



Using Protective Factors
to
Strengthen Families

Fostering Protective Factors

The Strengthening Families Initiative

**Developed by the Center for the Study of Social
Policy**

www.cssp.org

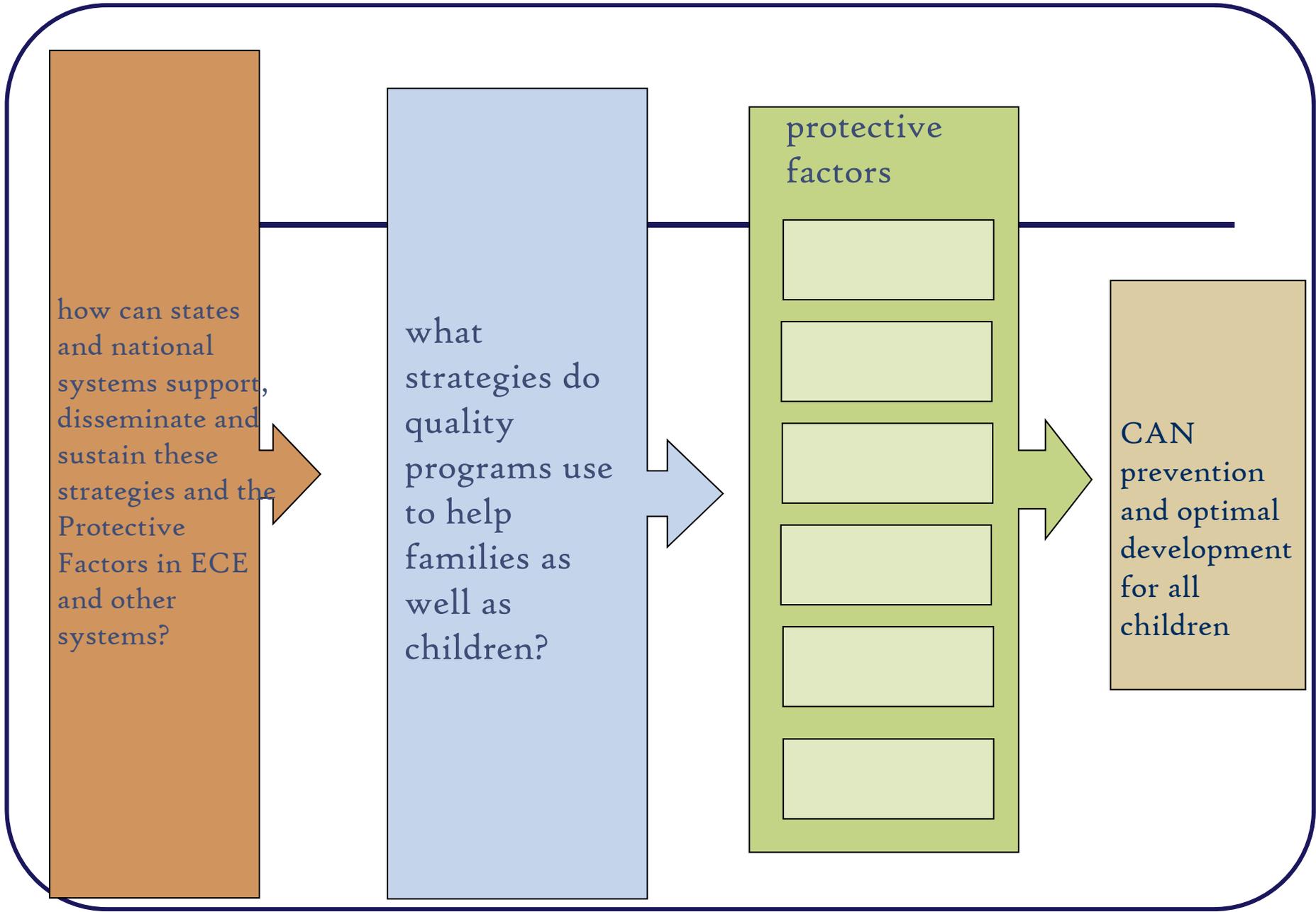
**National Expansion with the assistance of the
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Prevention Funds**

www.ctfalliance.org

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Learning Objectives

- Gain a basic understanding of the protective factors
- Learn how the protective factors strengthen families
- Identify strategies to integrate each of the protective factors into your daily work with families



how can states and national systems support, disseminate and sustain these strategies and the Protective Factors in ECE and other systems?

what strategies do quality programs use to help families as well as children?

protective factors

CAN prevention and optimal development for all children

Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children

The community partnership approach starts from the premise that no single factor is responsible for child abuse and neglect, thus no one public agency can safeguard children.

The principles underlying the community partnership approach include:

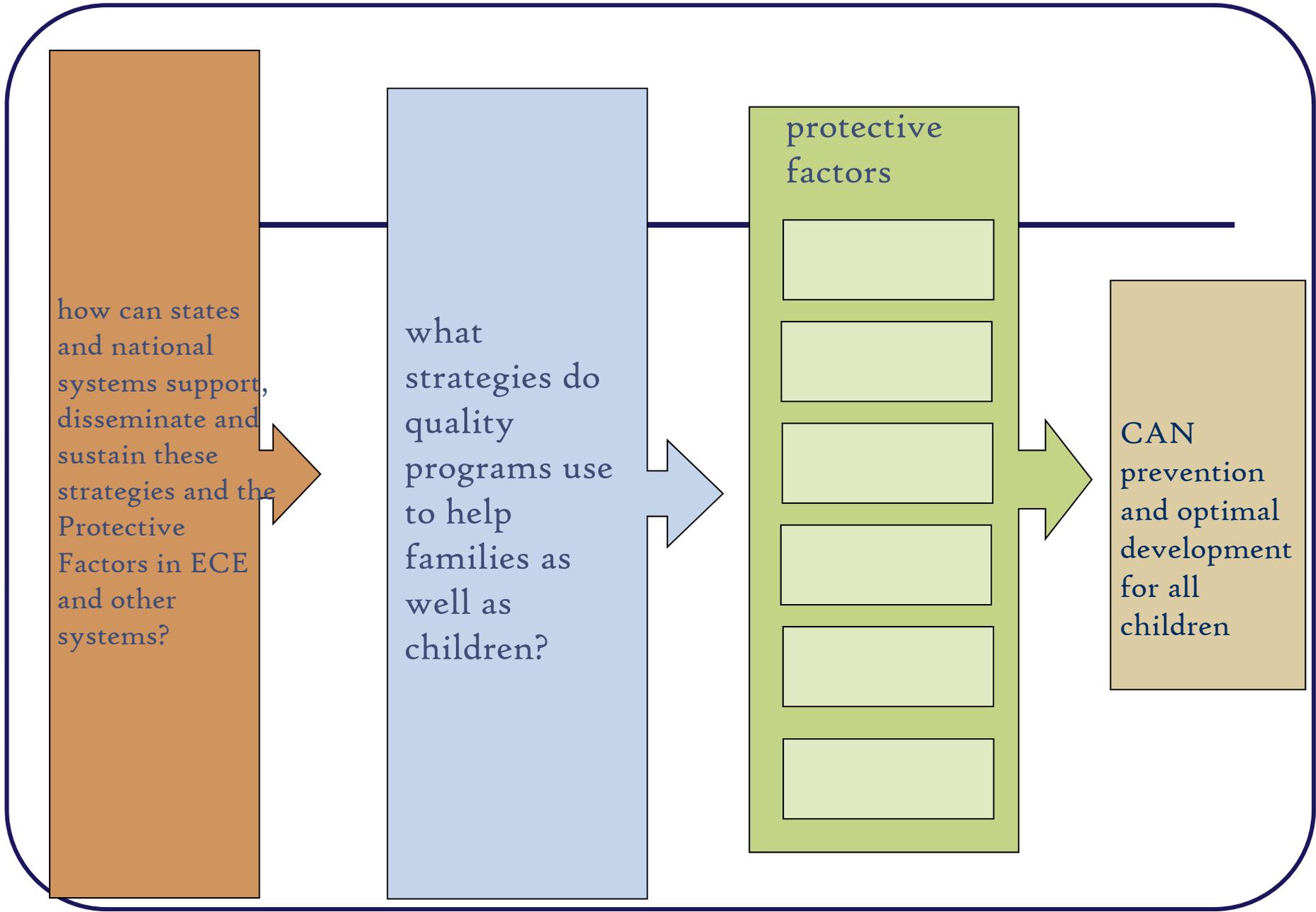
- Families are stronger when all members, including parents and caregivers, are safe from abuse
- There is no substitute for strong families to ensure that children and youth grow up to be capable adults
- Families do best when they live in supportive communities
- Children do best when families, friends, residents and organizations work together as partners

The principles underlying the community partnership approach include:

- Efforts to reduce abuse and neglect must be closely linked to broader community initiatives and priorities
- All families should receive high-quality services with no disparities among racial, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic groups
- Each community must shape the strategies and network of services based on its own resources, needs and cultures

The principles underlying the community partnership approach include:

- Children should stay with their own families whenever possible
- Services and supports need to be available earlier, before crises occur and must be closely linked to the communities in which families live
- Government alone, through the public child protective services agency, cannot keep children safe from abuse and neglect



how can states and national systems support, disseminate and sustain these strategies and the Protective Factors in ECE and other systems?

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7 Program Strategies that Build Protective Factors

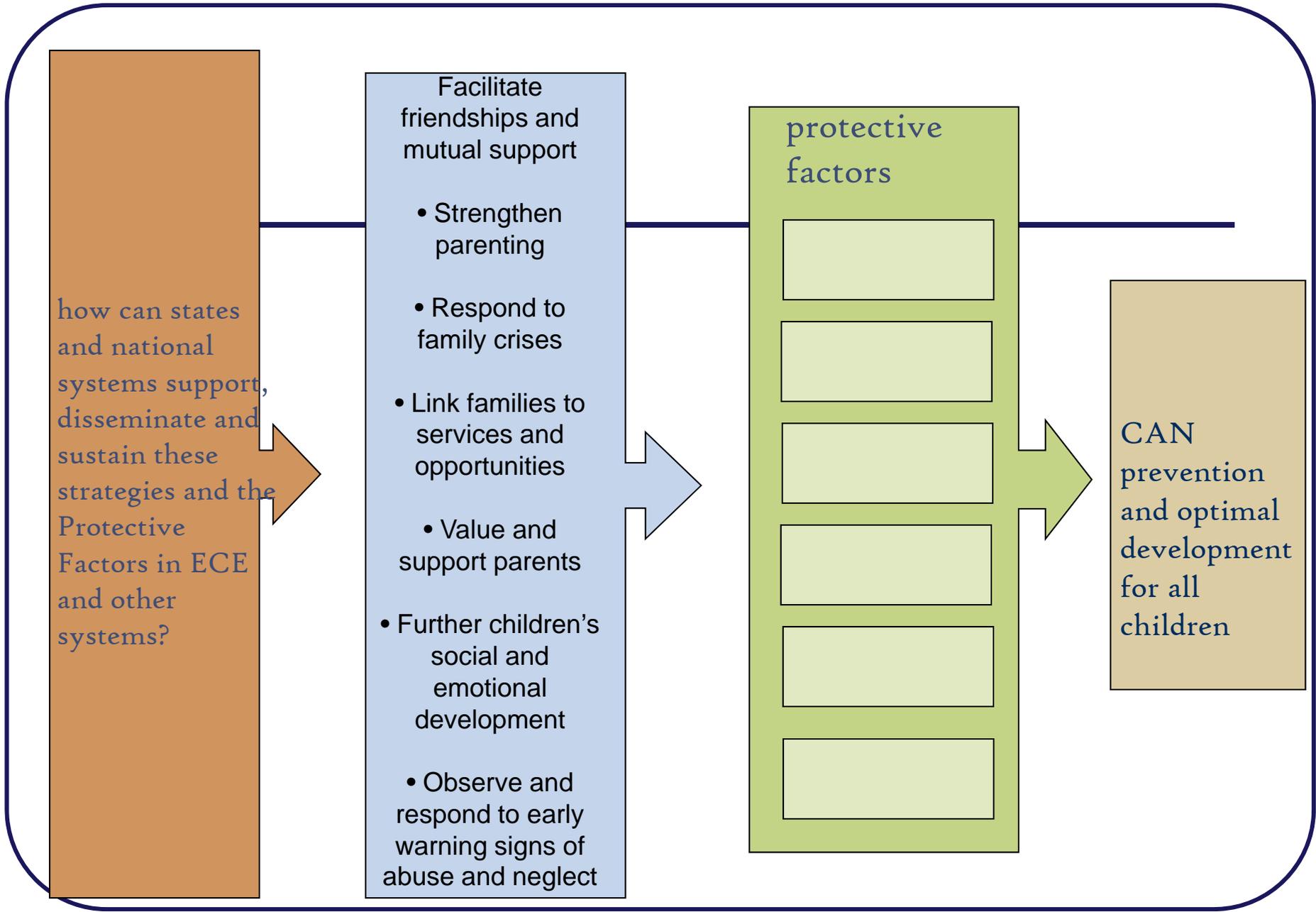
1. **Value and Support Parenting**
2. **Strengthen Parenting Skills**
3. **Facilitate Friendships and Mutual Support**
4. **Respond to Family Crises**

7 Program Strategies that Build Protective Factors

5. **Link Families to Services and Opportunities**
6. **Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development**
7. **Observe and Respond to Early Warning Signs of Abuse and Neglect**

Identify the Strategy

Activity	Strategy
<p>Train staff to develop trusting relationships with families during program time, and provide an opportunity for these relationships to flourish.</p>	
<p>Give parents opportunities to participate in conversations with other parents about their own experiences as children and how they want to change their parenting for their children.</p>	
<p>Provide for immediate needs through a closet with extra winter coats and a direct connection to a food pantry; facilitating help from other parents when appropriate.</p>	
<p>Provide art programs that allow children to express themselves in ways other than words.</p>	
<p>Provide multiple parent education opportunities through classes or workshops that address topics parents initiate or that respond to current issues.</p>	



From these strategies there came the Protective Factors

Protective Factors serve as a buffer to prevent families from becoming “at risk” for abuse and neglect.

Helping families find alternate resources, supports, and coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively even under stress.

When these factors are present child maltreatment appears to be less likely to occur.

The Protective Factors Framework

Parental Resilience

Social Connections

Knowledge of Parenting and
Child Development

Concrete Support in Times of
Need

Social and Emotional
Development

Nurturing and Attachment



Parental Resilience

- The ability to cope and bounce back from all types of challenges
- Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises. Those 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.

“Be strong and flexible”

Mary's Story

Center for the Study of Social Policy

Social Connections

- Friends, family members, neighbors, and other members of a community who provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents
- 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.

“Parents need friends”





Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

- Accurate information about raising young children and appropriate expectations for their behavior
- 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.

“Parenting is part natural, part learned”



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Concrete Support in Times of Need

- Financial security to cover day-to-day expenses and unexpected costs that come up from time to time, access to formal supports like TANF and Medicaid, and informal support from social networks
- 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.

“We all need help sometimes”

Children's Social and Emotional Competence

- A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively

"Help children communicate"



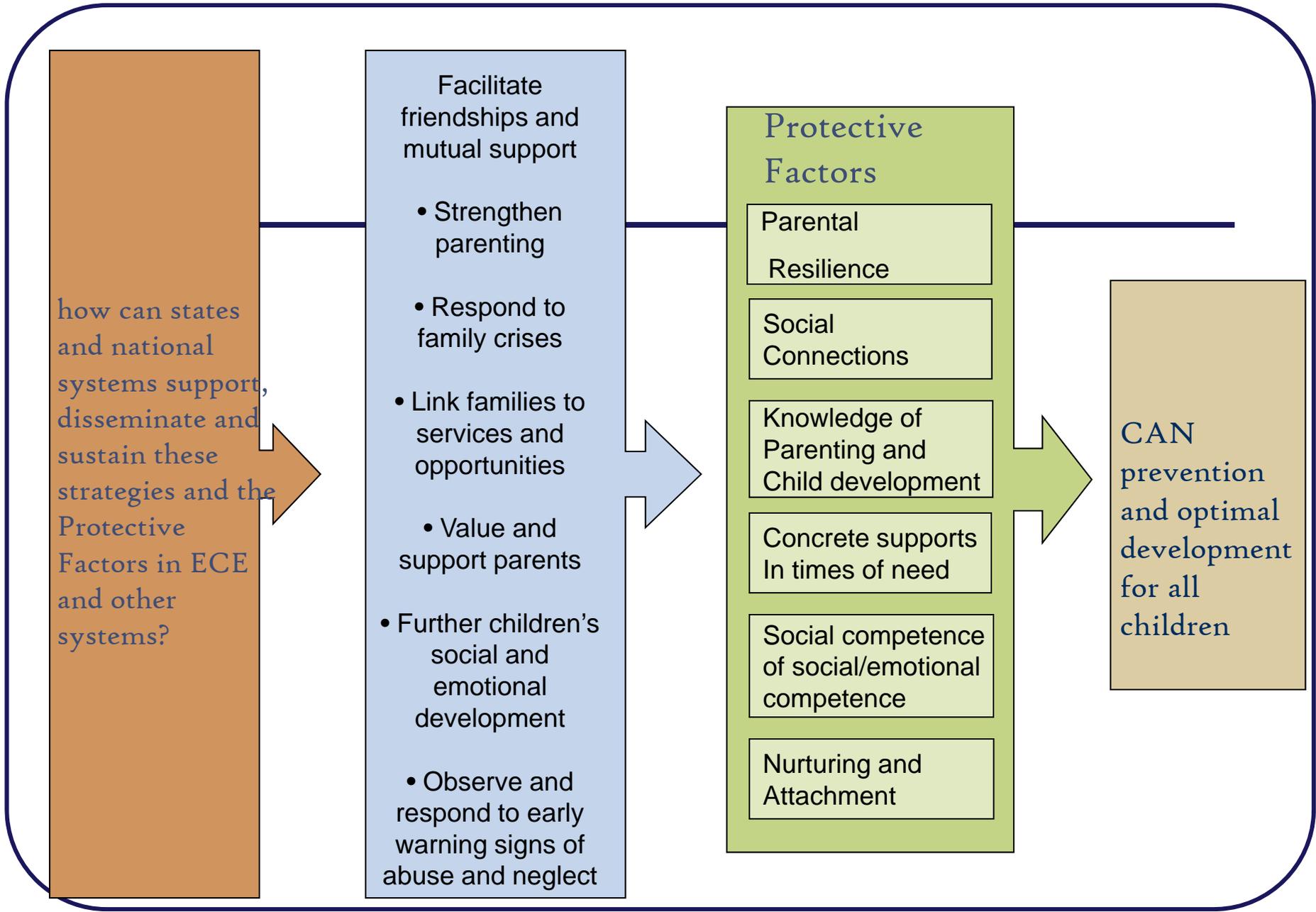
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Nurturing and Attachment

- 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.



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Reflection

- How can our programs promote these protective factors?
 - What do we already do?
 - What could we consider doing?

A Resiliency Approach to Collaboration

- | | |
|--|---|
| ● Parental resilience | Community resilience |
| ● Social connections | Peer relationships |
| ● Concrete support in crisis | Shared leadership and accountability |
| ● Knowledge of parenting and child development | Quality professional development & technical assistance |
| ● Social and emotional development | Effective two-way communication |
| ● nurturing and attachment | Mutual trust and shared leadership |

Resiliency

Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises.

Despite the increase in collaborative efforts, State Lead Agencies (SLA) have expressed difficulties in sustaining these efforts with the ever present challenges of staff turnover, fluctuation in state/organizational/local priorities, changes in leadership and decreasing funding.

Social Connections

Research indicates that relationships, feelings of belonging and emotional support were critical to preventing parental maltreatment of children. Children's safety depends on strong families, and strong families depend on good connections with other families, local organizations, and community institutions.

Concrete Support

In a time of need or crisis, research indicates that a parent's ability to care for their children is directly related to targeted services they receive.

Effective collaborations also include a jointly developed structure, shared responsibility, mutual authority and accountability for success, and a sharing of resources and rewards.

Knowledge

While accurate information about raising children was identified as an essential factor to preventing child maltreatment

One of the most powerful tools to help communities develop and sustain community change efforts is results-oriented, demand-driven technical assistance.

Feelings of Competence

One measure of good parenting is children who interact positively and have good self concepts.

The ability to build and sustain strong relationships is the necessary component to a strong collaboration. This requires many qualities including a personal commitment to serving children and families, an understanding of the landscape of the population served, expertise that adds value to all aspects of family services, and perseverance in seeking to build partnerships throughout the community.

Strengthening Families As a Platform for Collaboration

Collaboration across multiple service systems is central to the Strengthening Families approach. State and local leadership teams for Strengthening Families are made up of multiple agencies and partners, including community and parent leaders.

Each represent a unique part of the systems of support that families need.

Strengthening Families & Collaboration

The Strengthening Families approach to collaboration, using the common language of research-based Protective Factors to describe results for families across systems, has led to:

Strengthening Families & Collaboration

- Better understanding of the role that each service system – both administrators and practitioners – plays in supporting families
- More effective partnerships among agencies and among individual workers
- A professional development system that fosters collaboration by creating a common language and common approach across disciplines

Strengthening Families & Collaboration

- Greater appreciation for the significant role that non-governmental community resources like informal networks, churches, social groups and cultural practices play in building protective factors with families
- Consistent, positive messages about building on strengths that encourage family engagement and partnerships
- Greater cumulative impact on results for both children and their families across systems

Levers For Change

Implementing Strengthening Families at a state, county or local level requires engaging the programs and services that already provide support for children and families as partners. States participating in the Strengthening Families National Network have found three key “levers for change” are critical for fully realizing the promise of Strengthening Families.

Three Levers for Change

- Parent Partnerships
- Professional Development
- Policy and Systems

Parent Partnerships

- Reach out and partner with existing parent organizations
- Create and maintain prominent leadership roles for parents
- Continually assess what motivates parents to engage in program leadership
- Provide leadership training and support for parent leaders to participate

Parent Partnerships

- Create opportunities for parents to engage with other parents in understanding and using the protective factors in their own families
- Designate specific resources for parent engagement, participation and leadership

Conversations with parents...

- What's hard about being a parent?
- Are there ways our staff could help you deal with those challenges?
- We want this to be a welcoming place where families feel comfortable asking for help. What are some of your ideas about how we can do that?
- We are particularly concerned when parents seemed stressed, isolated, or overwhelmed. Do you have ideas about how we can reach out to parents during those times?
- We want to make it easy for parents to make connections with each other. How can we do that?

Professional Development

- Provide orientation and training on Strengthening Families at professional conferences and meetings
- Offer the Protective Factors Framework to current training providers to leverage existing training capacity

Professional Development

- Integrate Strengthening Families research and Protective Factors Framework into university, college, continuing education and certificate programs
- Incorporate Strengthening Families concepts into new worker training
- Develop online training and distance learning opportunities
- Reinforce training with follow-up support, such as reflective supervision and ongoing mentoring

Conversations with staff...

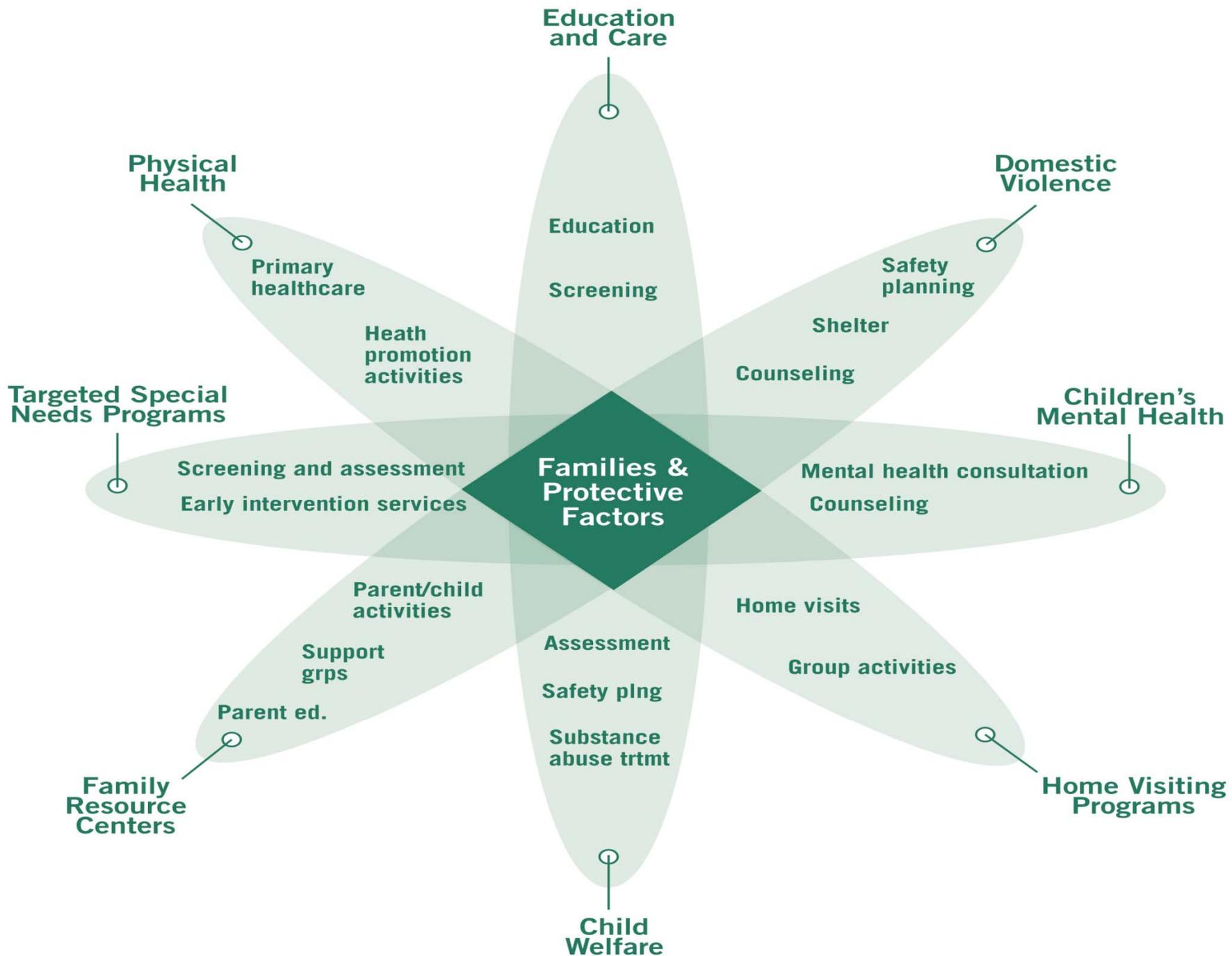
- How might this affect our work? What would be the benefits? What would be the difficulties?
- How might building protective factors impact parents and how parents relate to their children?
- How might building protective factors impact the parents we are most concerned about?

Policies and Systems

- Engage multidisciplinary partners responsible for improving child outcomes and preventing maltreatment in Strengthening Families state leadership
- Use the Protective Factors Framework to define a shared set of desired outcomes for families across systems and disciplines

Policies and Systems

- Link Strengthening Families to cross-systems planning efforts as a way to implement common language and common goals
- Adapt contracting methods for funding and assessing programs to include a focus on Protective Factors
- Revise job requirements, performance reviews and performance contracts to reflect the Strengthening Families approach to working with children and families



Community Conversations

- What's important to have in a prevention plan?
- What can we create to increase awareness of the problem and solutions?
- What is the benefit of a multi-county approach to maltreatment prevention?
- What are the short and long term risks if we don't develop and implement a plan?

West Michigan Child Maltreatment Prevention Team

- Began with a partnership between:
 - Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Child Abuse and Neglect Councils
 - Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Great Start Collaborations
 - Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon Great Start Parent Coalitions
 - Funding provided by CTF, ECIC and Lakeshore Coordinating Council

PreVent Institute

- The PREVENT Program is designed to facilitate the change process by providing Education, Networking and Technical Assistance to help individuals and organizations nationwide reduce violence through local, state, tribal and national approaches
- <http://www.prevent.unc.edu/>

Logic Model Example

Action Plan Example

Training and Technical Assistance:

- Cross-training and technical assistance to create a common frame for practice
 - Substance Abuse Prevention Providers
 - Domestic Violence (CWIT)
 - Early Care and Education (Head Start)
 - Saving Lives, Embracing Children: Muskegon County's Call to Action

Centralized Referral Resources:

One option some states are exploring is using the United Way 211 systems or other centralized referral methods to support referrals to home visiting programs and as a way for families receiving home visiting to connect to a broader array of services. United Way Worldwide is a Strengthening Families National Partner organization and has been working with local United Ways to use the protective factors framework within 211 referral systems. This provides an opportunity to connect families with specific opportunities to build their protective factors, not only services related to risk.

Home Visiting Programs

- The strengths-based protective factors framework can also be incorporated into messaging campaigns about the importance of home visiting efforts.
- Parents as Teachers has for the last several years been incorporating the protective factors into new or updated curricula. Partners for a Healthy Baby, a home visiting curricula which is used nationally by more than 1,200 home visiting program—including Healthy Start, Healthy Families and Early Head Start sites—has developed a cross walk

Early Care and Education

- On-line self-assessment
- Illinois has developed a crosswalk with national accreditation standards
- Several states have developed Quality Rating Improvement Systems that include the protective factors

Parent Education

- Family Dinner Day
 - Social Connections: Autograph Scramble-Up
 - Nurturing and Attachment: Family Meeting
 - Knowledge of Child Development: Star Activity
 - Social and Emotional Competence: In the Test Kitchen
 - Parental Resilience: Juggling Kittens

Parental Resilience

Programs from the FRIENDS' Program Directory* with components that promote outcomes or indicators in this sub-domain are:

Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, Infant Health and Development, Parents As Teachers, Dare to Be You, Healthy Families America, Healthy Families New York, Infant Health and Development, Nurturing Parenting Program, Project SafeCare, Reaching Educators, Children, and Parents (RECAP), Creating Lasting Family Connections, 1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children

Social Connections

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Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, Infant Health and Development, Parents As Teachers, Dare to Be You, Healthy Families America, Healthy Families New York, Infant Health and Development, Nurturing Parenting Program, Project SafeCare, Reaching Educators, Children, and Parents (RECAP), Creating Lasting Family Connections, 1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Programs from the FRIENDS' Program Directory* with components that promote outcomes or indicators in this sub-domain are:

Carolina Abecedarian Project, Creating Lasting Family Connections, Dare to Be You, Early Head Start, Families and Schools Together, Get Real About Violence Guiding Good Choices, Healthy Families America, Healthy Families New York, Helping the Noncompliant Child, Incredible Years, Infant Health and Development, Nurse Family Partnership, Nurturing Parenting Program, Olweus / Bullying Prevention Program, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Parenting Wisely, Parents As Teachers, Perry Preschool Project, Project SafeCare, Reaching Educators, Children, and Parents (RECAP), Schools and Families Educating Children (SAFE Children), STEP: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting, Strengthening Families, Success in Stages, Triple P - Positive Parenting Program, 1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children

Concrete Support

Programs from the FRIENDS' Program Directory* with components that promote outcomes or indicators in this sub-domain are:

Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, Infant Health and Development, Parents As Teachers, Dare to Be You, Healthy Families America, Healthy Families New York, Infant Health and Development, Nurturing Parenting Program, Project SafeCare, Reaching Educators, Children, and Parents (RECAP), Creating Lasting Family Connections, 1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children

Nurturing and Attachment

Programs from the FRIENDS' Program Directory* with components that promote outcomes or indicators in this sub-domain are:

Carolina Abecedarian Project, Early Head Start, Healthy Families America, Healthy Families New York, Incredible Years, Infant Health and Development, Nurse Family Partnership and Project SafeCare

Finding an evidence-based program:

To find a program in your community, contact your local child abuse and neglect council.

To find the local council in your community, go to www.michigan.gov/ctf and click on programs, under programs click on local councils and then click on “Michigan map of CTF funded programs”

Comments, questions and discussion