

CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF SOCIAL POLICY'S

# strengthening families™

A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Center  
for the  
Study  
of  
Social  
Policy

*Ideas  
into  
Action*

# Five Protective Factors

1. Parental resilience
2. Social connections
3. Knowledge of parenting and child development
4. Concrete support in times of need
5. Social and emotional competence of children



# Parental resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

---

## What it looks like

### *Resilience to general life stress*

- Hope, optimism, self confidence
- Problem solving skills
- Self care and willingness to ask for help
- Ability to manage negative emotions

### *Resilience to parenting stress*

- Not allowing stress to interfere with nurturing
- Positive attitude about parenting and child

# Parental resilience

---

## Everyday actions

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued
- Honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times

# Social connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

---

## What it looks like

- Multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others
- Feeling respected and appreciated
- Accepting help from others, and giving help to others
- Skills for establishing and maintaining connections

# Social connections

---

## Everyday actions

- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
- Create an inclusive environment
- Facilitate mutual support
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

# Knowledge of parenting & child dev't

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development

---

## What it looks like

- Nurturing parenting behavior
- Appropriate developmental expectations
- Ability to create a developmentally supportive environment for child
- Positive discipline techniques; ability to effectively manage child behavior
- Recognizing and responding to your child's specific needs

# Knowledge of parenting & child dev't

---

## Everyday actions

- Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children
- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development
- Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies
- Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective



# Concrete support in times of need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

---

## What it looks like

- Seeking and receiving support when needed
- Knowing what services are available and how to access them
- Adequate financial security; basic needs being met
- Persistence
- Advocating effectively for self and child to receive necessary help

# Concrete support in times of need

---

## Everyday actions

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports

# Social & emotional competence of children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

---

## What it looks like

### *For the parent:*

- Warm and consistent responses that foster a strong and secure attachment with the child
- Encouraging and reinforcing social skills; setting limits

### *For the child:*

- Age appropriate self-regulation
- Ability to form and maintain relationships with others
- Positive interactions with others
- Effective communication

# Social & emotional competence of children

---

## Everyday actions

- Help parents foster their child's social emotional development
- Model nurturing care to children
- Include children's social and emotional development activities in programming
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support