

5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

According to extensive research, families thrive when protective factors are present and strong in their lives and communities. The five protective factors at the foundation of strengthening families are characteristics that have been shown to make positive outcomes more likely for young children and their families, and to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

PARENTAL RESILIENCE

Numerous researchers have concluded that how parents respond to stressors is much more important than the stressor itself in determining the outcomes for themselves and their children. Parents are more likely to achieve healthy, favorable outcomes if they are resilient. Resilient parents are able to manage personal difficulties and those in relation to their child and thrive in spite of the challenges.



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Several research studies have demonstrated that—for both mothers and fathers—high levels of emotional, informational, instrumental or spiritual support is associated with positive parenting including well-being and sense of competence. Parents need constructive and supportive social connections help them deal with stressors and support nurturing behaviors that promote secure attachments in young children.

CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED

All parents need access to concrete support and services that address their needs and help minimize the stress caused by challenges and adversity. Seeking help is a step toward improving one's circumstances and learning to better manage stress and function well—even when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma.



KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Understanding the nature and importance of early brain development enables both parents and those who work with children to know what young children need most in order to thrive: nurturing, responsive, reliable and trusting relationships; regular, predictable and consistent routines; interactive language experiences; a physically and emotionally safe environment; and opportunities to explore and to learn by doing.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

Numerous research studies show that a relationship with a consistent and caring adult is essential for healthy social-emotional outcomes in young children. Early and appropriate interventions that focus on social-emotional development can help to mitigate the effects of negative experiences in ways that lead to improved cognitive and social-emotional outcomes.

