child maltreatment can be profound. Research shows that child maltreatment is associated with adverse health and mental health outcomes in children and families, and those negative effects can last a lifetime. The long-term effects can be physical, psychological, or behavioral.

A history of child abuse or neglect has been associated with increased risk of:

- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Developmental disabilities and learning problems
- Social problems with other children and with adults
- Teen pregnancy
- Lack of success in school
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Domestic violence
- Chronic illnesses

In addition to the impact on the child and family, child abuse and neglect affects various systems—including medical and mental health, law enforcement, judicial, public social services, and nonprofit agencies—as they respond to the incident and support the victim. One analysis of the immediate and long-term economic impact of child abuse and neglect suggests that child maltreatment costs the Nation as much as $258 million each day, or approximately $94 billion each year.

**What Are the Warning Signs?**

The first step in helping or getting help for an abused or neglected child is to identify the symptoms of abuse.

The table that follows lists some symptoms of the four major types of child maltreatment. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should consider the possibility of maltreatment.

| Maltreatment Type | Symptoms |
|---|---|
| *Neglect* | • Signs of malnutrition<br>• Poor hygiene<br>• Unattended physical or medical problems |
| *Physical abuse* | • Unexplained bruises, burns, or welts<br>• Child appears frightened of a parent or caregiver |
| *Sexual abuse* | • Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in anal or genital area<br>• Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, or others<br>• Age-inappropriate knowledge of sex |
| *Emotional abuse* | • Extremes in behavior, ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive<br>• Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development |

**On the Child Welfare Information Gateway Website**

For more information about:

- Why child abuse occurs: www.childwelfare.gov/can/factors
- How many children are abused: www.childwelfare.gov/can/prevalence
- Consequences of child abuse and neglect: www.childwelfare.gov/can/impact
- Warning signs: www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying

# Reporting Child Maltreatment

Anyone can and should report suspected child abuse or neglect. If you think a child is being mistreated, take immediate action.

Most States have a toll-free number for reporting. You can also call the Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453). When you call to make a report, you will be asked for specific information, such as:

- The child's name and location
- The name and relationship (if known) of the person you believe is abusing the child
- What you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect
- The names of any other people who might know about the abuse
- Your name and phone number (voluntary)

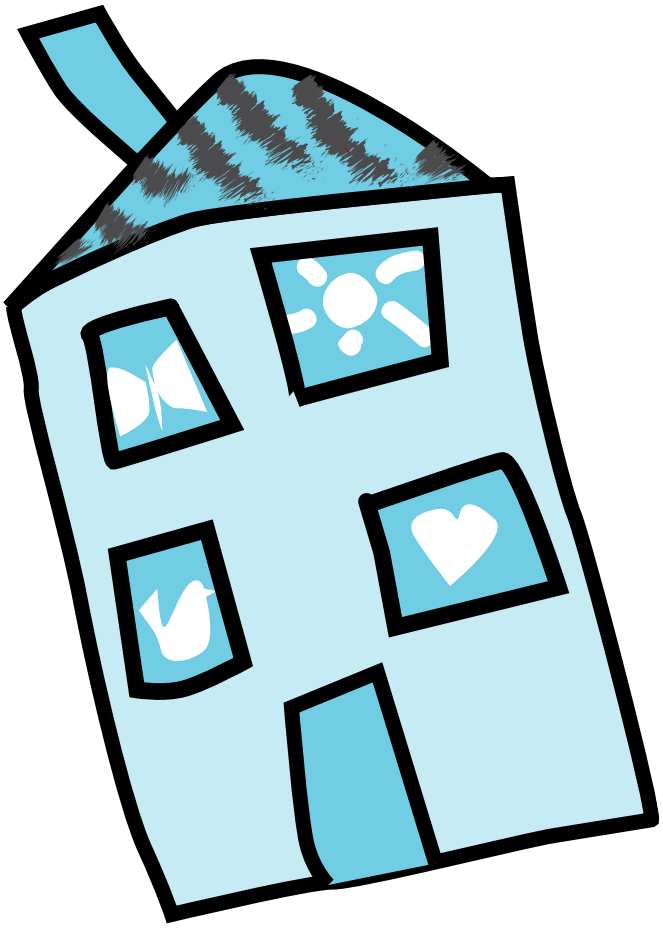
We can all help prevent child abuse by recognizing the risk factors, protecting children who are at risk, and supporting families who are experiencing stressors. Reporting the situation may protect the child and get additional help for the family. Some States provide training for professionals who are required by law to report child abuse and neglect (e.g., child care providers, teachers, doctors, clergy) and workshops on responding to signs of stress in families.

Many nonprofit, public, education, social service, and child care organizations in your community play a role in providing supports and services to children, youth, and families. Parenting education, crisis/respite care, transitional housing, and literacy programs, as well as family resource centers, teen parent support groups, fatherhood groups, and marriage education classes, support families in important ways.

Find more information on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website: www.childwelfare.gov/responding

Chapter 5

# Resources



# National Child Abuse Prevention Partners

Many organizations across the country work to prevent child abuse and neglect by strengthening families and the communities where they live. The following is an alphabetical list of those that supported the creation of this Resource Guide by offering their information and input. They are varied in the services they offer and the professionals they support, but all are committed to strengthening families and protecting children. Many of these organizations have member agencies and can link you to local affiliates in your State or community. All offer additional information about preventing child abuse and neglect.

**American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)**
AAP is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The Section on Child Abuse and Neglect provides an educational forum for the discussion of problems and treatments relating to child abuse and neglect and its prevention.
847.434.4000
www.aap.org

**American Humane Association (AHA)**
AHA's mission is preventing cruelty, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and animals. AHA information assists professionals and citizens in making informed decisions about how to help children and families in crisis. The association also develops resources and programs that help child welfare systems deliver quality services, and communities and citizens prevent child abuse.
800.227.4645
www.americanhumane.org

**American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)**
APSAC seeks to improve the quality of practice provided by professionals who work in child abuse and neglect by providing professional education and promoting research and practice guidelines in child maltreatment.
877.402.7722
www.apsac.org

**Annie E. Casey Foundation**
The Annie E. Casey Foundation works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The Foundation's mission is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.
410.547.6600
www.aecf.org

**Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)**
CSSP develops public policies and practices that strengthen families and communities. CSSP is the coordinator of the national Strengthening Families Initiative, which is working in over half of all States to engage early childhood providers and others that see children on a day-to-day basis in building protective factors.
202.371.1565
www.cssp.org
www.strengtheningfamilies.net

**Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago**
Chapin Hall is a policy research center dedicated to bringing rigorous research and innovative ideas to policymakers, service providers, and funders working to improve the well-being of children. Its work provides a source of knowledge about the needs of children and the service systems designed to meet those needs.
773.753.5900
www.chapinhall.org

**Childhelp®**
In addition to a 24-hour National Child Abuse Hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD), Childhelp directly serves abused children through residential treatment facilities, child advocacy centers, group homes, foster care, preschool programs, child abuse prevention programs, and community outreach.
480.922.8212
www.childhelp.org

**Child Welfare Information Gateway**
Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau, promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals, as well as concerned citizens, to timely, essential information.
800.394.3366
www.childwelfare.gov

**Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)**
CWLA is an association of more than 800 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services.
703.412.2400
www.cwla.org

**Circle of Parents®**
Circle of Parents, a national network of parents and statewide and regional organizations, works to prevent child abuse and neglect, strengthen families, and promote parent leadership through mutual self-help parent support groups and children's programs.
312.334.6837
www.circleofparents.org

**Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**
The Foundation's child abuse prevention program supports a small number of national organizations and research initiatives that advance efforts to prevent the maltreatment of young children by providing services, supports, and information to families.
212.974.7000
www.ddcf.org

**FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)**
FRIENDS, a service of the Children's Bureau, provides information, training, and technical assistance to Federal grantee agencies implementing the Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, under the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. FRIENDS is committed to building the capacity of State CBCAP Lead Agencies to prevent child abuse and neglect and to strengthen and support families.
919.490.5577 x222
www.friendsnrc.org

**National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds**
The mission of the Alliance is to build and maintain a system of services, laws, practices, and attitudes that strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect, achieved by assisting Children's Trust and Prevention Funds at State and national levels.
206.526.1221
www.ctfalliance.org

**National Association of Children's Hospitals & Related Institutions (NACHRI)**
NACHRI promotes the health and well-being of all children and their families through support of children's hospitals and health systems that are committed to excellence in providing health care to children.
703.684.1355
www.childrenshospitals.net

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**
NAEYC exists for the purpose of leading and consolidating the efforts of individuals and groups working to achieve healthy development and constructive education for all young children.
800.424.2460
www.naeyc.org

**National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)**
NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of promoting the economic security, health, and well-being of America's low-income families and children.
646.284.9600
www.nccp.org

**National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome (NCSBS)**
NCSBS prevents shaken baby syndrome through the development and implementation of education, programs, public policy, and research to establish networks for, support, and train families, caregivers, and professionals.
888.273.0071 or 801.627.3399
www.dontshake.org

**National Children's Alliance (NCA)**
NCA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to communities seeking to plan, establish, and improve Children's Advocacy Centers.
800.239.9950 or 202.548.0090
www.nca-online.org

## National Child Abuse Prevention Partners

**National Exchange Club (NEC) Child Abuse Prevention Services**
The NEC Foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of children, families, and communities through its national project, the prevention of child abuse. The NEC Foundation coordinates a nationwide network of nearly 100 Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Centers that utilize the parent aide program and provide support to families at risk for abuse.
800.924.2643 or 419.535.3232
www.preventchildabuse.com

**National Family Preservation Network (NFPN)**
NFPN provides training, tools, and resources to assist policymakers and practitioners to build on a family's strengths and to preserve family bonds so children can be protected and nurtured at home.
888.498.9047
www.nfpn.org

**National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC)**
NHMRC's mission is to help individuals and couples who choose marriage for themselves gain the knowledge and skills necessary to build and sustain a healthy marriage.
866.916.4672
www.healthymarriageinfo.org

**National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)**
NICWA is a membership organization of Tribes, individuals, and private organizations that work to promote Indian child welfare and address child abuse and neglect through training, research, public policy, and grassroots community development.
503.222.4044
www.nicwa.org

**National Respite Coalition**
The mission of the National Respite Coalition is to secure quality, accessible, planned, and crisis respite services for all families and caregivers in need of such services in order to strengthen and stabilize families and enhance child and adult safety.
703.256.9578
www.archrespite.org/NRC.htm

**National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)**
NRFC serves as a central source for professionals and the public to learn more about the importance of responsible fatherhood and fatherhood issues.
877.432.3411
www.fatherhood.gov

**Nurse-Family Partnership**
The Nurse-Family Partnership National Office supports communities in implementing a cost-effective, evidence-based nurse home visitation program to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and self-sufficiency for eligible, first-time parents—benefiting multiple generations.
866.864.5226
www.nursefamilypartnership.org

**Parents Anonymous® Inc.**
Parents Anonymous is a community of parents, organizations, and volunteers committed to strengthening families and building strong communities, achieving meaningful parent leadership and shared leadership, and leading the field of child abuse and neglect prevention.
909.621.6184
www.parentsanonymous.org

**Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America)**
PCA America provides leadership to promote and implement national and local prevention efforts.
312.663.3520
www.preventchildabuse.org

**Search Institute**
Search Institute conducts research to identify what children and adolescents need to become caring, healthy, and responsible adults, and provides resources to apply this knowledge and to motivate and equip others in ensuring young people are valued and thrive.
800.888.7828
www.search-institute.org

**ZERO TO THREE**
ZERO TO THREE disseminates key developmental information, trains providers, promotes model approaches and standards of practice, and works to increase public awareness about the significance of the first 3 years of life.
202.638.1144
www.zerotothree.org

More information about national organizations that work to strengthen families and communities is available on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at:
www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/overview/relatedorgs.cfm

# Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect

## U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Office on Child Abuse and Neglect**
**Children's Bureau**
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**
**Administration for Children and Families**
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/index.htm

The Children's Bureau seeks to provide for the safety, permanency and well-being of children through leadership, support for necessary services, and productive partnerships with States, Tribes, and communities.

The Office on Child Abuse and Neglect provides leadership and direction on the issues of child maltreatment and the prevention of abuse and neglect under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Children's Justice Act. The Director of the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect chairs the Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect and coordinates the Work Group's activities.

Also participating on the Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect are the Children's Bureau Divisions of Research and Innovation, Child Welfare Capacity Building, and Program Implementation.

**Child Welfare Information Gateway**
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**
**Administration for Children and Families**
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
800.394.3366
Email: info@childwelfare.gov
www.childwelfare.gov

A service of the Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals, as well as concerned citizens to timely, essential information.
Family and Youth Services Bureau

**Family Violence Prevention and Services Program**
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**
**Administration for Children and Families**
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/familyviolence/index.htm

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) provides national leadership on youth and family issues. FYSB promotes positive outcomes for children, youth, and families by supporting a wide range of comprehensive services and collaborations at the local, Tribal, State, and national levels. Through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, FYSB awards grants to State agencies, Territories, and Indian Tribes for the provision of shelter to victims of family violence and their dependents, and for related services, such as emergency transportation and child care.

**Child Care Bureau**
**Office of Family Assistance**
**Administration for Children and Families**
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb

The Child Care Bureau supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and promotes children's learning by improving the quality of early care and education and after-school programs.

**Division of Child and Family Development**
**Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**
**Administration for Children and Families**
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) is responsible for advising the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of programs to improve the economic and social well-being of children and families. In collaboration with Administration for Children and Families program offices and others, OPRE is responsible for performance management, conducts research and policy analyses, and develops and oversees research and evaluation projects to assess program performance and inform policy and practice.

**Office of Refugee Resettlement**
**Administration for Children and Families**
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr

Founded on the belief that newly arriving populations have inherent capabilities when given opportunities, the Office of Refugee Resettlement provides people in need with critical resources to assist them in becoming integrated members of American society.

**Office of Human Services Policy**
**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation**
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201
http://aspe.hhs.gov/_/office_specific/index.cfm

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) advises the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy development in health, disability, human services, data, and science, and provides advice and analysis on economic policy. ASPE conducts research and evaluation studies, develops policy analyses, and estimates the cost and benefits of policy alternatives under consideration by the Department or Congress. The Office of Human Services Policy is the Department of Health and Human Services' chief economist on welfare, service delivery issues, and policies affecting children, youth, and families. The Office works closely with the Administration for Children and Families, the Department's Children's Council, and a variety of other departments and agencies.

**Indian Health Service**
**Division of Behavioral Health**
801 Thompson Avenue, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852
www.ihs.gov
www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Behavioral

The Indian Health Service (IHS) raises the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level to assure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people. The IHS Division of Behavioral Health strives to support Tribal and urban native communities to eliminate behavioral health diseases and conditions and to promote health, resilience, and strength in all native communities.

**Office of Minority Health**
Rockwall II Building, Room 1000
Rockville, MD 20852
www.omhrc.gov

The mission of the Office of Minority Health is to improve and protect the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health policies and programs that eliminate health disparities. It advises the Secretary and the Office of Public Health and Science on public health program activities affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Blacks/African-Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders.

**Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research**
**National Institutes of Health**
31 Center Drive
Building 31, Room B1C19
Bethesda, MD 20892
http://obssr.od.nih.gov/content

The mission of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research is to stimulate behavioral and social science research throughout the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and integrate this research with other NIH initiatives to improve understanding, treatment, and prevention of disease.

**National Institute of Child Health and Human Development**
**Child Development and Behavior Branch**
**National Institutes of Health**
6100 Executive Blvd., Room 4B05A, MSC 7510
Bethesda, MD 20892-7510
www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/crmc/cdb

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development conducts and supports research on all stages of human development, from preconception to adulthood, to better understand the health of children, adults, families, and communities.

The Child Development and Behavior Branch develops scientific initiatives and supports research and research training relevant to the psychological, psychobiological, language, behavioral, and educational development of children. The following theme characterizes all Branch programs: Development is best described and studied as a variable process in which individual differences in cognitive, social, affective, language, neurobiological maturation, environment and life experiences, and genetics interact in complex ways.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Program**
**Division of Developmental Translational Research**
**National Institute of Mental Health**
**National Institutes of Health**
6001 Executive Blvd., Room 6185
Bethesda, MD 20892-9617
www.nimh.nih.gov/about/organization/ddtr/index.shtml

The mission of the National Institute of Mental Health is to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

The Division of Developmental Translational Research (DDTR) supports programs of research and research training with the goal of preventing and curing childhood psychopathology. DDTR supports research that employs a developmental perspective on a variety of related basic behavioral processes and the psychopathology that arises from their dysfunction. These efforts to translate knowledge from basic research to a new understanding of clinical disorders share the goal of developing novel treatment and prevention strategies. The Child Abuse and Neglect Program within DDTR supports research that addresses child abuse and neglect and familial aspects of traumatic stress as risk factors for psychopathology in children and adolescents.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**
**Center for Substance Abuse Treatment**
Office of Policy, Coordination and Planning
1 Choke Cherry Road, Room 5-1039
Rockville, MD 20850
http://csat.samhsa.gov/

The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), promotes the quality and availability of community-based substance abuse treatment services for individuals and families who need them. CSAT works with States and community-based groups to improve and expand existing substance abuse treatment services under the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program.

**Maternal and Child Health Bureau**
**Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services**
**Health Resources and Services Administration**
Parklawn Building Room 18-05
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
http://mchb.hrsa.gov/about/dhsps.htm

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration has the primary responsibility for promoting and improving the health of our Nation's women, children, and families.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
**Division of Violence Prevention**
4770 Buford Hwy., NE—Mailstop K60
Atlanta, GA 30341
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/CMP

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) child maltreatment program is coordinated by the Division of Violence Prevention within the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. The Division's mission is to prevent violence-related injuries and deaths through surveillance, research and development, capacity building, communication, and leadership. CDC's efforts to prevent child maltreatment focus on developing, evaluating, and disseminating evidence-based interventions that support safe, stable, and nurturing relationships for children.

# Federal Interagency Work Group on Child Abuse and Neglect

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Family Life and Human Development**
**Families, 4-H and Nutrition**
**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 2201
Washington, DC 20250-2201
www.extension.org; www.csrees.usda.gov

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) is a nationwide educational collaboration of Federal, State, and local governments and State land-grant universities. The mission of CES is to disseminate research-based information on topics as varied as family and child development, health, nutrition, agriculture, small business, and personal finance. CES is uniquely positioned to inform and educate parents, caregivers, and family members, especially in rural and isolated areas, about the issues, challenges, and opportunities related to raising children. CES's new eXtension (pronounced e-extension) Initiative (www.extension.org) provides a web-based interactive learning environment linking users to CES resources, including resources to promote healthy families, to support a variety of educational outreach efforts.

## U.S. Department of Defense

**Family Advocacy Program**
**Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense**
**Military Community and Family Policy**
4000 Defense Pentagon, Room 5A726
Washington, DC 20301-4000
www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

The Department of Defense (DOD) Family Advocacy Program (FAP) provides social services to prevent, identify, intervene in, and treat child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse, including domestic violence, at each installation with command-sponsored families around the world. FAPs coordinate with civilian child welfare and domestic violence agencies when abuse or neglect is identified. FAPs teach parenting skills, provide extra support for first-time parents, teach stress management, offer counseling, and conduct public awareness activities related to family maltreatment. FAPs also operate the New Parent Support Program, a secondary prevention program that uses an intensive, voluntary home visitation model developed specifically for at-risk parents to reduce the risk of child abuse.

## U.S. Department of Education

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**
**Office of Special Education Programs**
550 12th Street, SW, 4065
Washington, DC 20202-2600
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services provides a wide array of supports to parents and individuals, school districts, and States in three main areas: special education, vocational rehabilitation and research.

## U.S. Department of the Interior

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**
1849 C Street, NW, MS4603
Washington, DC 20240
www.doi.gov/bia

The Bureau of Indian Affairs works to enhance the quality of life, promote economic opportunity, and carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian Tribes, and Alaska Natives.

## U.S. Department of Justice

**Office of Justice Programs**
**National Institute of Justice**
**Office of Research and Evaluation**
**Victim and Victimization Research Division**
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ provides objective, independent, evidence-based knowledge and tools to meet the challenges of crime and justice, particularly at the State and local levels. The Office of Research and Evaluation develops, conducts, directs, and supervises research and evaluation activities across a wide variety of issues.

**Office for Victims of Crime**
**Office of Justice Programs**
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/welcovc/welcome.html

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) was established by the 1984 Victims of Crime Act to oversee diverse programs that benefit victims of crime. OVC provides substantial funding to State victim assistance and compensation programs—the lifeline services that help victims to heal. OVC supports training designed to educate criminal justice and allied professionals regarding the rights and needs of crime victims. OVC also sponsors an annual event in April to commemorate National Crime Victims Rights Week.

**Office on Violence Against Women**
**Office of Justice Programs** 810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/crime/violence-against-women/welcome.htm

The mission of the Violence Against Women and Family Violence Research and Evaluation program is to promote the safety of women and family members and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system's response to crimes against these populations.

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**
**Office of Justice Programs**
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) accomplish its mission by supporting States, local communities, and Tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective programs for juveniles. OJJDP strives to strengthen the juvenile justice system's efforts to protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and provide services that address the needs of youth and their families. OJJDP sponsors research, program, and training initiatives; develops priorities and goals and sets policies to guide Federal juvenile justice issues; disseminates information about juvenile justice issues; and awards funds to States to support local programming.

**Child Protection Division**
**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**
**Office of Justice Programs**
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/about/DivProgram.asp?di=5&pp=division

The Child Protection Division (CPD) administers projects, programs, and initiatives related to crimes against children and children's exposure to violence. It provides leadership and funding in the areas of prevention, intervention, treatment, and enforcement. CPD promotes research and effective policies and procedures to address the problems of abused, neglected, missing, and exploited children and children who have been exposed to domestic or community violence.

## U.S. Department of State

**Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons**
**Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs**
2201 C Street, NW, SA-29, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20520
www.state.gov/g/tip

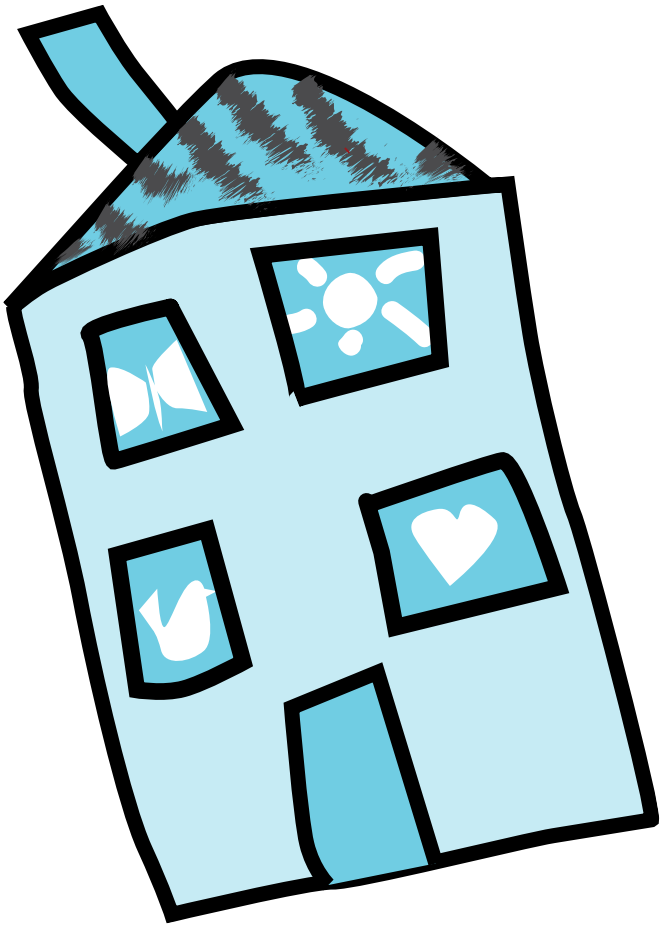
The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons provides the tools to combat trafficking in persons and assists in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts both worldwide and domestically.

**Please comment on the 2009 Resource Guide by taking our brief survey. Your answers will help us better meet your future needs.**

**www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/surveys/PreventionGuide.cfm**

Chapter 6

# Tip Sheets for Parents and Caregivers



# Using the Tip Sheets for Parents and Caregivers

This section of the Resource Guide provides tip sheets on specific parenting issues. Each is designed for service providers to distribute to parents and caregivers in the context of a particular concern or question. The tip sheets are not intended to tell the whole story, but merely to provide a starting point for a discussion between parent and provider that is grounded in the five protective factors.

The information is easy to read and focuses on concrete steps that parents and caregivers can take to care for their children and strengthen their family. A Spanish version appears on the back of each tip sheet. The Spanish versions convey similar messages to the English versions, but they have been adapted slightly for readability and cultural appropriateness.

We encourage you to make additional copies of the tip sheets that are most useful to the families with whom you work.

The tip sheets address the following topics:

- ***Bonding With Your Baby***—Written to help new parents understand the importance of early and secure attachment.
- ***Dealing With Temper Tantrums***—Includes tips on how to prevent and handle toddler tantrums while modeling calm behavior.
- ***Connecting With Your Teen***—Designed to help parents maintain strong bonds with their teens as they move toward independence.
- ***Teen Parents…You're Not Alone***—Tips to help teen parents cope with the challenges of raising a new baby and find support.
- ***Ten Ways to Be a Better Dad***—Encourages fathers to be involved and help their children live happy, healthy lives.
- ***Raising Your Grandchildren***—Written to help caregivers deal with some of the unique challenges of parenting grandchildren and find concrete supports in the community.

These tip sheets, like the other resources in this guide, were created with input from experts from national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. Additional resources are available through the national organizations listed in Chapter 5, beginning on page 61.

Tip sheets may be downloaded individually for distribution at:
www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res_guide_2009

More parenting tip sheets are available in the Parenting Resources section of the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:
www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting

# Bonding With Your Baby

## What's Happening

Attachment is a deep, lasting bond that develops between a caregiver and child during the baby's first few years of life. This attachment is critical to the growth of a baby's body and mind. Babies who have this bond and feel loved have a better chance to grow up to be adults who trust others and know how to return affection.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal babies:

- Have brief periods of sleep, crying or fussing, and quiet alertness many times each day
- Often cry for long periods for no apparent reason
- Love to be held and cuddled
- Respond to and imitate facial expressions
- Love soothing voices and will respond with smiles and small noises
- Grow and develop every day; they learn new skills quickly and can outgrow difficult behaviors in a matter of weeks

## What You Can Do

No one knows your child like you do, so you are in the best position to recognize and fulfill your child's needs. Parents who give lots of loving care and attention to their babies help their babies develop a strong attachment. Affection energizes your child to grow, learn, connect with others, and enjoy life.

**Here are some ways to promote bonding:**

- Respond when your baby cries. Try to understand what he or she is saying to you. You can't "spoil" babies with too much attention—they need and benefit from a parent's loving care even when they seem inconsolable.
- Hold and touch your baby as much as possible. You can keep him close with baby slings, pouches, or backpacks (for older babies).
- Use feeding and diapering times to look into your baby's eyes, smile, and talk to your baby.
- Read, sing, and play peek-a-boo. Babies love to hear human voices and will try to imitate your voice and the sounds you make.
- As your baby gets a little older, try simple games and toys. Once your baby can sit up, plan on spending lots of time on the floor with toys, puzzles, and books.

***The best gift you can give your baby is YOU. The love and attention you give your baby now will stay with him or her forever and will help your baby grow into a healthier and happier child and adult.***

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting or call 800.394.3366.*

# Usted y su bebé: El lazo que los une

Los bebés necesitan más que alimento, calor y protección. También necesitan amor, atención y cariño. Formar lazos ayuda a su bebé a crecer fuerte y sano, tanto física como mentalmente.

## Los recién nacidos:

- Duermen, lloran, se quejan y ven el mundo a su alrededor muchas veces por día
- Les encanta que los mimen y que les hablen
- Lloran sin motivo aparente, a veces por mucho tiempo
- Les encantan las voces tranquilas y responden con sonrisas y gorgoritos de bebé feliz
- Crecen y cambian todos los días

## Formar lazos es bueno para el bebé … ¡y para usted!

Cuando usted forma lazos con su bebé, sabrá mejor lo que el bebé quiere y necesita. Y su bebé se sentirá amado y protegido. El lazo que usted forma ahora ayuda a que el cuerpo y el cerebro de su bebé crezcan sanos. Esto afectará al bebé toda su vida: su temperamento, sus decisiones y las relaciones futuras que pueda tener. Le ayudará a tener una vida mejor.

## La mejor manera de crear ese lazo es pasar tiempo con su bebé.

Éstas son algunas cosas que usted puede hacer:

- Responda cuando llore el bebé. Los recién nacidos no se vuelven “consentidos” por exceso de atención.
- Tómelo en brazos, mímelo y toque a su bebé a menudo. Use un canguro o una mochila especial para mantener a su bebé cerca.
- Léale, cántele y juegue a que se esconde y aparece. A su bebé le encanta oír su voz y tratará de imitarlo.
- Sonríale y mírelo a los ojos.
- Juegue juegos sencillos a medida que su bebé crezca. Pase tiempo en el piso con juguetes, rompecabezas y libros.

***El mejor regalo que le puede hacer a su bebé es ¡USTED MISMO! El amor y la atención que le dé ahora permanecerán con él para siempre. Le ayudarán a tener relaciones sanas y a tomar buenas decisiones más adelante en la vida.***

*Esta hoja informativa para los padres fue desarrollada con la colaboración de profesionales vinculados a diversas organizaciones nacionales que protegen a la juventud y promueven familias sanas. Para descargar esta publicación o para obtener más consejos para los padres (en inglés), vea: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting o llame al 1.800.394.3366.*

# Dealing With Temper Tantrums

## What's Happening

Two- and three-year-olds have many skills, but controlling their tempers is not one of them. Tantrums are common at this age because toddlers are becoming independent and developing their own wants, needs, and ideas. However, they are not yet able to express their wants and feelings with words. Take comfort in the fact that most children outgrow tantrums by age 4.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal toddlers:

- Love to say "no!" "mine!" and "do it myself!"
- Test rules over and over to see how parents will react
- Are not yet ready to share
- Need lots of fun activities, play times, and opportunities to explore the world
- Respond well to a routine for sleeping and eating (a regular schedule)
- Like to imitate grownups and to "help" mom and dad

## What You Can Do

**It is often easier to prevent tantrums than to deal with them once they get going. Try these tips:**

- Direct your child's attention to something else. ("Wow, look at that fire engine!")
- Give your child a choice in small matters. ("Do you want to eat peas or carrots?")
- Stick to a daily routine that balances fun activities with enough rest and healthy food.
- Anticipate when your child will be disappointed. ("We are going to buy groceries for dinner. We won't be buying cookies, but you can help me pick out some fruit for later.")
- Praise your child when he or she shows self-control and expresses feelings with words.

**If you cannot prevent the tantrum, here are some tips for dealing with it:**

- Say what you expect from your child and have confidence that your child will behave.
- Remain calm. You are a role model for your child.
- Holding your child during a tantrum may help a younger child feel more secure and calm down more quickly.
- Take your child to a quiet place where he or she can calm down safely. Speak softly or play soft music.
- Some children throw tantrums to seek attention. Try ignoring the tantrum, but pay attention to your child after he or she calms down.
- Resist overreacting to tantrums, and try to keep your sense of humor.

***When your child is having a floor-thumping tantrum, the most important thing you can do is remain calm and wait it out. Do not let your child's behavior cause you to lose control, too.***

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting or call 800.394.3366.*

# Los berrinches

Es común que los niños pequeños hagan berrinches. Entre los 2 y 4 años los niños van desarrollando sus propias ideas, necesidades y deseos. Pero todavía no los pueden expresar en palabras. Esto puede ser frustrante para su hijo…¡y para usted!

## Los niños pequeños:

- Les encanta decir: *¡No!... ¡Mío!...* y *¡Yo solo!*
- Ponen a prueba las reglas una y otra vez para ver cómo reacciona usted
- Necesitan mucho tiempo para jugar, hacer cosas divertidas y explorar el mundo
- No saben compartir todavía
- Se comportan mejor cuando tienen horarios fijos para comer y dormir
- Les gusta imitar a los "grandes" y "ayudar" a mami y a papi

## A veces los padres pueden prevenir los berrinches.

Estas son algunas cosas que usted puede hacer:

- Siga una rutina diaria de actividades divertidas, con suficiente descanso y comida sana.
- Anticipe lo que puede desilusionar a su hijo. *(Vamos a comprar comida para la cena. Esta vez no vamos a comprar galletitas pero, ¿me ayudas a elegir fruta para el postre?*)
- Ayude a su hijo a concentrarse en otra cosa. *(¡Mira ese camión de bomberos!)*
- Deje que su hijo tome decisiones sobre cosas pequeñas. *(¿Quieres comer chícharos o zanahorias?)*
- Felicite a su hijo cuando se controle a sí mismo y exprese sus sentimientos en palabras.

## Pero a veces los berrinches ocurren de todos modos.

Si no puede prevenir un berrinche, pruebe estas sugerencias:

- Aunque un berrinche en un lugar público puede ser penoso, no pierda la calma.
- Algunos niños se calman más rápido si los ayuda a sentirse seguros y protegidos.
- Lleve a su hijo a un lugar tranquilo para que se calme. Háblele en voz baja o ponga música suave.
- Si su hijo está tratando de comunicarse con usted, trate de entender lo que quiere. Si sólo quiere llamar la atención, no haga caso a su berrinche. Préstele atención *después* de que se haya calmado.
- Trate de no perder el sentido del humor. ¡No haga berrinche usted!

***Lo mejor que puede hacer es guardar la calma, incluso cuando el niño hace un berrinche en pleno piso. No pierda la paciencia, trate de entender lo que el niño le quiere decir. Recuerde que la mayoría de los niños dejan de hacer berrinches alrededor de los 4 años de edad.***

*Esta hoja informativa para los padres fue desarrollada con la colaboración de profesionales vinculados a diversas organizaciones nacionales que protegen a la juventud y promueven familias sanas. Para descargar esta publicación o para obtener más consejos para los padres (en inglés), vea: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting o llame al 1.800.394.3366.*

# Connecting With Your Teen

## What's Happening

Many teens spend less time with their families than they did as younger children. As they become more independent and learn to think for themselves, relationships with friends become very important. Sometimes it may feel like your teen doesn't need you anymore. But teens still need their parents' love, support, and guidance.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal teens …

- Crave independence
- Question rules and authority
- Test limits
- Can be impulsive
- Make mature decisions at times, and childish ones at others

## What You Can Do

Simple, everyday activities can reinforce the connection between you and your teen. Make room in your schedule for special times when you can, but also take advantage of routine activities to show that you care.

**Tips to keep in mind:**

- **Have family meals.** If it's impossible to do every night, schedule a regular weekly family dinner night that accommodates your child's schedule.
- **Share "ordinary" time.** Look for everyday opportunities to bond with your teen. Even times spent driving or walking the dog together offer chances for your teen to talk about what's on his or her mind.
- **Get involved, be involved, and stay involved.** Go to games and practices when you can. Ask about homework and school projects. Look for chances to learn about your teen's latest hobby.
- **Be interested.** Make it clear that you care about your teen's ideas, feelings, and experiences. If you listen to what he or she is saying, you'll get a better sense of the guidance and support needed. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents, too, when possible.
- **Set clear limits.** Teens still need your guidance, but you can involve your teen in setting rules and consequences. Make sure consequences are related to the behavior, and **be consistent** in following through. Choose your battles. Try to provide choices in the matters that are less important.

***Your words and actions help your teen feel secure. Don't forget to say and show how much you love your teen!***

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting or call 800.394.3366.*

# Cómo relacionarse con su hijo adolescente

## Lo que está pasando

Muchos adolescentes comparten menos tiempo con su familia. Conforme se hacen más independientes y aprenden a pensar por sí mismos, las relaciones con sus amigos se hacen más importantes. A veces puede parecer que su hijo adolescente ya no lo necesita. Pero en realidad los adolescentes siguen necesitando el amor, el apoyo y los consejos de sus padres.

## Los adolescentes normales…

- Desean independizarse
- Cuestionan las reglas y la autoridad
- Ponen a prueba los límites
- Pueden ser impulsivos
- A veces toman buenas decisiones, a veces malas

## Lo que usted puede hacer

Cualquier actividad normal puede mejorar su relación con su hijo adolescente. Dedique tiempo para compartir ocasiones especiales con su hijo cuando pueda, pero también aproveche las actividades que forman parte de la rutina familiar para demostrarle que le interesa lo que hace en la escuela y con sus amigos.

**Estas actividades familiares pueden fortalecer la relación con su hijo:**

- **Coma con la familia.** Si no pueden comer juntos todos los días, aparte un día de la semana para la cena familiar.
- **Comparta más tiempo con su hijo.** Busque oportunidades para acercarse a su hijo. Usted puede platicar con su hijo aun cuando estén en el supermercado o cuando vayan en el auto.
- **Manténgase involucrado en la vida de su hijo.** Vayan juntos a partidos y entrenamientos de la escuela. Hablen de la tarea y los proyectos escolares. Busque información sobre la actividad favorita de su hijo, o ayúdelo a buscar una actividad o pasatiempo.
- **Demuestre interés.** Demuestre interés por las ideas, sentimientos y experiencias de su hijo. Si pone atención a lo que su hijo le dice, sabrá cómo guiarlo y ayudarlo a tomar decisiones. Conozca a los amigos de su hijo y, de ser posible, también a sus padres.
- **Establezca límites claros.** Déle consejos a su hijo adolescente, pero involúcrelo a la hora de establecer las reglas y las consecuencias por no seguirlas. Asegúrese de que las consecuencias tengan que ver con el comportamiento, y sea consecuente a la hora de aplicarlas. Escoja sus batallas. Ofrezca varias opciones cuando se trate de situaciones de menor importancia.

***Sus palabras y sus acciones ayudan a que su hijo se sienta seguro. ¡Demuéstrele a su hijo adolescente cuanto lo quiere!***

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# Teen Parents... You're Not Alone!

## What's Happening ??

Being a parent is a 24-hour-a-day job, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. You may be juggling the demands of a baby, your family, school, and work. Chances are you're not able to do all of the things you enjoyed before your baby was born.

## Many teen parents sometimes feel...

- Confused and uncertain—about their future or their skills as a parent
- Overwhelmed—they don't know where to begin or they feel like giving up
- Angry—at the baby's other parent, their friends, or even their baby
- Lonely—like they are the only person dealing with so many problems
- Depressed—sad and unable to face their problems

***These feelings do not mean you are a bad parent!***

## What Can I Do ??

Every parent needs support sometimes. If you think stress may be affecting how you treat your baby, it's time to find some help. Try the following:

- **Join a support group.** A group for young moms or dads could give you time with new friends who have lives similar to yours. Your children can play with other children, and you can talk about your problems with people who understand. Look on the Internet or call your local social services agency for information about support groups in your community.
- **Find ways to handle stress.** Take a break while someone reliable cares for your baby. Take a walk with the baby in a stroller, or rest while your baby naps. A social worker or nurse can help you learn other ways to manage stress.
- **Finish school.** Even though it may be difficult, finishing high school (or getting a GED) is one of the most important things you can do to help your baby and yourself. A diploma will help you get a better job or take the next step in your education (such as vocational training or college).
- **Improve your parenting skills.** Don't be afraid to ask for advice from experienced parents. Classes for parents can also help you build on what you already know about raising a happy, healthy child.
- **Call a help line.** Most States have help lines for parents. Childhelp® runs a national 24-hour hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD) for parents who need help or parenting advice.

***Stay in contact with friends and family who support you and make you feel good about yourself. Remember, help is just a phone call away!***

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting or call 800.394.3366.*

# Hay muchos padres adolescentes como usted

## Lo que está pasando

Ser padre o madre es como tener un trabajo de 24 horas al día, y a veces puede ser muy pesado. Es probable que usted tenga que cuidar a un bebé y ocuparse de la familia además de ir a la escuela y al trabajo. Quizás ya no tenga tiempo para hacer todo lo que le gustaba antes de que naciera el bebé.

## Muchos padres adolescentes a veces se sienten…

- Confundidos o indecisos sobre su futuro o su habilidad como padre o madre
- Abrumados por no saber dónde empezar, o por sentirse con ganas de renunciar a todo
- Enojados con el otro padre del bebé, sus amigos o hasta con el bebé
- Solitarios por sentir que son la única persona que enfrenta problemas similares
- Deprimidos y tristes o incapaces de enfrentar sus problemas

***¡Experimentar estos sentimientos no quiere decir que sea un mal padre o una mala madre!***

## Lo que usted puede hacer

Todos los padres necesitan apoyo tarde o temprano. Si usted siente que el estrés está afectando la manera como trata a su bebé, es mejor que busque ayuda. Considere estas opciones:

- **Encuentre un grupo de apoyo.** Puede hacer nuevos amigos entre las personas y los padres jóvenes que tienen una vida parecida a la suya. Sus hijos pueden jugar con los hijos de estos padres jóvenes, y usted puede hablar de sus problemas con personas que lo entiendan. Busque por Internet o llame a su agencia local de servicios sociales para obtener más información sobre los grupos de apoyo en su comunidad.
- **Encuentre maneras de sobreponerse al estrés.** Tome un descanso mientras alguien de confianza cuida a su bebé. Vaya a caminar con su bebé en la carriola, o dese un baño de burbujas mientras duerme su bebé. Una enfermera o trabajador social le puede ayudar a sobreponerse al estrés.
- **Termine la escuela.** Aunque parezca difícil, terminar la preparatoria o high school (u obtener su GED) es una de las cosas más importantes que puede hacer para mejorar su situación y la de su bebé. Con su diploma, usted puede encontrar un trabajo mejor pagado y puede seguir sus estudios en el fututo (como la escuela vocacional o la universidad).
- **Adquiera más experiencia de crianza.** No tenga miedo de preguntar a los padres con más experiencia. Las clases para los padres también le ayudan a mejorar sus habilidades como padre o madre para criar a un niño sano y feliz.
- **Llame a un número de apoyo.** Casi todos los estados tienen números de teléfono para ayudar a los padres. La organización Childhelp® le brinda una línea de apoyo las 24 horas del día (1.800.4.A.CHILD) donde le ofrecen asistencia en español.

***Manténgase en contacto con los familiares y los amigos de confianza que lo apoyan y lo hacen sentir bien. ¡Recuerde: usted puede encontrar ayuda en español solo marcando un teléfono!***

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# Ten Ways to Be a Better Dad

## What's Happening

Children need both parents. Involved fathers can help children lead lives that are happier, healthier, and more successful than children whose fathers are absent or uninvolved. Fathers who spend time with their children increase the chances that their children will succeed in school, have fewer behavior problems, and experience better self-esteem and well-being.

## What You Can Do

1. **Respect your children's mother**
   When children see their parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected.
2. **Spend time with your children**
   If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Set aside time to spend with your children.
3. **Earn the right to be heard**
   Begin talking with your kids when they are very young and talk to them about all kinds of things. Listen to their ideas and problems.
4. **Discipline with love**
   All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits and help children learn from natural or logical consequences. Fathers who discipline in a calm, fair, and nonviolent manner show their love.
5. **Be a role model**
   Fathers are role models whether they realize it or not. A girl with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect. Fathers can teach sons what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility, and responsibility.
6. **Be a teacher**
   A father who teaches his children about right and wrong and encourages them to do their best will see his children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to teach the basic lessons of life.
7. **Eat together as a family**
   Sharing a meal together can be an important part of healthy family life. It gives children the chance to talk about what they are doing, and it is a good time for fathers to listen and give advice.
8. **Read to your children**
   Begin reading to your children when they are very young. Instilling a love for reading is one of the best ways to ensure they will have a lifetime of personal and career growth.
9. **Show affection**
   Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted, and loved by their family. Showing affection every day is the best way to let your children know that you love them.
10. **Realize that a father's job is never done**
    Even after children are grown and leave home, they will still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Fatherhood lasts a lifetime.

*Adapted from National Fatherhood Initiative. Find the full brochure at www.fatherhood.org/10ways.asp*

# Diez maneras de ser un mejor padre

## Lo que está pasando

Los niños necesitan a ambos padres. Los padres que participan en la vida de sus hijos los ayudan a tener vidas más saludables, felices y exitosas. En cambio, los niños cuyos padres se ausentan o no participan en la vida de sus hijos no tienen las mismas oportunidades. Cuando los padres dedican tiempo a sus hijos, éstos tienen más probabilidades de sobresalir en la escuela, tener menos problemas de comportamiento y experimentar mejor autoestima y bienestar.

## Lo que usted puede hacer

1. **Respete a la madre de sus hijos**
   Cuando los niños ven que sus padres se respetan, es más probable que ellos aprendan a respetar y a sentirse respetados.
2. **Dedique tiempo a sus hijos**
   Si siempre está muy ocupado para encargarse de sus hijos, tarde o temprano se sentirán abandonados sin importar lo que les diga. Deje tiempo libre para dedicarse a sus hijos.
3. **Gánese el derecho de ser escuchado**
   Empiece a platicar con sus hijos desde pequeños y hábleles de muchas cosas. Escuche sus ideas y sus problemas.
4. **Imponga disciplina, pero con amor**
   Todos los niños necesitan consejos y disciplina, pero no como un castigo, sino para establecer límites razonables y para ayudar a los niños a aprender consecuencias lógicas y naturales. Los padres que disciplinan a sus hijos de forma tranquila, justa y sin violencia demuestran su amor.
5. **Sea un padre modelo**
   Quieran o no, los padres dan el ejemplo a sus hijos. Una niña con un padre cariñoso y respetuoso crece con la idea de que merece ser respetada. Los padres les enseñan a sus hijos las cosas importantes de la vida al demostrar humildad, honestidad y responsabilidad.
6. **Sea un buen maestro**
   Los padres que enseñan sus hijos la diferencia entre el bien y el mal, animándolos a hacer lo mejor que puedan con sus vidas, se sentirán recompensados cuando sus hijos tomen buenas decisiones. Bastan ejemplos comunes y de todos los días para enseñarles las cosas que valen la pena en la vida.
7. **Coma con la familia**
   Comer en familia es una parte importante de una vida familiar saludable. La comida con la familia da a los niños la oportunidad de hablar de sus actividades, y los padres, a su vez, pueden escucharlos y aconsejarlos.
8. **Lea con sus hijos**
   Lea con sus hijos desde pequeños. Cultive su amor por la lectura para que tengan una vida rica y llena de posibilidades profesionales.
9. **Demuestre afecto**
   Los niños necesitan sentirse seguros sabiendo que son queridos, aceptados y amados por su familia. Demuéstreles su afecto para que se sientan queridos y apreciados.
10. **Comprenda que el trabajod un padre nunca termina**
    Aun después de que los niños crezcan y se vayan de casa seguirán respetando los consejos y la sabiduría de sus padres. Un padre es para todo la vida.

*Adaptado de la Iniciativa Nacional para la Paternidad. Encuentre el folleto completo en: www.fatherhood.org/10ways.asp*

# Raising Your Grandchildren

## What's Happening

No matter why or how they came to live with you, your grandchildren will benefit from being in your home. When children cannot be with their parents, living with a grandparent may provide:

- Fewer moves from place to place
- The comfort of a familiar language and culture
- A chance to stay with siblings
- More contact with their parents, depending on the situation

## What You Might Be Seeing

Despite these benefits, the children will face some unique challenges.

- They may feel insecure and unsure that you will take care of them.
- They may act out or challenge you.
- They will miss their parents.
- They may be anxious or depressed.
- They may seem young or act too old for their ages.

## What You Can Do

It will take time for your grandchildren to feel safe and secure in their new home with you. You can encourage these good feelings in a number of ways:

- Set up a daily routine of mealtimes, bedtime, and other activities.
- Help your grandchildren feel "at home" by creating a space just for them.
- Talk to your grandchildren, and listen when they talk to you.
- Set up a few rules and explain your expectations. Then, enforce the rules consistently.
- Reward positive behavior. When children make mistakes, focus on teaching rather than punishing.
- Be as involved with their school as you can, and encourage your children to participate in school activities.

This is a big job, and you may need help from your community. Here are some suggestions:

- Help with housing or other bills, clothing, or school supplies may be available specifically for grandparents raising grandchildren in your community.
- Join a support group. Often there are local groups for grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Ask for help and referrals from a church leader, the counselor at your child's school, or a social services agency.
- If necessary, get professional help to address your grandchild's special needs, such as medical care, mental health care, or special education.

***Parenting the second time around brings special challenges and special joys. Do not hesitate to ask for help or seek services in your community for yourself and your grandchildren.***

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting or call 800.394.3366.*

# Cómo criar al hijo de un pariente

Es muy importante que los niños se sientan parte de una familia que los quiere y los respeta.

**Su hogar puede ser el mejor lugar para los hijos de un pariente.**

Cuando un niño no puede estar con sus padres, el hogar de un pariente le puede dar:

- El consuelo de estar con una persona que conoce, y que comparte su idioma y cultura.
- La oportunidad de quedarse con sus hermanos
- Menos mudanzas de un lugar a otro
- A veces más contacto con sus padres

**Los niños extrañan a sus padres.**

Los niños que no viven con sus padres tienen necesidades especiales. Pueden:

- Sentirse inseguros y no saber con certeza si usted los va a cuidar
- Portarse mal o desafiarlo
- Estar preocupados o deprimidos
- No comportarse de acuerdo con su edad

**Usted puede ayudar a que el niño se sienta seguro y protegido en su hogar.**

- Tenga un sitio especial sólo para él, para que se sienta en casa.
- Tenga una rutina diaria de comidas, actividades y horas de irse a la cama.
- Háblele y escúchelo cuando le habla.
- Ponga unas pocas reglas y explíquele lo que espera de él. Haga que se cumplan las reglas sin falta.
- Si el niño hace algo bueno, ¡dígaselo! Si comete un error, explíquele lo que debe hacer la próxima vez.
- Participe en su escuela y en sus actividades escolares.

**Criar al hijo de un pariente no es fácil. Es posible que usted necesite ayuda.**

Su comunidad puede tener recursos para ayudarle con:

- Comida, vivienda y algunas de sus cuentas
- Ropa, útiles escolares y enseñanza individual
- Apoyo y asesoramiento
- Visitas al médico, atención de la salud mental o educación especial

***Tenga paciencia. Tomará tiempo para que el niño se sienta protegido y seguro con usted. Si usted necesita apoyo, hable con el consejero de la escuela o con un trabajador social. Si usted necesita apoyo adicional solicítelo en su iglesia o en una agencia comunitaria.***

*Esta hoja informativa para los padres fue desarrollada con la colaboración de profesionales vinculados a diversas organizaciones nacionales que protegen a la juventud y promueven familias sanas. Para descargar esta publicación o para obtener más consejos para los padres (en inglés), vea: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting o llame al 1.800.394.3366.*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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# Publication Survey

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 5 minutes per response to complete this questionnaire. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The control number for this project is 0970-0303. The control number expires on 09/30/2011.

***Publication Title: Strengthening Families and Communities: 2009 Resource Guide***

Complete this survey online: www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/surveys/PreventionGuide.cfm
Or mail to: Child Welfare Information Gateway; ATTN: Publications Survey; 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031

1. Please rate your agreement with the following statements using this scale:

   *SD — Strongly disagree*
   *D — Disagree*
   *N — Neither agree nor disagree*
   *A — Agree*
   *SA — Strongly agree*
   *NA —Not applicable*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| I can apply what I learned from this publication to my work, school, or personal situation. | SD | D | N | A | SA | NA |
| I would recommend this publication to others. | SD | D | N | A | SA | NA |

2. How are you using or do you intend to use the information in this publication? *(Check one.)*
   - ☐ Personal use (personal situation, school report)
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   - ☐ Research
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   - ☐ Program improvement
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   - ☐ Public awareness

3. What would have made this publication more helpful to you?

   _____

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   _____

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