

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INITIATIVE



IMPROVING FAMILIES' RESILIENCY THROUGH SUPPORTING INTEGRATION OF THE FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS INTO FAMILIES' LIVES

Florida's Head Start State Collaboration Office 

 Florida Head Start Association

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INITIATIVE WORKGROUP

WORKGROUP MEMBERS

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- Regina Wright: Redlands Christian Migrant Association
- Liz Bender: Early Childhood Learning Services of Lee County , HS/EHS
- Angela Porterfield: Prekindergarten Services/Pasco County School District HS/EHS



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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES WEBINAR OBJECTIVES



- ❖ Present goals of Florida's Prevention & Permanency Plan
- ❖ Develop understanding of relationship between Five Protective Factors & Strengthening Families Strategies
- ❖ Provide an orientation to Tier-One Program Assessment

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FLORIDA'S PREVENTION & PERMANENCY PLAN



❖ **VISION:** Florida's highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.

❖ **MISSION:** To serve as an implementation blueprint to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida's children, in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

❖ **GOAL:** All families and communities ensure that children are safe, nurtured, and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

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FLORIDA'S STATE PLAN OBJECTIVES



❖ To build resiliency in all of Florida's families and communities in order to equip them to better care for and to nurture their children.

❖ To reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need in order to parent effectively, even under stress.

❖ To build relationships with families by recognizing signs of stress and building families' protective factors with timely, effective help.

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STATE PREVENTION STRATEGY



❖ Infuse the Five Protective Factors into Florida systems that serve parents and children.

❖ By June 30, 2015, Florida-based programs' supports and services will have intentionally incorporated the Five Protective Factors as a foundation for their work.

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HEAD START ACTION STEPS

- ❖ By June 30, 2015, Florida's Head Start Programs will have incorporated the Five Protective Factors as a foundation for work within all programs.
- ❖ The Strengthening Families Strategies will be utilized as a way of incorporating the Five Protective Factors into the HS/EHS services for children & families.
- ❖ All HS/EHS programs will perform a program self assessment and then implement needed program improvement activities as identified.



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STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON IMPROVING FAMILIES' RESILIENCY



- ❖ Program strategies have been identified to help families improve their ability to handle the challenges of family life.
- ❖ The Strengthening Families Strategies are aligned with the Five Protective Factors focused on improving families resiliency.
- ❖ Head Start staff can integrate these strategies within all aspects of their programs as way of focusing on supporting their families ability to handle challenges of family life.

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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

1. NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT

- ❖ A child's ability to interact positively with others, to self-regulate, and to effectively communicate his or her emotions has a great impact on the parent-child relationship.
- ❖ A child's social and emotional development is highly dependent on the quality of a young child's primary relationships.
- ❖ How caregivers respond to children's emotional expression profoundly influences how they learn to process, understand, and cope with such feelings as anger, happiness, and sadness.
- ❖ Promoting positive behavior and responses in children could strengthen parent-child relationships.



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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS, CONTINUED

2. KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND OF CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Extensive research links healthy child development to effective parenting.
- ❖ Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication & listening, consistent rules & 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.



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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS, CONTINUED

3. 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.
- ❖ Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, or domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.



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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS, CONTINUED

4. 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.
- ❖ Research has shown that parents, who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.



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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS, CONTINUED

5. CONCRETE SUPPORTS FOR PARENTS



❖ Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment.

❖ Providing concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES APPROACH



- ❖ benefits ALL families,
- ❖ builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes;
- ❖ can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions;
- ❖ builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities; and
- ❖ is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge.

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FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS & STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRATEGIES ALIGNMENT

1. Nurturing & Attachment

•#2 Strengthen Families
•#5 Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development
•#6 Recognize and Respond to Early Warning Signs of Abuse and Neglect
•#7 Value and Support Parents

2. Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

•#2 Strengthen Parenting
•#5 Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development
•#6 Recognize & Respond to Early Warning Signs of Abuse & Neglect

3. Parental Resilience

•#6 Recognize & Respond to Early Warning signs of Abuse & Neglect

4. Social Connections

•#3 Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support
•#7 Value & Support Parents

5. Concrete Supports for Parents


•#3 Respond to Family Crisis
•#4 Link Families to Services and Opportunities

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**STRATEGY #1:
FACILITATE FRIENDSHIPS & MUTUAL SUPPORT**

ALIGNMENT: #4--SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ High quality programs welcome all parents and children equally and send an important message of inclusiveness and equal social value.
- ❖ This message is reinforced by policies such as asking parents to invite all children in a class to family parties or social activities.
- ❖ Staff of such programs may intervene in conflicts between parents to help reduce animosities and cliques, to ensure that small disagreements do not fester, and to enhance the understanding of cultural differences.




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**STRATEGY #2:
STRENGTHEN PARENTING**

**ALIGNMENT:
#1--SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE
#2--PARENTING & CHILD/YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT**

- ❖ Early care and education programs are a natural place for parents to turn for parenting information and support.
- ❖ Parents know that staff see their children every day and will have some context for issues they want to ask about.
- ❖ Their day-to-day interaction with teachers and other program staff makes the program a convenient place for them to turn when they have questions or concerns.
- ❖ Finally, parents know that teachers work every day to help children develop and learn—they view teachers as knowledgeable experts.




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STRATEGY #3: RESPONDS TO FAMILY CRISIS

ALIGNMENT: #5--CONCRETE SUPPORT

- ❖ This strategy involves staff offering extra support to families when they face illnesses, job loss, substance abuse, financial problems, and other issues.
- ❖ Staff are available to speak to family members that need help and, in some of the smaller programs; directors maintain an open door policy so that anyone can come to them for help.
- ❖ Staff are knowledgeable about community resources and available to help families get the services they need.



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**STRATEGY #3: RESPONDS TO FAMILY CRISIS,
CONTINUED**

❖ They maintain strong collaborative relationships with other service providers within the community; so that they can make referrals to agencies they themselves know and trust.

❖ In addition to making referrals, they create internal resources to help families resolve crises.

❖ When they refer parents to services, they follow up with the parents to see whether or not they accessed the services suggested and, if not, to continue to help them resolve their problems.



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**STRATEGY #4: LINK FAMILIES TO SERVICES
& OPPORTUNITIES**

ALIGNMENT: #5--CONCRETE SUPPORT



❖ Early childhood programs recognize that a child's well-being is grounded in the well-being of his or her family.

❖ Working with families to help them meet their health, social, psychological, economic, and career goals is an important part of the work they do.

❖ Because early care and education programs are places parents visit regularly, staff at these programs are in a good position to help families identify and access services.

❖ Programs make a deliberate effort to identify families' goals and needs and to connect them to the services and supports that will help them meet those goals and needs.

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**STRATEGY #5- FACILITATE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL &
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ALIGNMENT:

#1--SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

#2--PARENTING & CHILD/YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

❖ Many early care and education programs teach specific social and emotional skills in the classroom—such as sharing, cooperation, and taking turns—that make parenting easier and reduce the stress in families' homes.

❖ Programs also help parents develop new disciplinary skills by carrying out children's social and emotional development work in conjunction with parenting education curricula.

❖ For parents with particularly challenging children, the social and emotional work program staff do with children provides welcome added support.

❖ Parents can discuss their children's challenging behavior with staff, learn from the strategies being used in the classroom, and place their children's behavior in the larger frame work of children's social and emotional development.



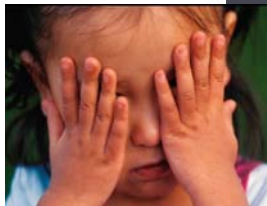
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STRATEGY #6: RECOGNIZE & RESPOND TO EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

ALIGNMENT:

- #1 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE
- #3 PARENTAL RESILIENCE

- ❖ Day-to-day interactions between staff, children, and parents provide an important opportunity for program staff to identify concerns early and intervene immediately.
- ❖ Rather than focusing simply on mandated reporting, the exemplary programs in this study all train and support staff to observe children carefully and respond at the first sign of any difficulty.
- ❖ They use such indicators as frequent absences, missing payments, late pick-ups, or signs of parental stress as opportunities to proactively reach out to families and connect them with family support or other services.



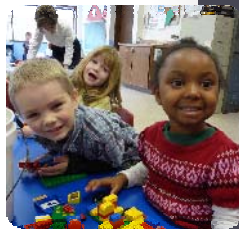
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STRATEGY #7: VALUE & SUPPORT PARENTS

ALIGNMENT:

- #1-- NURTURING ATTACHMENT
- #4 -- SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Positive relationships with parents are the foundation of program efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- ❖ Quality early childhood programs treat parents respectfully and partner with them on their children's education.
- ❖ They create clear opportunities for parents to contribute to the program, to their child's learning, to other parents, and to the community.
- ❖ Programs have found that when parents' efforts are noticed, valued, recognized, and rewarded, they receive the message that they are important to the program.
- ❖ Programs reach out proactively to parents who seem most in need of encouragement and support, offering them opportunities to volunteer and to participate in children's activities.



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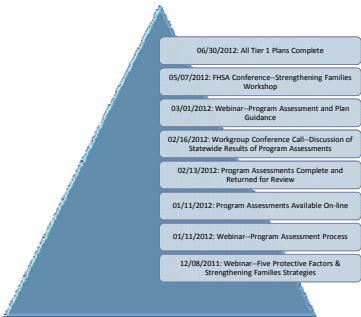
Head Start Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework

- ❖ The Strengthening Families Initiative has been developed to work in coordination with the PFCE Framework.
- ❖ The PFCE Framework is about building relationships with families.
- ❖ The Framework supports:
 - Family well being
 - Strong relationships between parents and their children and
 - Ongoing learning and development for both parents and children.
- ❖ The PFCE Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families.



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Strengthening Families Initiative Timeline



- 06/30/2012: All Tier 1 Plans Complete
- 05/07/2012: FHSA Conference—Strengthening Families Workshop
- 03/01/2012: Webinar—Program Assessment and Plan Guidance
- 02/16/2012: Workgroup Conference Call—Discussion of Statewide Results of Program Assessments
- 02/13/2012: Program Assessments Complete and Returned for Review
- 01/11/2012: Program Assessments Available On-line
- 01/11/2012: Webinar—Program Assessment Process
- 12/08/2011: Webinar—Five Protective Factors & Strengthening Families Strategies

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Resource Links

Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) provides resources and information assisting programs in their efforts to prevent child abuse.

- <http://www.preventchildabuse.org/publications/index.shtml>

CSSP improves public policies, systems and communities by building protective factors, reducing risk factors and creating opportunities that contribute to well-being and economic success.

- <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families>

CSEFEL is a national resource center for Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country.

- http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_parent.html
- <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>

Child Welfare Information Gateway connects child welfare and related professionals to comprehensive information and resources to help protect children and strengthen families.

- <http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth/guide2011/>

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