

**Building Relationships and  
Strengthening Families  
through the Strengthening  
Families Model**



**Parenting Communities of  
Leelanau County**

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Our Home...

**Leelanau County Family Coordinating  
Council**

*“Doing business differently to help  
Leelanau families achieve better things”*

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**Parenting Communities**

Is a relationship-based outreach program for ALL Leelanau County families with children prenatal through kindergarten with extended supports available through age eight.

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**Parenting Communities strives to serve  
ALL Leelanau families**

- Universal Service
- Regardless of preschool affiliation
- pregnant moms, teens, grandparents, young parents, old parents, adoptive parents, migrant parents, anyone and everyone parent-y, incarcerated parents, people with homes, homeless folks, genius parents, parents with special needs, wealthy, poor, NO BARRIERS!



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*Parenting Communities*  
**seeks to promote healthy children  
living in stable, nurturing families,  
supported by strong communities  
that provide comprehensive, supportive services.**

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**There is no such thing as  
“THOSE PEOPLE”  
when it comes to child abuse and neglect.**

Anyone under enough stress can snap and hurt a child or just check out/be consumed by meeting needs of family resulting in neglect.

strengthening families  
THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Center  
Study  
Social  
Policy

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**how early childhood programs help prevent child abuse and neglect**

Excellent early care and education programs use common program strategies to build the protective factors known to reduce child abuse and neglect.

<p><b>QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION</b></p> <p><b>Program strategies that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate friendships and mutual support</li> <li>Strengthen parenting</li> <li>Respond to family crises</li> <li>Link families to services and opportunities</li> <li>Facilitate children's social and emotional development</li> <li>Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect</li> <li>Value and support parents</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROTECTIVE FACTORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parental resilience</li> <li>Social connections</li> <li>Knowledge of parenting and child development</li> <li>Concrete support in times of need</li> <li>Social and emotional competence of children</li> </ul>	
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Parenting Communities is guided by the

## Five Protective Factors

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children
- Knowledge of Child Development and Parenting

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Parenting Communities offers

- Monthly Newsletter
- Parental Education
- Weekly Playgroups
- Home Visits to support the hopes of the family
- Developmental Screenings
- Resources and referrals
- Wrap Around
- Advocacy

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## Monthly Newsletter



- **Many families' first touch with PC**  
(Currently 600+ families)
- **Supports all five protective factors**
  - Education article
  - Local news
  - All playgroups
  - Baby Pantry, WIC, Food Pantries, etc.
  - Contact info

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It's all about

## CONNECTION



- **Parent Education**
- **Weekly Playgroups**
- **Home Visits**
- **Developmental Screenings**

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## Parental Education



**Informal Parent Education includes:**

- Newsletter articles
- Conversations with PC coordinators anywhere, anytime.
- Conversations and observations with peers at PC events
- Lending library

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## Parent Education Evenings

based on current research & current interests of families



### Parents Together Education Series

- Temperaments
- Parenting Styles
- Coping with Grief & Loss
- Movement & Development
- Conscious Discipline

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## Conscious Discipline

Dr. Becky Bailey

- **Brain Development:** Connections with others on the outside build neural connections on the inside.
- **Composure:** Becoming the person you want your children to be
- **Encouragement:** Building a connected family
- **Assertiveness:** Saying “no” and being heard
- **Choices:** Building self-esteem and willpower
- **Positive Intent:** Seeing the best in yourself & others
- **Empathy:** Handling the fussing and the fits
- **Consequences:** Helping children learn from their mistakes

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## Meet families where they are



Provide dinner and childcare. Meet at a convenient location.  
These strategies help to support all five protective factors.

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## Weekly Playgroups

A neutral space to support the five protective factors



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## Weekly Playgroups include



- Kindergym
- Pool Pals
- Beach & park outings
- Library story hours
- Intergenerational Creative Movement
- Infant massage
- Music with Doug Hansen
- Family Hikes & Potlucks
- Paint and Playdough
- Puppet Theater

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## The Protective Factors at Playgroups

- Playgroups connect families with others for concrete supports
- Social interaction for parents and children
- Parents ask other parents and PC coordinators questions about their challenges or concerns.
- **Parents observing other parents-the biggest teacher!**
- Playgroups connect families with other families-modeling alternative strategies for how to respond to different situations.

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## Home Visits

To support the hopes of the family

What is this type of Home Visit?

What does it look like?

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a “Home Visit” is

not always a visit to someone’s home.

Home visits and personal visits are meaningful conversations that happen anywhere, anytime *to support the protective factors*. HV’s and PV’s require planning and/or follow up. Usually around two hours time goes into each HV/PV, even if the interaction with the family lasts a short time.

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## Paralell Process

*support the parent so the parent can support the child*

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Parenting Communities Home Visits support the

### Five Protective Factors

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## Initial Visit

Is ALWAYS building rapport. Listen, feel, meet families where they are.



### Tools for early home visits:

- Initial visit forms-hopes, concerns, strengths
- Intake form-when families want to share more about themselves

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Some options for families who want to focus on **Child Development:**

- Ounce Scale-albums & developmental screenings
- Parents as Teachers
- Conscious Discipline




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Some options for families who need to focus on **Concrete Supports:**

- Family goals sheets
- Resource support
- Referrals
- Wrap Around



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**Infant Mental Health Principles**

- Do for, do with, stand beside and admire
  - Being therapeutic without being a therapist
  - Observe
    - Listen
    - Wonder
    - Respond
- [www.mi-aimh.org](http://www.mi-aimh.org)



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**Developmental Screenings**



- Ounce Scale
- ASQ
- Developmental Wheels
- Parents as Teachers
- IEP
- DECA
- Hearing/Vision
- Early On

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It's all about  
**CONNECTION**



- Resources/Referrals
- Wrap Around
- Advocacy

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**Resources and Referrals**

- Begins with collaboration
- All about connection
  - No wrong door
  - No blind dates



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**Parenting Communities Partners**

- Health Department
- Family Support Team
- Leelanau Public Schools
- Department of Human Services
- Traverse Bay Area Intermediate Public Schools
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians
  - 4 C's/Great Start
  - Leelanau Preschools
- Leelanau Christian Neighbors
- Northwest Michigan Human Services Association
  - Doula

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## Collaborative Concrete Supports



- Laundry Project
- Baby Pantry

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## Wrap Around

Family Support System “wraps around” as families identify values and pursue short-term and long-term goals

- Education/child care
- Employment
- Social
- Family
- Financial
- Transportation
- Cultural/Spiritual
- Emotional/Psychological
- Housing
- Legal
- Physical Health/Medical
- Crisis/Safety
- Calming Strategies

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## Advocacy-Navigating

Helping a family to connect with resources and effectively navigate complex systems.

- Family Support Team
- Department of Human Services
- Continuing Education
- Healthcare



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# Advocacy

Connecting local values and concerns, family and early childhood issues with the greater community and law makers



- Candidate forum
- **Early Childhood Initiative Community Forum**
- **Month of the Young Child Awareness and Advocacy Campaign**
- **Great Start Collaborative**

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# How do families connect with Parenting Communities?



- Word of mouth
- "Can my cousin call you?"
- Referrals from PC partners
- No wrong door
- All are welcome

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# Connecting



*Parenting Communities* seeks to promote  
**healthy children**  
**living in stable, nurturing families**  
**supported by strong communities**  
**that provide comprehensive, supportive services.**

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For further information about the  
Strengthening Families Model and the Five  
Protective Factors ...

<http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net>

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