



The Protective Factors Survey



**FRIENDS National Resource Center for
Community Based Child Abuse
Prevention**

*A Service of the Children's Bureau,
a member of the T/TA network*

www.friendsnrc.org



Overview

- Risk/Protective Factors
- Development of the Protective Factors Survey (PFS)
- Administering the PFS
- Using the PFS Database
- Q & A

Protective/Risk Factors

- There is no single cause of child maltreatment.
- a number of risk factors or attributes commonly associated with maltreatment.
- a number of protective factors to reduce the occurrence of child maltreatment.



Risk Factors

Four Categories of Risk Factors

- Parent Factors
- Family Factors
- Child Factors
- Environmental Factors

Understanding the Risk Factors

Even though certain factors are often present where maltreatment occurs, this does not mean that the presence of these factors will *always* result in child abuse and neglect.

Most people living in poverty do not harm their children.

Protective Factors

Factors that can protect families and promote resilience.

A Protective Factors framework focuses on prevention strategies based on building strengths with families rather than exclusively on risks and deficits.

The Five Protective Factors

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents

Nurturing and Attachment
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Healthy Families & Communities

Reduction in Child Abuse & Neglect

The Protective Factors Approach

- An approach that requires identifying existing strengths of families and builds upon those strengths to keep families healthy and children safe.
- The approach does not mean ignoring risk factors. Rather, it means building protective factors to reduce risk and buffer against child maltreatment.

Protective Factors

- Conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families.
- Attributes that are buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

*Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Why are Protective Factors Important?

- **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.

*Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Why are Protective Factors Important?

- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development.** 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.

*Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Why are Protective Factors Important?

- **Family Functioning/ Resiliency.** Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises. Parents 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.

* Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Why are Protective Factors Important?

- **Social Emotional Support.** 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 and the community can model alternative parenting styles and can serve as resources for parents when they need help.

* Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Why are Protective Factors Important?

- **Concrete Supports for Parents.** Families 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.

* Adapted from Strengthening Families and Communities, 2009 Resource Guide

Measuring Protective Factors

FRIENDS Protective Factor Survey

- Pre-post evaluation tool for use with caregivers receiving child maltreatment prevention services.
- Self-administered survey that measures protective factors in five areas

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Family Functioning/ Resiliency
- Social Emotional Support
- Concrete Supports for Parents

Strengthening Families & the PFS

CSSP		CBCAP/PSF
Parental Resilience	↔	Family Functioning/Resiliency
Social Connections	↔	Social Emotional Support
Parenting Knowledge	↔	Knowledge of Parenting/Child Development
Concrete Support in Times of Need	↔	Concrete Support
Social & Emotional Competence of Children		Nurturing and Attachment

Development of the PFS

It is difficult to show that a program prevented negative things from happening

Increasing protective factors minimizes risk

The PFS was developed as one way of measuring the program effectiveness

Developed and tested as a collaborative effort with FRIENDS, the University of Kansas, parents, program managers, researchers, and CBCAP leads

The PFS...

- Designed for use in child abuse prevention programs
- Provides feedback for continuous improvement and evaluation purposes
- Provides agencies with the following information:
 - ✓ A snapshot of the families they serve
 - ✓ Changes in protective factors
 - ✓ Where to focus on increasing individual family protective factors
 - ✓ The PFS is not intended for individual assessment, placement, or diagnostic purposes

Definitions used in designing the PFS (1)

- **Family Functioning/ Resiliency** Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis. Family's ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems.
- **Social Emotional Support** Perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs.

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Definitions used in designing the PFS (2)

- **Concrete Support** Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.
- **Child Development/ Knowledge of Parenting** Understanding and utilizing effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children's abilities.
- **Nurturing and Attachment** The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.

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The PFS & other measures

- A respondent with high (good) scores on the PFS was more likely to do poorly on measures of child abuse potential and stress
- A respondent with a high (good) score on the PFS was more likely to do well on measures of optimism and adaptive coping strategies
- All subscales except Concrete Support significantly negatively related to depression

For more details, visit:
<http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/outcomeresources/pfs/phase4summary.pdf>

Examine the Survey

- 4 pages
- Demographics
- 7 point Likert scale
- Database

Resources

Survey materials, FRIENDS database

- Training manual, PFS technical information handout, survey, reports all available at www.friendsnrc.org

How can I find other evaluation tools?

The FRIENDS Evaluation Toolkit and Logic Model Builder includes a compendium of evaluation tools. Access it at:

<http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/toolkit/annot.htm>

Where can I learn more about protective factors?

FRIENDS offers an on-line course on Protective Factors. Access it at:

<http://www.friendsnrc.org/resources/onlinelearn.htm>

Contact Information

Edi Winkle

Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator
FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention
(918) 279-0461
ediwinkle@windstream.net

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