



## Preliminary Agenda

### Strengthening Families Learning Community

January 26, 2012 ▪ 8:00 a.m. to Noon  
The California Endowment ▪ Tahoe Room  
1000 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles

- 8:00 **1. Continental Breakfast** Hosted by the  
Center for the Study of Social Policy
- 8:30 **2. Opening Remarks and Introductions** **Trish Ploehn**  
Chief Executive Office
- Making It Happen **Bonnie Armstrong**  
Casey Family Programs
- 9:00 **3. Why are we here today?** **William T Fujioka**  
Chief Executive Officer
- 9:15 **4. What is a Learning Community?** **Jacquelyn McCroskey**  
Los Angeles County  
Policy Roundtable for Child Care
- 9:30 **5. Strengthening Families: The Approach and the Application**
- The Strengthening Families Approach (SFA) **Judy Langford**  
Center for the Study of Social Policy
  - Applying the SFA: Changing Practice - Promoting Integration **Erwin McEwen**  
Former Director  
Illinois Department of Children & Family  
Services
  - SFA Influence on Federal and State Program Design and Funding Opportunities **Frank Farrow**  
Center for the Study of Social Policy
- 11:00 **6. Strengthening Families in Los Angeles County**
- SFA and Local Philanthropy **Gwen Walden**  
L.A. Partnership  
for Early Childhood Investment
  - Incorporation of SFA into County Operations **Dorothy Fleisher**  
W.M. Keck Foundation
  - **Sam Chan**  
Department of Mental Health
  - **Mika Yamamoto**  
Department of Parks and Recreation
- 11:35 **7. Next Steps** **Trish Ploehn**
- Noon **8. Adjourn**

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# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES LEARNING COMMUNITY

## Meeting Objectives

January 26, 2012

Introduce and engage key County department leadership in the Strengthening Families Learning Community, including;

- Identify what a learning community is and how it could benefit County departments,
- Introduce the Strengthening Families approach, including the Protective Factors,
- Explore how the Strengthening Families approach has been implemented nationally, locally and internally, and
- Confirm department commitments to the Strengthening Families Learning Community.

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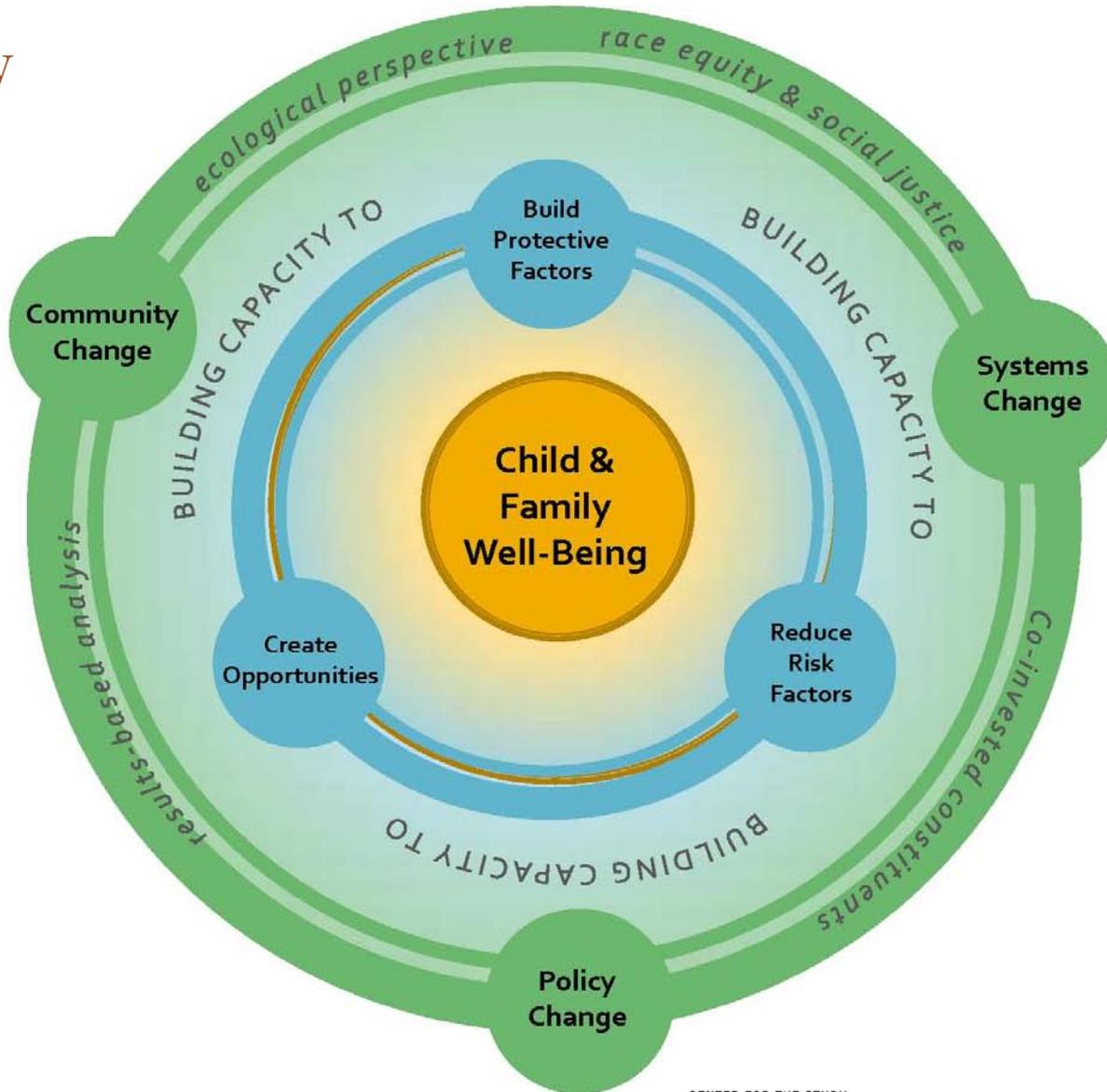
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

## Common Ground One Approach, Many Adaptations

*Judy Langford*

*October 2011*

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Mobilizing partners,  
communities and families to  
build family strengths, promote  
optimal development and reduce  
child abuse and neglect

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# *THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES APPROACH*

- ***5 Protective Factors***: Grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge from several fields; provides links across multiple disciplines and service sectors
- ***7 Program Strategies***: Through small but significant changes in everyday practice, the SF approach builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes.
- ***3 Levers for Change***: Building on existing strategies and systems, with powerful connections to communities and families.



D O R I S D U K E  
C H A R I T A B L E F O U N D A T I O N

In the  
beginning....

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# *PRAGMATIC STARTING POINTS*

- Start with what ALL families need to be successful.
- Outline what ALL kinds of programs and services should be building with families.
- Look for clues to success where families already have comfortable relationships, e.g. child care, family resource programs
- Build a new perspective into existing programs and strategies; don't invent a new model

# *WHAT DO FAMILIES NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?*

Dimensions	Description
Basic needs	Economic security, housing, health care, other necessary resources are in place
Internal resources	Education, expertise, and skills plus connections to extended family, neighbors, co-workers and friends
Positive family climate	Nurturing parenting styles, effective communication and warm interactions among family members
Self confidence	Sense of control over choices, being valued and able to make a difference; faith that all will be well

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What we know: Families gain what they need to be successful when key *protective factors* are robust in their lives and communities

# ***FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS***

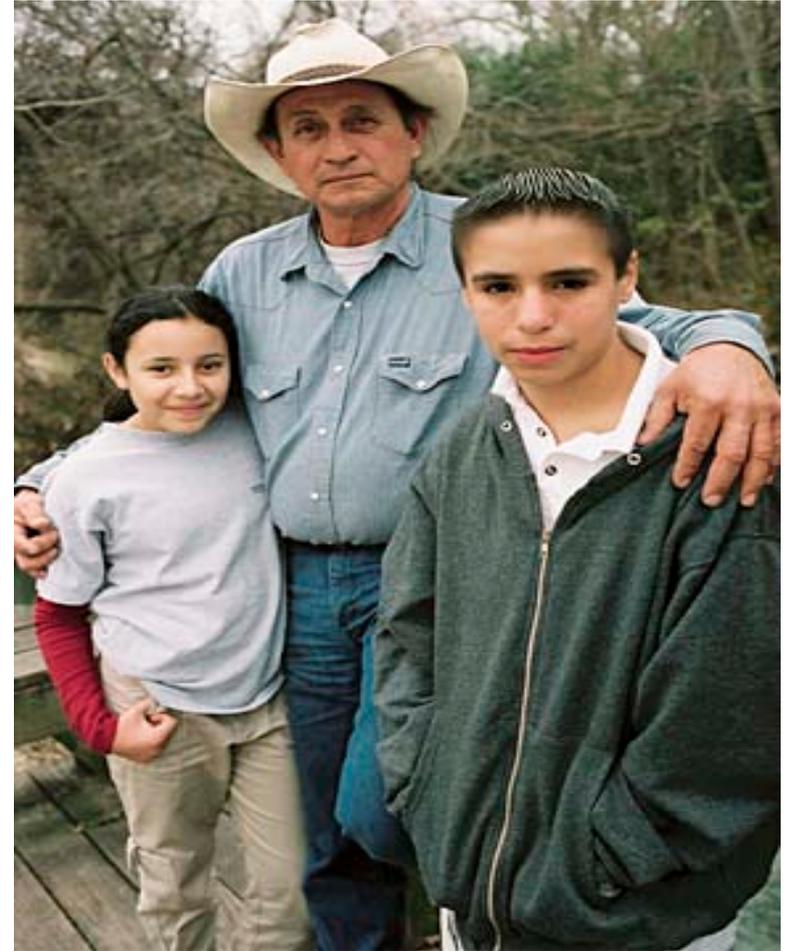
PARENTAL RESILIENCE

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

KNOWLEDGE of PARENTING  
and CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CONCRETE SUPPORT in  
TIMES of NEED

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL  
COMPETENCE of CHILDREN



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# Learning Network of Exemplary Programs

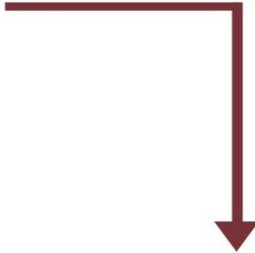


# How programs help strengthen families, promote optimal child development and prevent child abuse and neglect

Small but significant changes

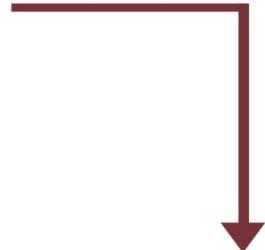
## Program strategies that:

Facilitate friendships and mutual support
Strengthen parenting
Respond to family crises
Link families to services and opportunities
Facilitate children's social and emotional development
Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect
Value and support parents



## Protective Factors

Parental resilience
Social connections
Knowledge of parenting and child development
Concrete support in times of need
Social and emotional competence of children



- Strengthened Families**
- Optimal Child Development**
- Reduced Child Abuse & Neglect**



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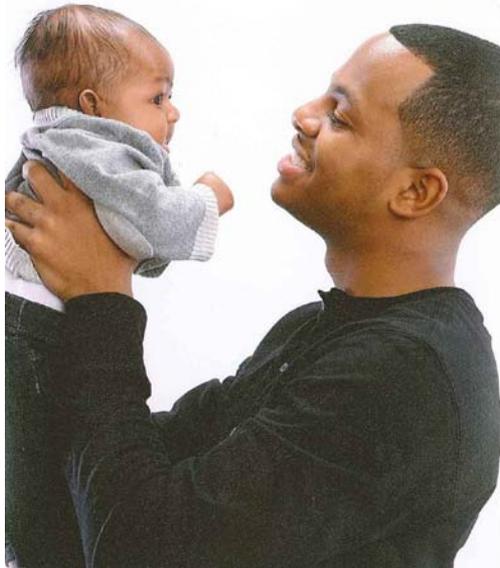
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What happened next:  
A surprising leap  
from programs  
to  
policy

# *A FEW BRAVE INNOVATORS*



- Alaska
- Arkansas
- Illinois
- Missouri
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Wisconsin

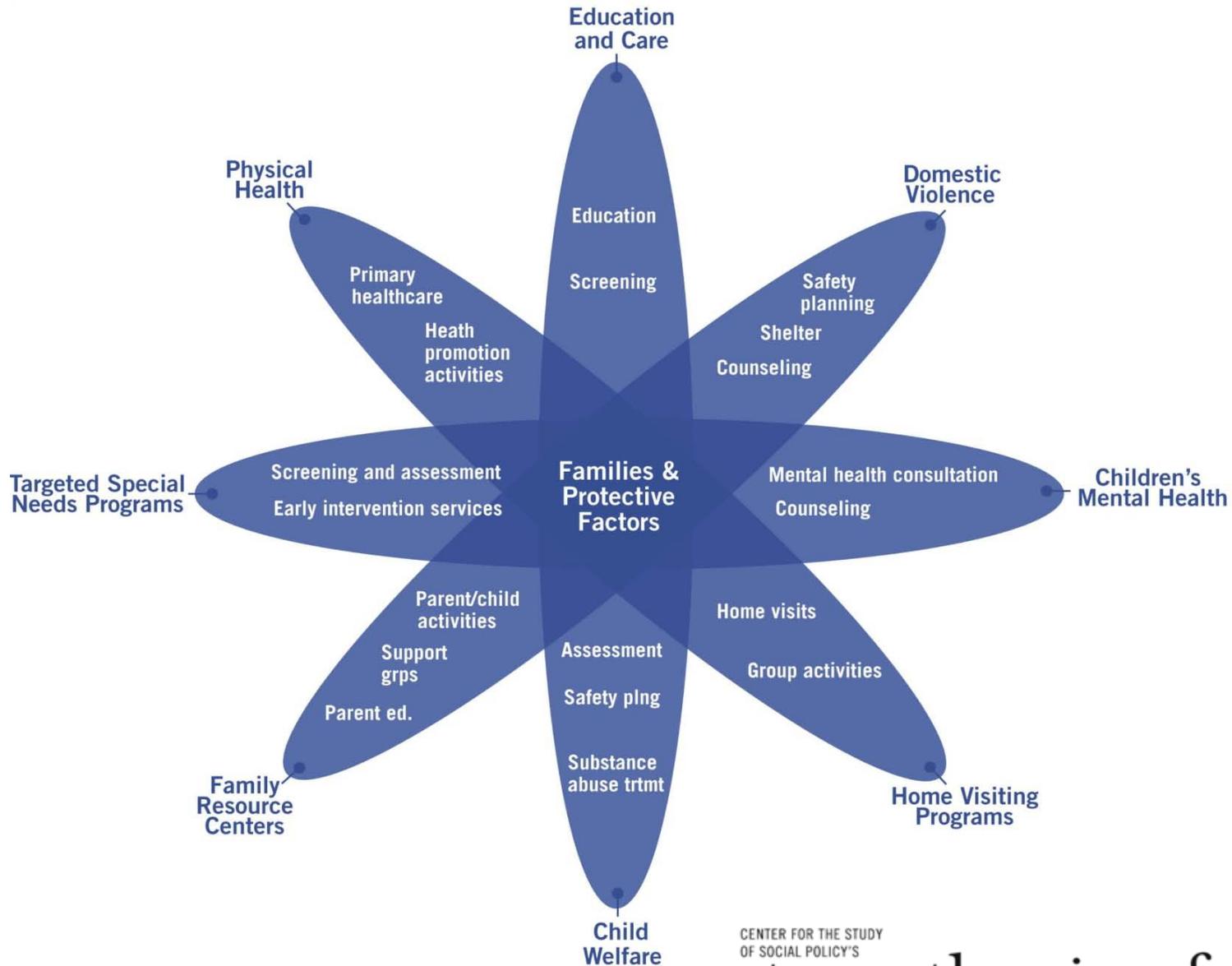
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*Parent leaders, state agencies  
and local programs quickly  
adapted the framework to create  
a platform for linkages across  
service systems and a way of  
engaging informal opportunities  
for families.*

# ALIGNING RESULTS FOR FAMILIES

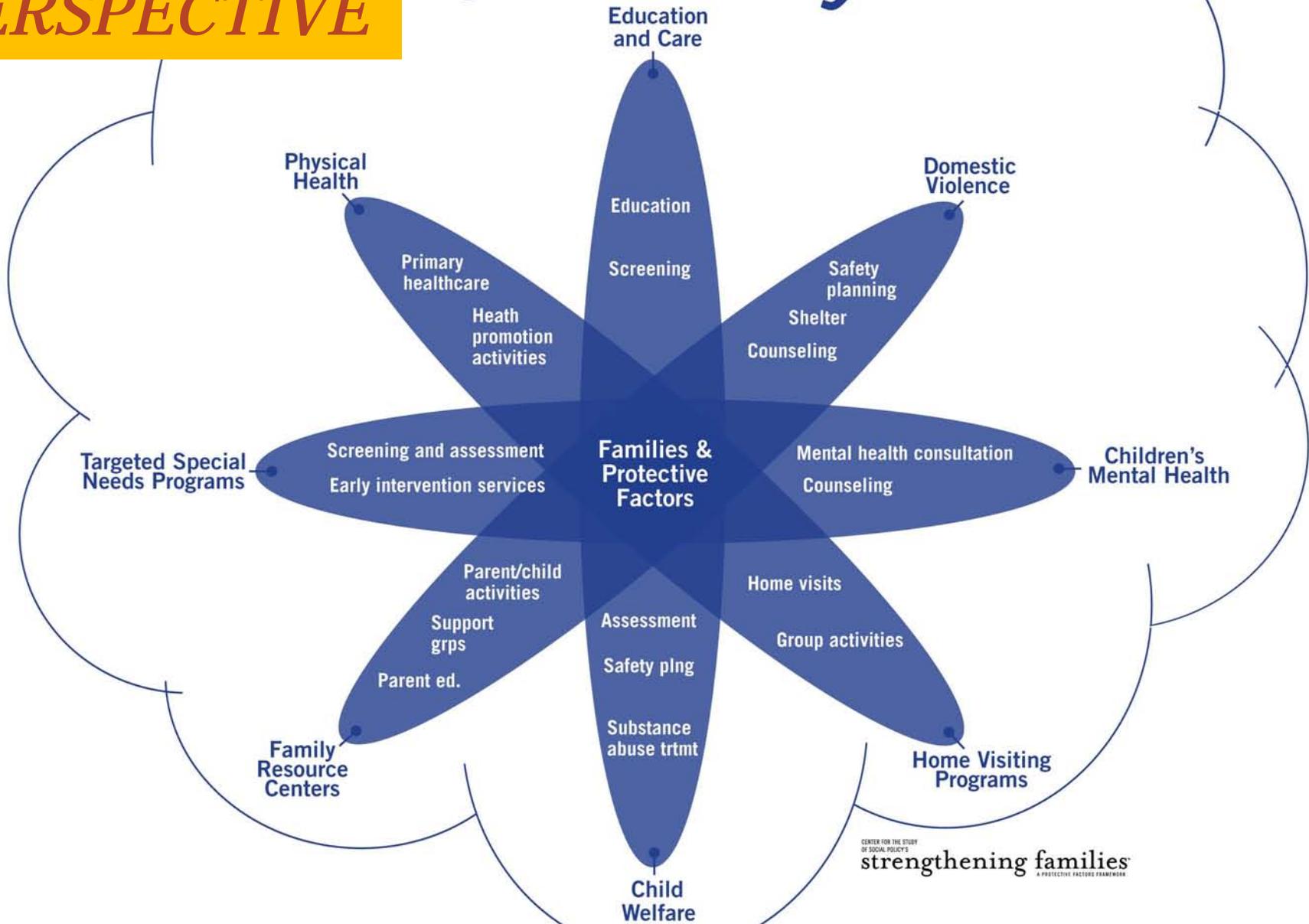


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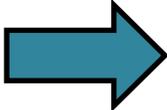
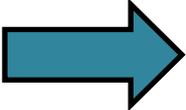
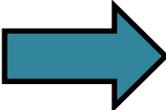
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# SERVICES IN PERSPECTIVE

## Community



# *FAMILIES TOOK LEADERSHIP*

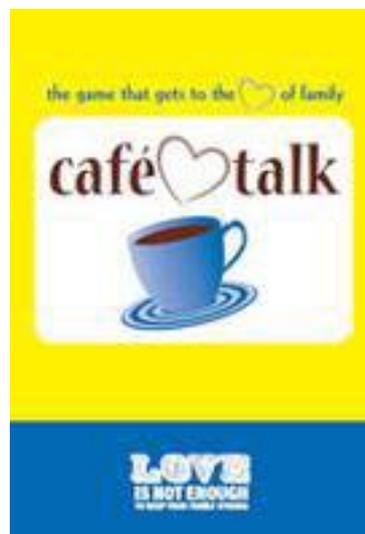
- “at risk” families  all families
- risk factors  protective factors/buffers  
to toxic stress
- prevention  promoting strong families  
and healthy development

**Parental Resilience** = Be strong and flexible

**LOVE**  
**IS NOT ENOUGH**  
TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY STRONG

**Social Connections** = Parents need friends

**Knowledge of Parenting** = Being a great parent is part natural and part learned



**Concrete Support** = We all need help sometimes

**Social and emotional development for children** = Help your children communicate and give them the love and respect they need

# *COMMUNITY CAFES - WASHINGTON*

- ***Parental Resilience*** = Courage
- ***Social Connections*** = Community
- ***Knowledge of Parenting*** = Health
- ***Concrete Support*** = Freedom
- ***Children's Social and Emotional Development*** = Compassion

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*This surprising “self-organizing” tipping point was quickly supported by key national organizations, nimble federal partners and a small amount of foundation funding.*

# *FEDERAL PARTNERS*

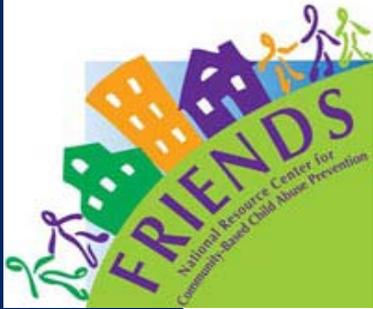
Administration for Children, Youth and Families:  
Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

Administration on Children and Families, Office of  
Child Care and Office of Head Start

Maternal and Child Health Bureau (ECCS)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration (SAMHSA), local Project Launch sites

Department of Defense, New Parents Program and  
Family Advocacy Program



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# *A FEDERAL FRAMEWORK?*

Interagency enthusiasm and structure

- Protective Factors Expert Panel
- Requests for Proposals
- Guidance for state plans (e.g. Early Learning Challenge grants)
- Military services for families

ACYF contract for Protective Factors framework to be developed within the next 18 months

# *STRENGTHENING FAMILIES NATIONAL NETWORK*



Parents as Teachers



ZERO  
TO  
THREE®

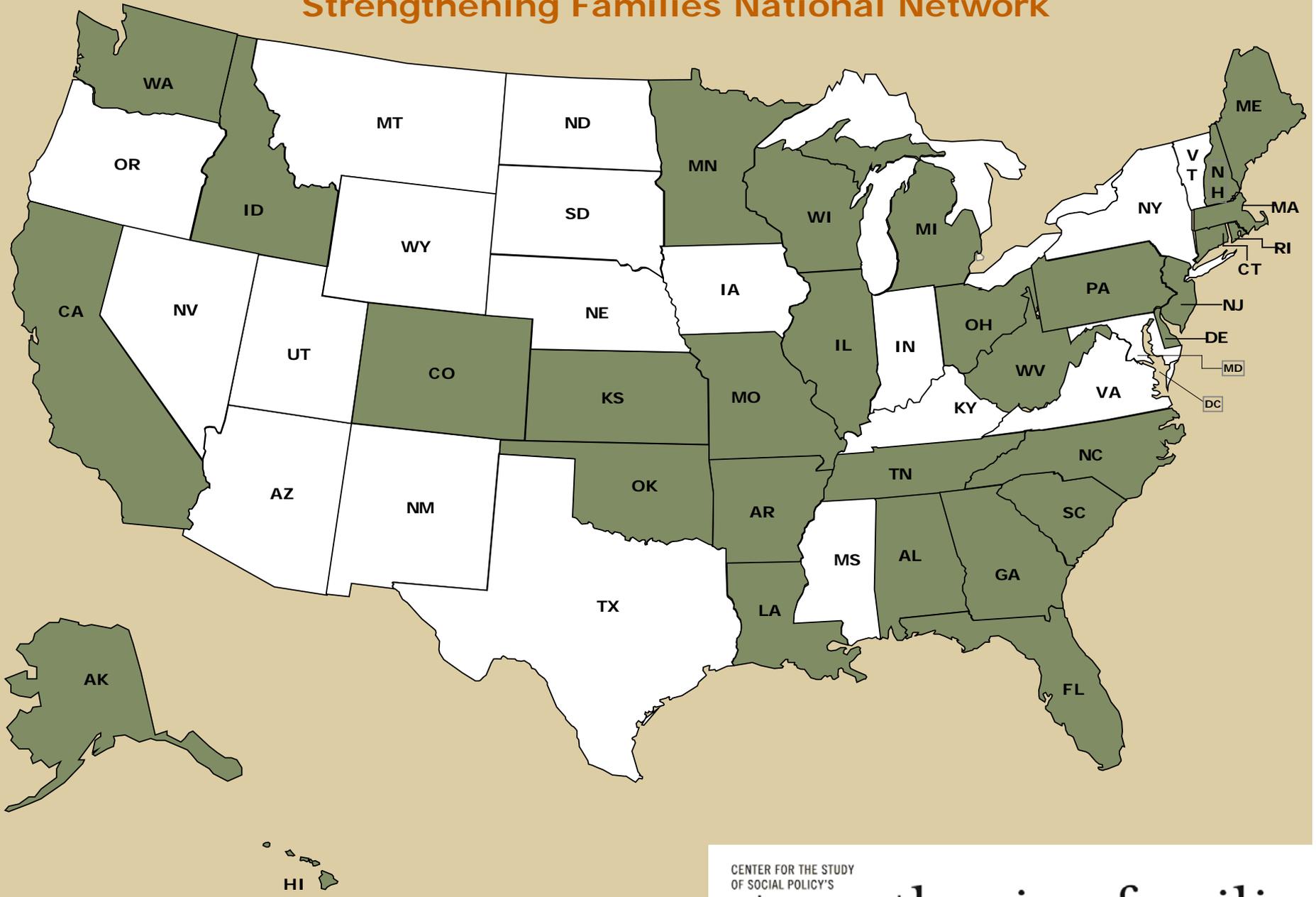
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families



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# Strengthening Families National Network



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A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

# *LEVERS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND SUSTAINING STRENGTHENING FAMILIES*

- Integration into policies and systems

- Professional development



- Real parent partnerships

# Strengthening Families: Creating a New Normal



## A New Normal

Families and communities, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on building protective and promotive factors to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for children, youth and families
- Recognize and support parents as decision makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

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[www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)

Judy Langford  
Center for the Study of Social Policy  
[judy.langford@cssp.org](mailto:judy.langford@cssp.org)

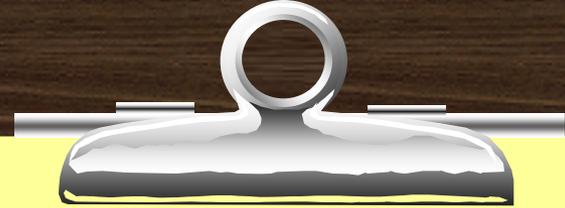
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# LA County Strengthening Families

January 25, 2012

Erwin McEwen



- **Child Welfare Systems should not be in the business of raising children, it should be in the business of strengthening families.**
  
- **“Primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family, and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.”**  
**--Family Resource Coalition, 1996--**



# Vision for Child Welfare

- Department that is approachable
- Can provide help and support to parents who are stressed and struggling to meet the needs of their children

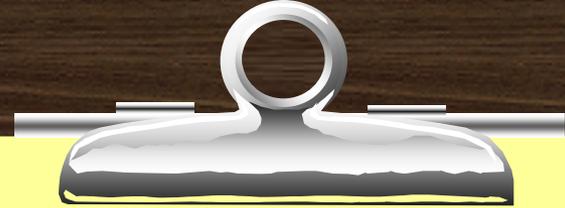
Vs.

- Department that “Takes away your kids”



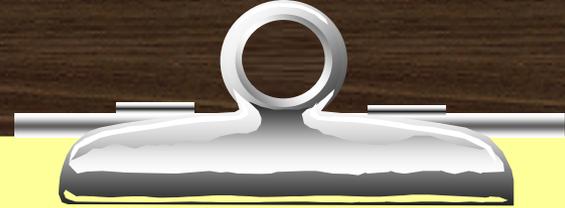
# Goal

1. Prevent families from coming into care
2. Help families in care reunite as soon as possible



Current research speaks to the  
short comings of:

- Investigations
- Foster Care



Dr. Kristine Campbell published in the recent edition  
of the archives of pediatric medicine:

- No Evidence CPS Investigations Impact
- Modifiable Risk Factors



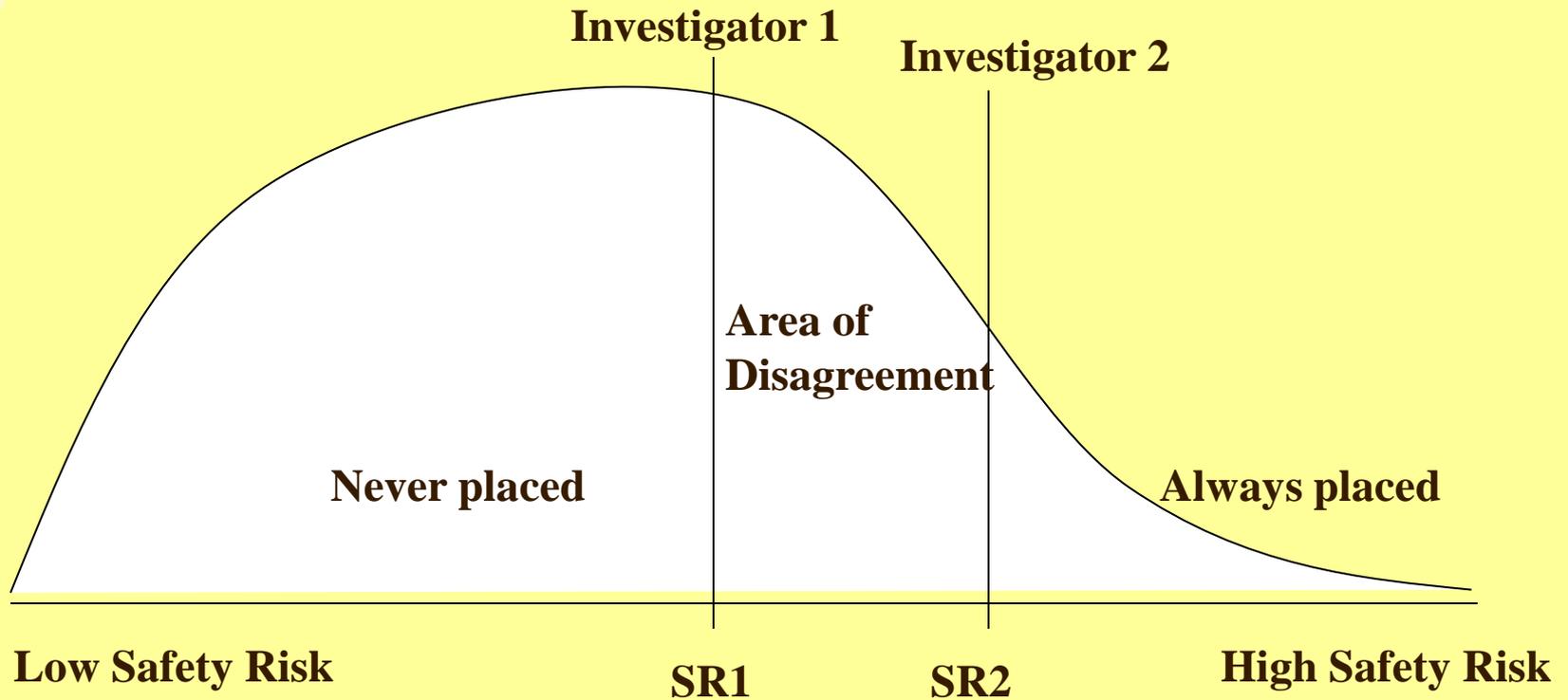
- 80% of Child Maltreatment cases do not result in child removal
- This represents the vast majority of families investigated by child protective service systems.



- Educational Performance
- Poverty
- Social Supports
- Family Functioning
- Child Behavior
- Maternal Depression Symptoms Worse



# Intervention Dilemma Cases



Strict Investigator 1 removes if  $SR > SR1$

Lenient Investigator 2 removes if  $SR > SR2$



# Detrimental Impact of Foster Care

Children at the margin of removal perform *worse* when they are removed from home<sup>1</sup>:

- 3x Higher Arrest Rate
- 3x Higher Delinquency
- 2x Higher Teen Motherhood
- 40% Lower Employment
- No Effects for Childhood Burns / Broken Bones;
- But 3x more likely to receive well-child visits.

<sup>1</sup>Doyle, J. J. (2007a). Child protection and child outcomes: Measuring the effects of foster care. *The American Economic Review*, 97(5), 1583—1610. Doyle, J. J. (2008). Child protection and adult crime: Using investigator assignment to estimate causal effects of foster care. *Journal of Political Economy*, 116(4), 746—770.

# Child Maltreatment Report Types of Maltreatment FY 2006

**75% of these cases  
are first time victims**

**Neglect  
64 %**

**Other  
15 %**

**Psychological  
Maltreatment  
6.6 %**

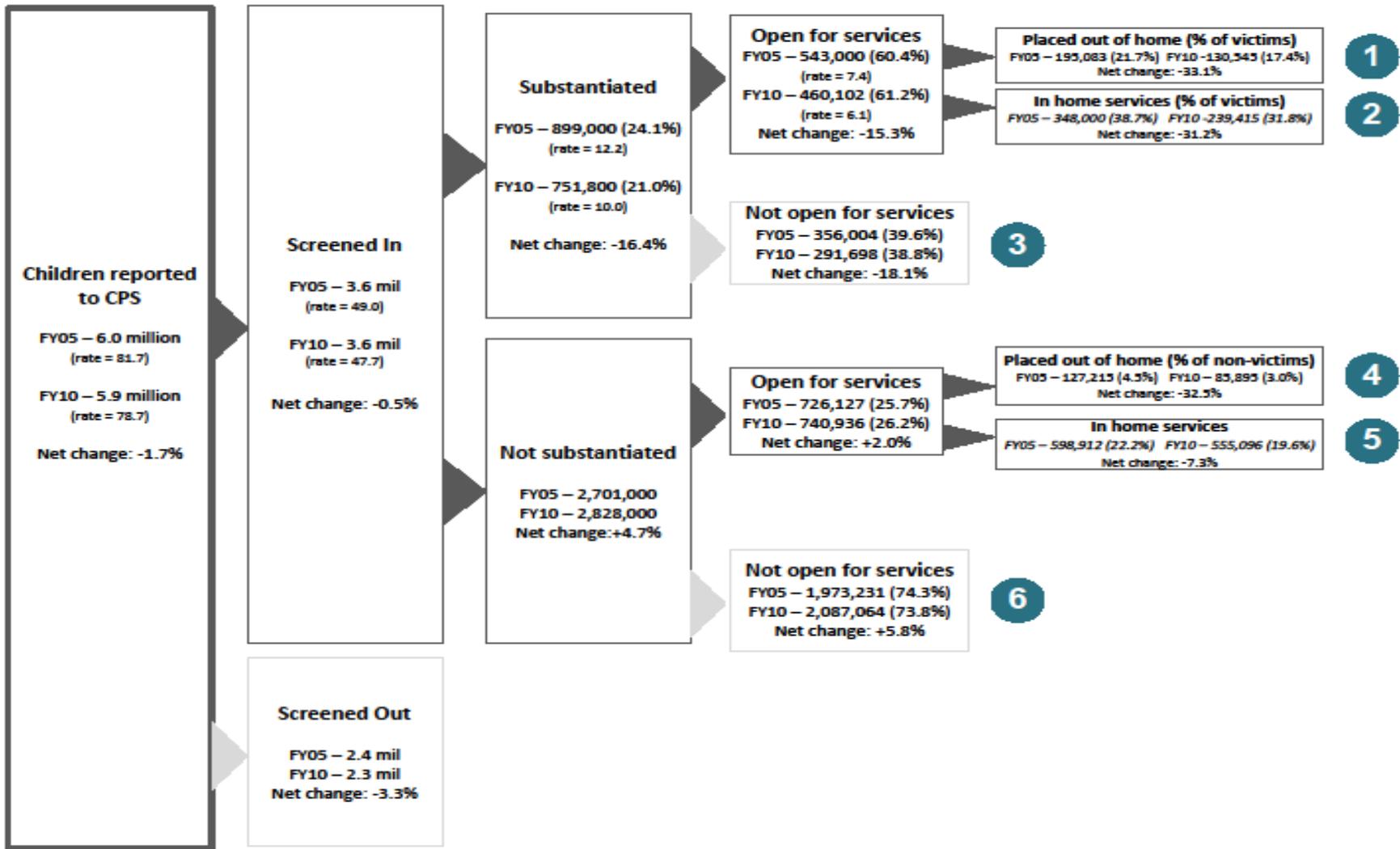
**Physical Abuse  
16 %**

**Sexual Abuse  
8.8%**

**Medical Neglect  
2.2%**

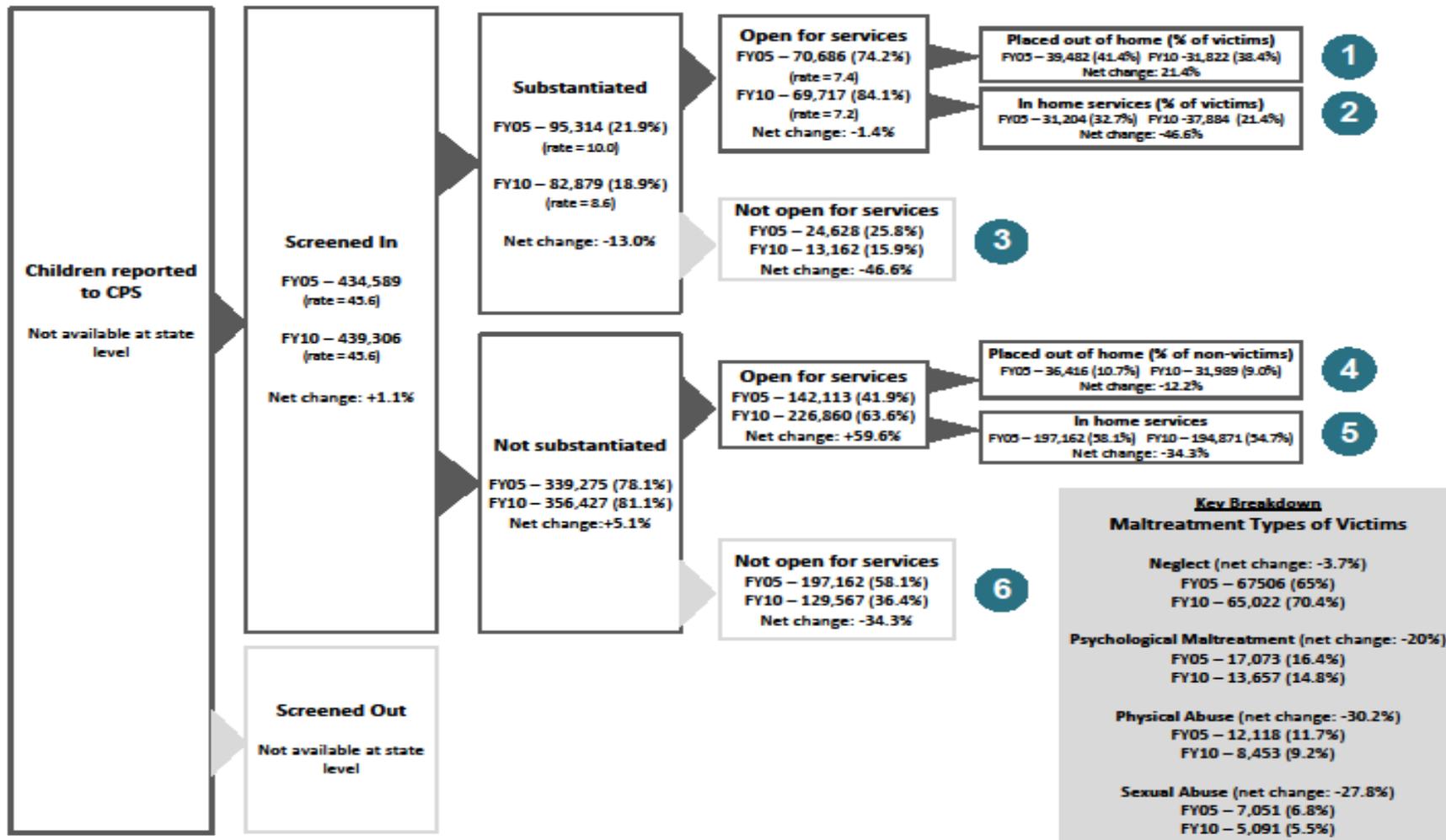
Adapted from Tony Loman, Institute of Applied Research. "Myths and Misconceptions about Differential Response."  
Power point. Differential Response Conference Columbus, Ohio November 12-14, 2008.

# NATIONAL: NCANDS – Key Populations



Note/Source: numbers presented as total counts of children and offered as estimates based on Child Maltreatment Reports; rates are presented per 1000 children in the general population

## California: NCANDS – Key Populations



Note/Source: numbers presented as total counts of children and offered as estimates based on Child Maltreatment Reports; rates are presented per 1000 children in the general population



# LONG TERM VISION

- Child welfare – continuously define and refine child welfare so that it becomes more closely aligned to child well-being (Don't always achieve child well-being using best child welfare tools.)
- Broad-based community impact around:
  - School performance
  - School misconduct
  - Youth violence
  - Community violence
  - Family well-being
  - Optimum Child Development
- Requires all of us!



## Strategic Goals for Strengthening Families

1. Embed the Protective Factors in all child welfare practices and initiatives
2. Ensure children 3-5 in child welfare system are enrolled in quality early care and education
3. Ensure collaboration at the community level among early childhood programs and agencies
4. Advance developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed child welfare practice
5. Work with public and private agencies to embed Protective Factors in child- and family-serving systems.



## Levers for making the Protective Factors paradigm shift

- Tools, assessments & checklists
- Provider database
- Training
- Performance contracting  
quality assurance tools
- Performance evaluation
- Case reviews
- Service planning
- Courts
- Communications
- Funding streams
- Policies



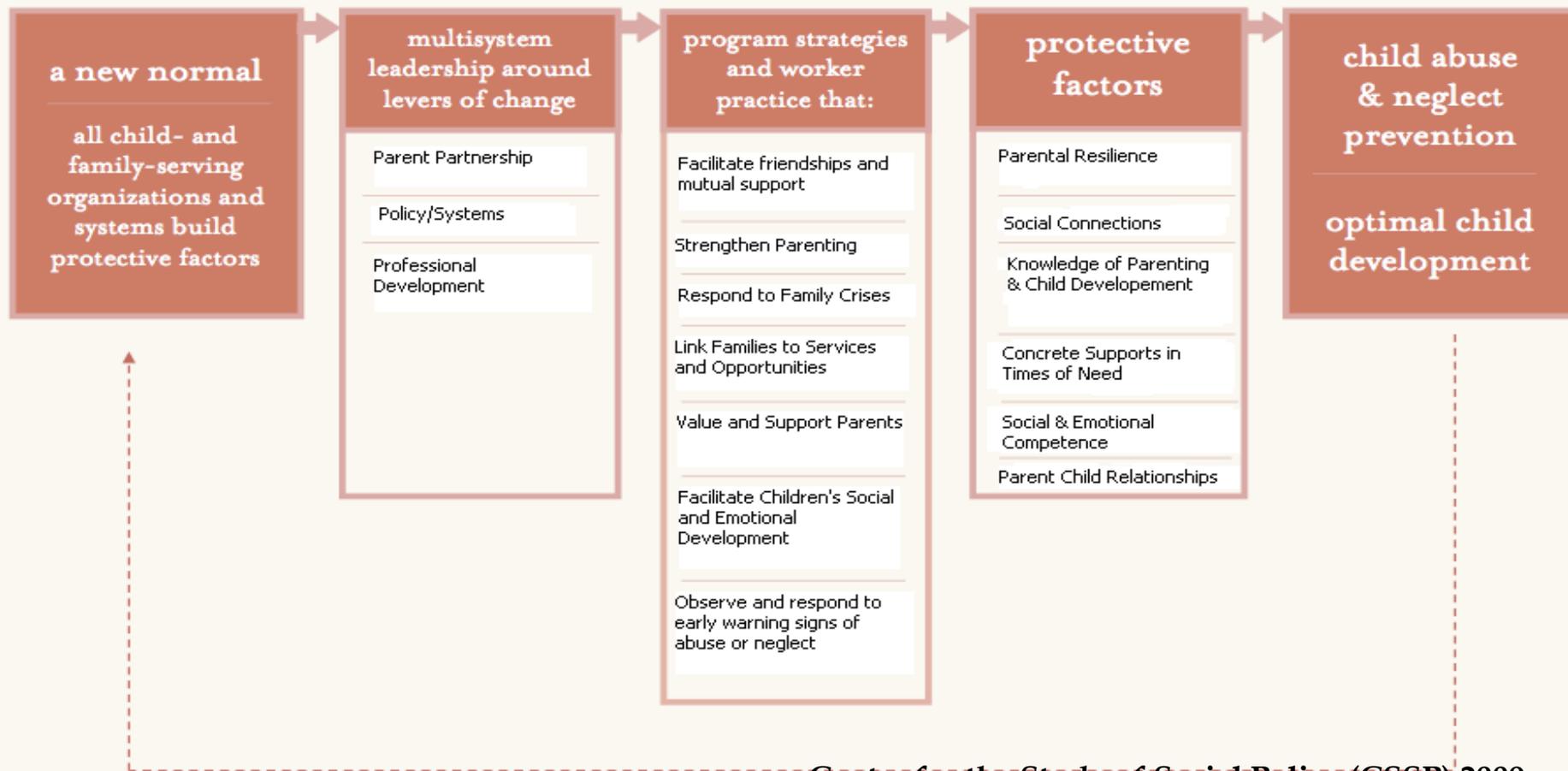
## “We Know You Love Your Kids ... ”

<b>Protective Factor</b>	<b>Common Language</b>
Parental Resilience	Be strong and flexible
Social Connections	Parents need friends
Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development	Being a great parent is part natural and part learned
Concrete Support in Times of Need	We all need help sometimes
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	Parents need to help their children communicate
Healthy Parent-Child Relationship	Give your children the love and respect they need



# strengthening families logic model

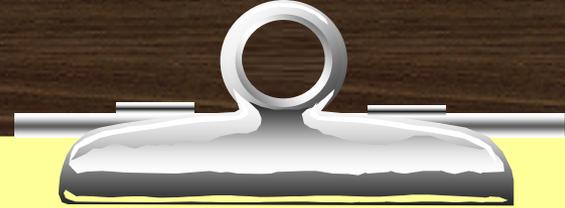
HOW POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICE CAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND PROMOTE OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT





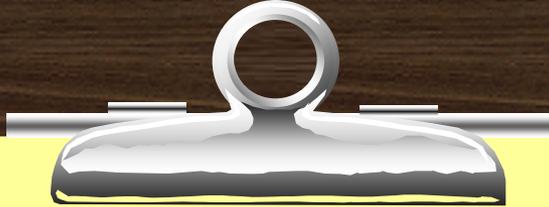
# Collaboration in Illinois

- Head Start Collaborative Agreements with every grantee agency in the state
- Public Schools
- Statewide Provider Database
- Psychological First Aid Training
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Human Services
- Strengthening Families Illinois -- Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, DHS/ Childcare Bureau, DHS Office of Community Health and Prevention, Illinois State Board of Education, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Illinois Network of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (and MOU with # R&R agencies)
- Constituents: Statewide Foster Parent Advisory Council, Birth Parent Councils, Youth Advisory Board and Child Welfare Staff (Leadership Summits, Data Summits, "Road Shows")



# Strengthening Families Illinois

- Supporting Foster Parents, Birth Parents, Adoptive Parents
- Supporting Teen Parents & Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
- Promoting Quality Early Education for Young Children in the Child Welfare System
- Building on DCFS partner agencies' relationships with public schools
- Assisting Child Welfare staff with embedding protective factors (contributing to tools & training)



# Strengthening Families Illinois

- 14 early childhood learning networks around the state engaging over 140 early childhood programs and centers serving approximately 11,000 families (DCFS Added 4 in FY 2011)

- Regional parent engagement coordinators involving and mobilizing parent leaders who want to strengthen their families and communities

- Local collaboration with schools, early childhood networks, home visitors, Differential Response, Family Advocacy Centers on Love Is Not Enough parent cafes and Awaken to Your Potential As a Person, As a Parent, As a Leader leadership training

- Over 7,000 individuals have attended Love Is Not Enough Parent Cafes

- Over 500 trained parent leaders on café

- Over 4,200 parents recruited as part of statewide leadership team committed to strong families and communities



In Closing...

“Inspiration and enthusiasm are of little value unless they move us to action and accomplishment.”

~Jim Casey~

## Strengthening Families Learning Community

### Introducing Our Speakers

**Bonnie Armstrong**, a long time child advocate, re-joined Casey Family Programs in 2008 to direct the foundation's strategic consulting work in Los Angeles County, focused on strengthening families and the child welfare system so that every child can live in a loving, safe and forever family. Ms. Armstrong was previously the Director of Advocacy and Community Development for the West Region (Arizona, California and Hawaii) of Casey Family Programs until 2002. In the interim, Ms. Armstrong served as Senior Fellow at the Foundation Consortium for California's Children & Youth where she led a public-private partnership between state government and philanthropy that resulted in significant changes in policy and practice for the child welfare system in California. Earlier, Ms. Armstrong acted as senior consultant to the National League of Cities and the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, and served two Florida Governors as Special Assistant for Health and Human Services. Ms. Armstrong is the author of numerous publications, including, *Making Government Work for Your City's Kids*, *Youth Development Planning Guide*, and *Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Futures*. She holds a Master's Degree in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College, and is a Certified Life Coach.

**Sam Chan**, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and District Chief with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH). During his tenure at DMH, he has administered many countywide programs and initiatives that promote systems transformation through interagency collaboration; community capacity building; program, policy and workforce development; and public education. Prior to joining DMH, Dr. Chan held senior administrative and faculty positions at the California School of Professional Psychology, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the USC School of Medicine and the UCLA Department of Psychology. He continues to be a voice for public-private sector partnerships advocating for family and community strengthening and governmental transformation. Dr. Chan currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment and represents DMH on the Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

**Frank Farrow** has served as the director of the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) since 2001. In that role, he has helped build the organization's capacity for policy analysis and research, as well as technical assistance to federal and state governments and local communities. With CSSP's board and leadership team, Farrow has focused CSSP on work that has a clear tie to improved results for children, families and communities; a commitment to equity and to CSSP's evolution as an anti-racist organization; and to strategies that integrate service system reform, community change and policy analysis. Prior to becoming director, Mr. Farrow served as CSSP's deputy director and as director of children's services. From 1999 through 2009, Mr. Farrow also served as the director of community change initiatives at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, Maryland, where he implemented new approaches to technical assistance and managed a national place-based initiative. Mr. Farrow was the director of social services for the state of Maryland from 1983 – 1987. In that capacity he managed the state's child welfare programs, services to the impaired elderly, community services for chronically mentally ill adults, child day care, services for the homeless and other social services. He has chaired national and international boards, most recently the board of the

International Initiative for Children, Youth and Families. He holds a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree in social welfare policy and planning from the University of Chicago.

**Dorothy Fleisher** is director for the W.M. Keck Foundation's Southern California Program, where she oversees grant-making in the areas of arts; cultural, civic, and community services; health care; and pre-collegiate education. She is also responsible for the W.M. Keck Foundation Early Learning Program, established to promote excellence in the field of early childhood education. Dr. Fleisher worked for United Way for 14 years, where she oversaw allocations to a network of organizations and launched several major initiatives. Dr. Fleisher earned her Ph.D. in social work from the University of Southern California. She represents the W. M. Keck Foundation on the Los Angeles Partnership for Early Childhood Investment and serves as the Chair of the Community Research & Investment Committee.

**William T Fujioka** was born and raised in Los Angeles County. Mr. Fujioka began his County career in 1978 and has held a variety of positions within the organization. In 1997, he moved to the City of Los Angeles, serving as General Manager of the Personnel Department for two years and then serving eight years as the City's Administrative Officer. In 2007 he returned to the County of Los Angeles as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Mr. Fujioka has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz and has noted that "In Los Angeles County we have an opportunity to provide meaningful and lasting contributions that improve the lives of those we serve; and we do so with great pride, commitment and dedication."

**Judy Langford** is an Associate Director and Senior Fellow with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. In this capacity, Ms. Langford's responsibilities include field research, policy and program analysis and technical assistance to foundations, governmental agencies and private organizations on the development and implementation of family supportive practices and policies. She is currently the national project director for Strengthening Families, a multidisciplinary approach to preventing child abuse and promoting healthy child development that is now used in more than 25 states. Langford is also part of the leadership team for the federal Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood. She is the former executive director of the Family Resource Coalition and previously headed the Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago. She has been an advisor to numerous foundations, including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and Casey Family Programs.

**Jacquelyn McCroskey**, DSW, holds the John Milner Professorship in Child Welfare at the University of Southern California School of Social Work. She is an active advocate for children and families in Los Angeles County, advising policy makers, administrators and philanthropists on using data to improve program planning and track results. Her research focuses primarily on the financing and organization of services for children and families, utilization of results and performance measurement, and the effectiveness of child welfare, juvenile justice and early care and education services. Dr. McCroskey was appointed to the Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care by Supervisor Yaroslavsky (2000-present) and currently serves as its Chair.

**Erwin McEwen** served as the Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) between 2006 and 2011. Prior to his appointment, Mr. McEwen served as Deputy Director of the agency's Division of Monitoring and Quality Assurance of DCFS. In addition to his work with DCFS,

Mr. McEwen has extensive experience working with children and families via community-based organizations including Kaleidoscope, Hull House, and Lakeside Community Committee. “I grew up in Chicago in the Robert Taylor Homes at a much different time. I saw families facing challenges, but I also saw children loved and supported by a strong network of family and friends. I wanted to be an influence for change and to make a difference in these young lives.” Mr. McEwen has received numerous citations for his many outstanding achievements. In 1998, he received the University of Chicago’s Evelyn Harris Ginsburg Memorial Prize, as well as the University’s Elinor Nims Brink Fellowship. The Chicago Police Department and Board of Education have recognized his achievements with the We Care Role Model award. In 2008, the Chicago District of the National Association of Social Workers - Illinois Chapter honored him with its Social Worker of the Year award.

**Patricia Ploehn, LCSW**, currently serves as Assistant Chief Executive Officer, managing the Service Integration Branch within the Chief Executive Office and the Education Coordinating Council. Ms. Ploehn has had a distinguished career working with vulnerable children and families. She began her work with the County in 1979 as a treatment counselor working with children and youth at the MacLaren Children’s Center. She went on to work as a social worker, supervisor and administrator within the Department of Children and Family Services. She served as the department Director from 2006 through 2010. Ms. Ploehn graduated from California State University, Los Angeles, with a Bachelor’s degree in sociology and received a Master’s of Social Work (MSW) degree from California State University, Long Beach. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in the state of California.

**Gwen I. Walden** is the Executive Director of the LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment (Partnership). Founded in 2003, the Partnership is a philanthropic funding collaborative comprised of some of the country’s largest private foundations, impactful family foundations and public funders of early childhood development. Currently, the Partnership’s top focus area is “Strengthening Families in High Need Communities.” Ms. Walden brings her considerable experience to the Partnership, including an encyclopedic knowledge of the history and practice of philanthropy, and her hands-on experience managing major foundation initiatives and functions. Ms. Walden has received national recognition for her numerous articles on current issues in philanthropy. She holds a Bachelor’s degree from The George Washington University and a Master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University.

**Mika Yamamoto** is the Special Assistant to the Chief Deputy Director of the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. With over 28 years of experience with the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Ms. Yamamoto has had the opportunity to work in many facets of the Department. She has spent many years working as the park superintendent at the regional parks including Castaic Lake State Recreation Area and Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. Currently, as the unincorporated areas liaison for the Department, Ms. Yamamoto works on countywide initiatives following the recreational trends, concerns and needs of the residents. Ms. Yamamoto also oversees department programs including healthy parks, gang violence prevention, youth self-sufficiency and child care policies along with the Department’s multi-million dollar grant management and legislative affairs. As a park professional, Ms. Yamamoto is a board member of the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials and a commissioner on the County’s Policy Roundtable for Child Care.

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The **5 Protective Factors** are the foundation of the **Strengthening Families Approach**. When the **Protective Factors** are robust in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes.

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

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*Informing the Los Angeles County  
Strengthening Families Learning Community*

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*Informing the Los Angeles County  
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**What We Know: Families thrive when protective factors are robust in their lives and communities.**

Using the Strengthening Families Approach, more than 30 states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states and counties also use the Protective Factors Framework to align services for children and families, strengthen families in the child welfare system and work in partnership with families and communities to build protective factors. For more information and many tools and options for implementation, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net).

Nationally, Strengthening Families is coordinated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and supported by national partner organizations including:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- The Finance Project
- FRIENDS National Resource Center
- The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
- Parents As Teachers
- United Way Worldwide
- ZERO TO THREE

## The Protective Factors Framework

Five Protective Factors are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach: parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. Research studies support the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these protective factors are also "promotive" factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

### Parental Resilience

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

### Social Connections

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

### Concrete Support in Times of Need

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

### Social and Emotional Competence of Children

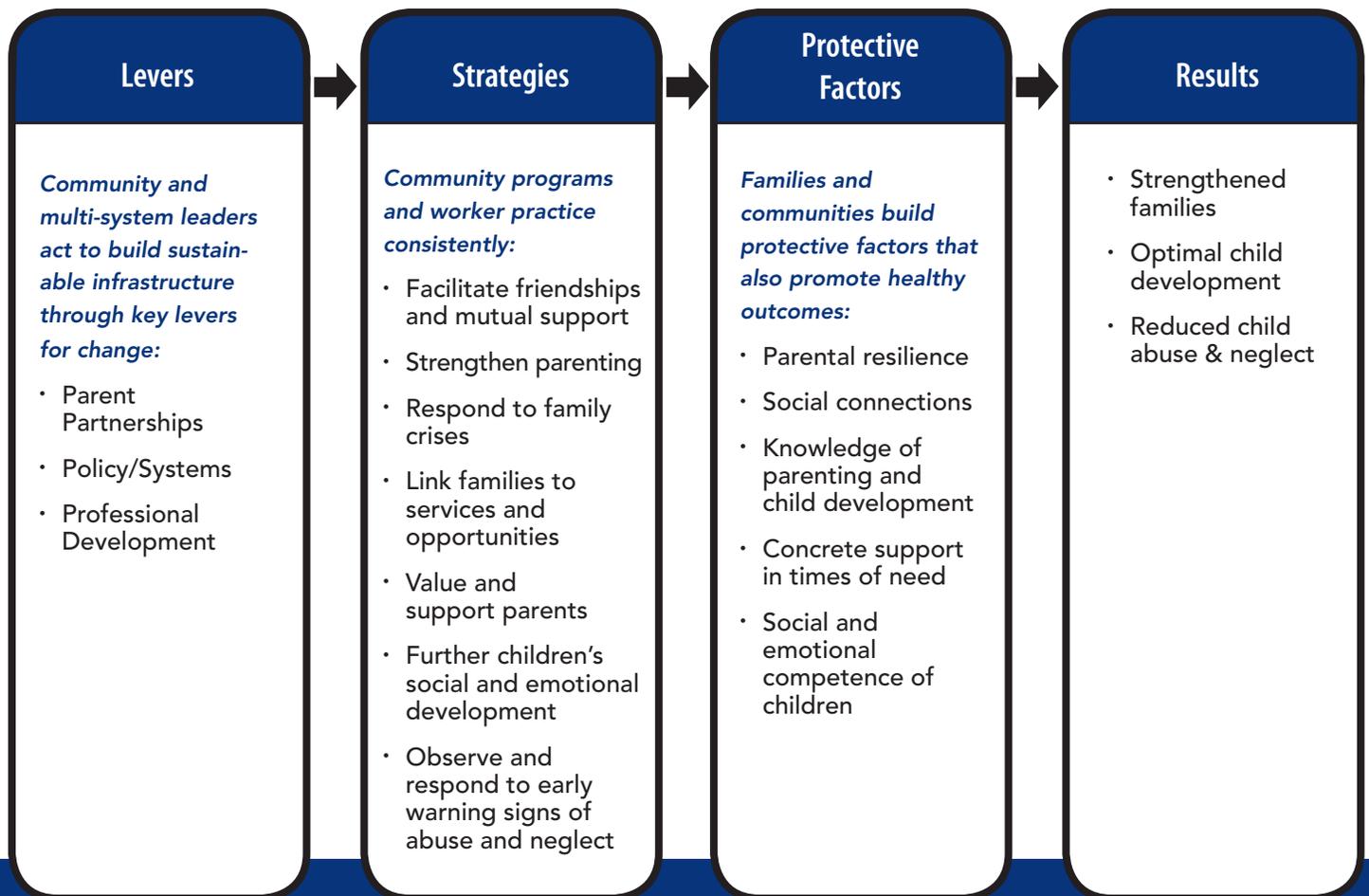
A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Mobilizing partners, communities and families  
to build family strengths, promote optimal  
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## Strengthening Families: Creating a New Normal

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### A New Normal

Families and communities, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on building protective and promotive factors to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for children, youth and families
- Recognize and support parents as decision makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

# 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. Partnerships have developed because each partner can see a benefit of the Protective Factors to their own work with families, so they are willing to align resources and share leadership for planning and results. These leadership teams have demonstrated that Strengthening Families can be a powerful tool for helping separate elements of support join together as an effective system to achieve outcomes for children and families.

As a comprehensive approach to working with families and not a model program, Strengthening Families is intended to be adapted to different contexts, programs and service systems. This allows each partner to apply the Protective Factors Framework within the context of their own work with children and families – whether that is domestic violence services, family child care, services for children with special needs or others. In addition, because Strengthening Families does not require new funding and can be implemented through low-cost and no-cost innovations, it has helped agencies shape existing resources around common goals. States with no new dollars to spend have built the Protective Factors Framework into existing contracts, requests for proposals, trainings or other vehicles already in place to shape and support collaborative practices.

Strengthening Families also supports family leadership, an arena that has often been a challenge for formal service systems. The Protective Factors Framework applies to all families and focuses on building strengths, which offers a positive starting point for family engagement. Program strategies built on the framework are intended to be adapted to the cultures, traditions and values of participating families, since Protective Factors are built and expressed differently in different contexts. Many tools and concrete examples for building parent leadership and engaging families as partners have been developed through Strengthening Families initiatives around the country.

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:

- 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
- 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

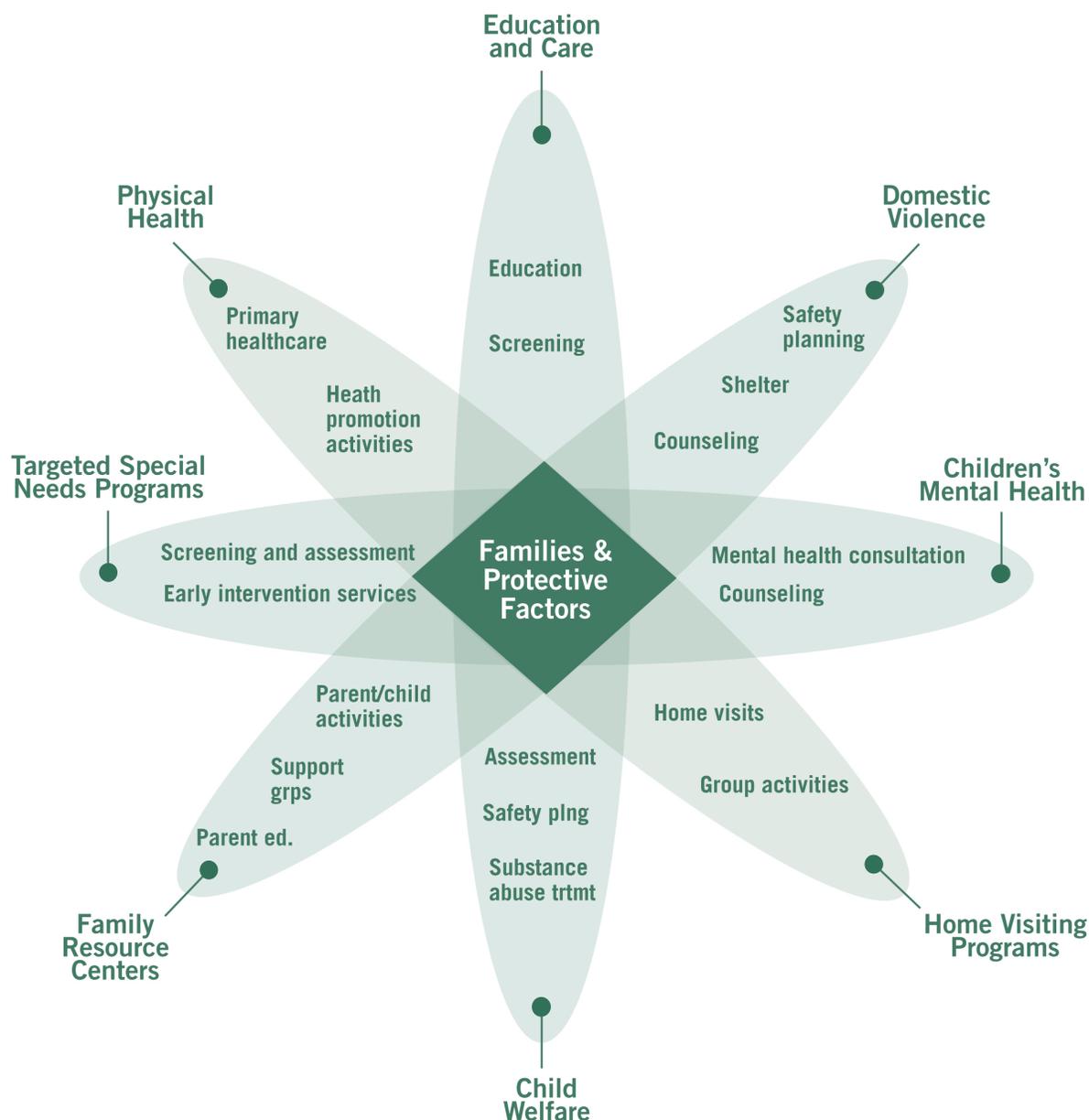
## Strengthening Families as a Platform for Collaboration

State leadership teams have used the Strengthening Families framework to show how all parts of a system are linked through efforts to build protective factors with families.

Diverse agencies and programs are responsible for specialized parts of the system, but all of them focus some aspect of their work on families. Their goals intersect in the need to create a strong partnership with families and to support the family's role in promoting their children's development.

The Protective Factors Framework combines familiar research findings that already guide policies and practices into a comprehensive approach to supporting families. The framework offers a common language to describe what all families need regardless of which part of the system they touch:

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



# Levers for Change: Implementing and Sustaining Strengthening Families in States and Counties

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.

Using very small investments, these levers can create incentives, capacity and significant momentum to encourage local programs and service systems to use the Protective Factors Framework. The levers create a systemic, scalable and sustainable opportunity to implement the Protective Factors.

The three levers for change are: ■ Parent partnerships ■ Professional development ■ Policy and systems

## Parent Partnerships

Leadership from parents at every level ensures that program and practice strategies (a) are responsive and relevant to all kinds of family needs and choices (b) model the relationships among families, service providers, and community resources that can promote the best possible partnership to support children’s development and (c) engage parents as active partners. Partnerships work best when many parents are consistently involved as decision-makers in program planning, implementation and assessment.

Starting points for implementing successful 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
- 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

## Professional Development

Infusing the Protective Factors Framework into training for all people who work with children and families helps build a workforce across disciplines with common knowledge, goals and language. Professionals at every level, from frontline workers to supervisors and administrators, should get training tailored to their roles with a consistent message focused on Strengthening Families.

Starting points for using professional development to implement Strengthening Families:

- 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

- 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

## Policies and Systems

Strengthening Families can serve as a platform for coordination across diverse initiatives since it’s based on research used by different disciplines and focuses on goals held in common by several departments and agencies. The Protective Factors Framework provides a bridge for promoting optimal child development AND preventing child abuse and neglect. Regulations and procedures that govern everyday practice are one avenue for creating and reinforcing linkages across agencies using Strengthening Families as a basis for their work.

Policy and systems strategies for building collaboration:

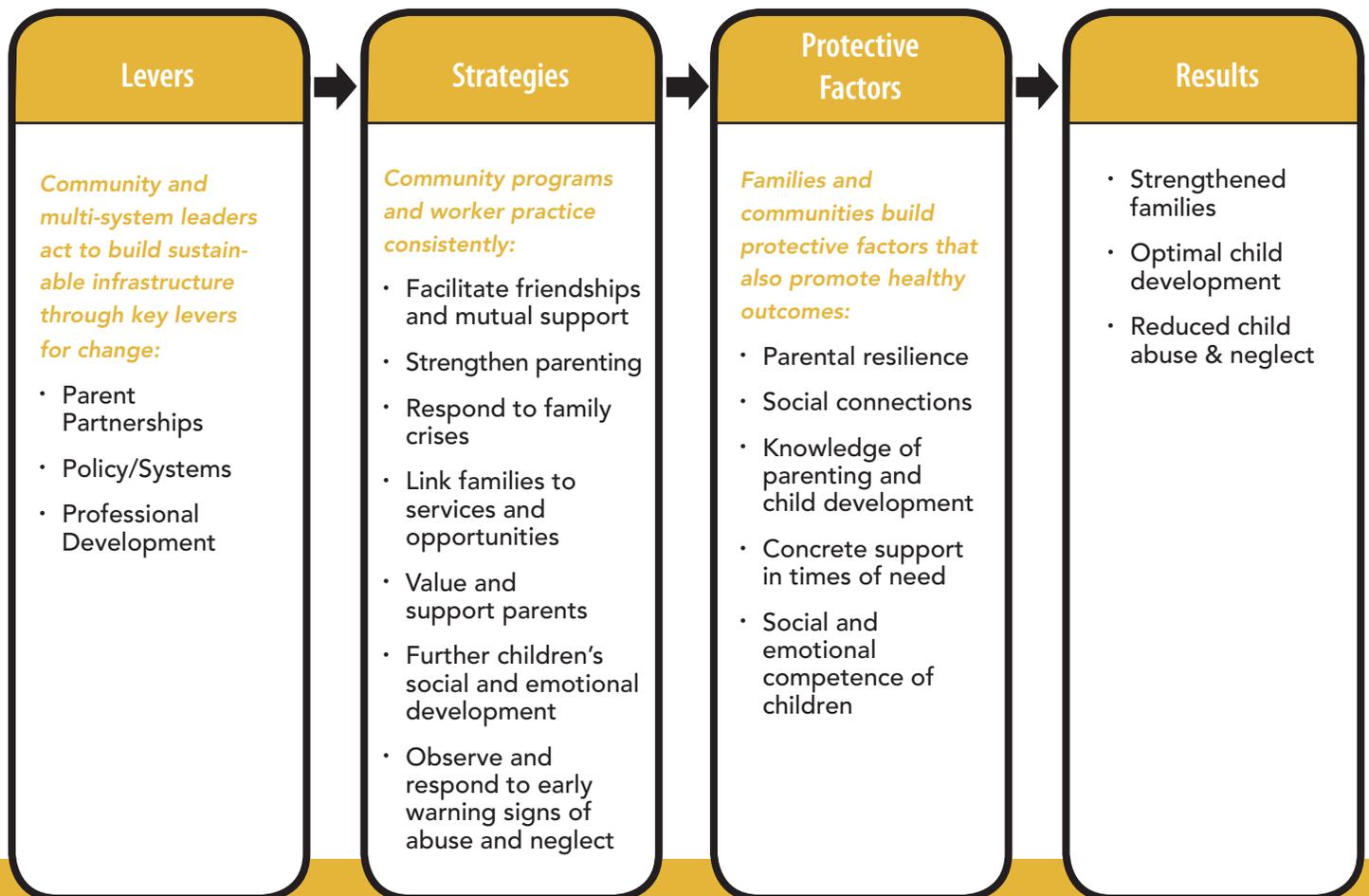
- Engage multidisciplinary partners responsible for improving child outcomes and preventing maltreatment in Strengthening Families state leadership
- Use the Protective Factors Framework to define a shared set of desired outcomes for families across systems and disciplines
- Link Strengthening Families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

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# Strengthening Families National Network

**What We Know: Families thrive when protective factors are robust in their lives and communities.**

The Protective Factors Framework is the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach. It summarizes what research reveals about the family attributes that act as buffers against stress and protect against the likelihood of child maltreatment. These same five factors are also “promotive factors” that build strengths and help create a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

The Protective Factors include:

1. Parental Resilience
2. Social Connections
3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
4. Concrete Support in Times of Need
5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) connects the many partners who are implementing the Protective Factors approach through the Strengthening Families National Network.

Strengthening Families is by far the most recognized child abuse prevention strategy in the nation, supported by leaders at every level. The network provides a forum for sharing the many tools and ongoing learning emerging across national, state and local work.

## National Partner Organizations

- *The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds* provides leadership and major support for Strengthening Families implementation through the Alliance's Parent Partnership Council and through a powerful learning community of more than 30 state Children's Trust Funds and their partners.
- *United Way Worldwide* has developed tools and strategies to help local United Ways embed Strengthening Families in their work. This includes using the Protective Factors as a guide for funding decisions, 2-1-1 operations, early childhood and family services and for developing innovative Strengthening Families programs for their business partners.
- *ZERO TO THREE* has developed and delivered waves of high quality training to cross disciplinary teams of almost 1,000 trainers, helping more than 30,000 child care providers put the Protective Factors Framework into practice.
- *Child Welfare Information Gateway* uses and promotes the Protective Factors Framework and Levers for Change to outline guidance for child abuse prevention strategies throughout the country on its websites and in its annual resource guides.
- *FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention* supports community-based child abuse prevention grantees in all 50 states using Protective Factors as a basis for their work. It has also developed a validated survey to measure results with families.
- *Parents As Teachers* has incorporated Strengthening Families into its basic curriculum, using the framework for a variety of parent educator and family child care provider trainings, annually reaching more than 350,000 children worldwide.

## State and Local Strengthening Families Initiatives

More than 30 states have developed interdisciplinary leadership teams to implement Strengthening Families. While implementation differs greatly from state to state, there is a commitment in each jurisdiction to use every opportunity to increase the use of the Strengthening Families approach across agencies and programs. In addition to parent leaders, state leadership teams include representatives from child welfare, early childhood, maternal and child health, education, mental health, juvenile justice and sometimes corrections and legal services.

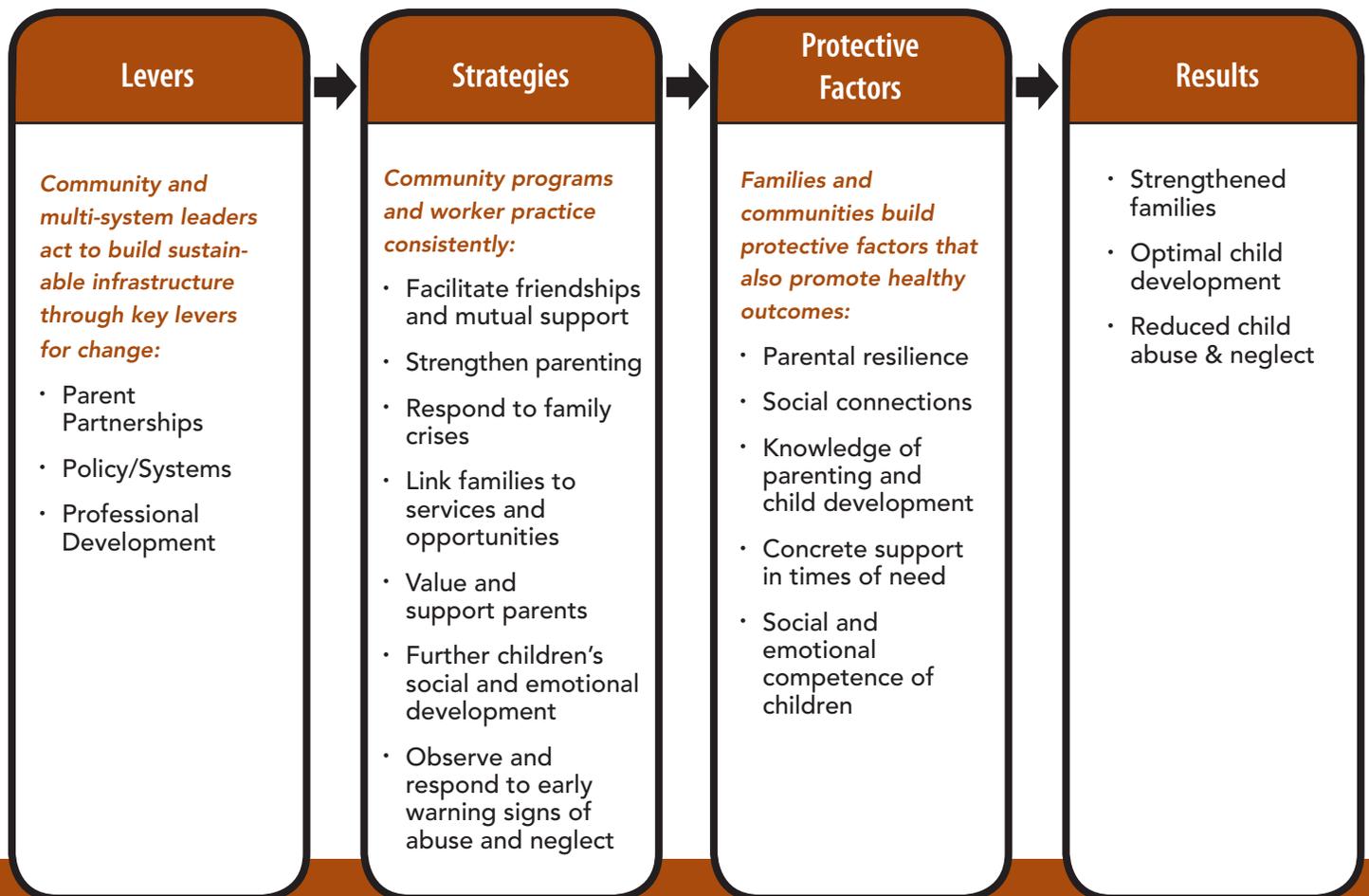
Several counties and local communities have developed their own local implementation of Strengthening Families, using the approach as a powerful tool to increase collaboration among agencies, engage parent leaders more consistently and link state and community resources more effectively.

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# Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework 2011- 2013 Promoting Healthy Children, Strong Families and Vibrant Communities



## Executive Summary

The Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework (Policy Framework) 2011-2013 reaffirms the commitment of the Board of Supervisors (Board), County departments and community stakeholders to close the gap between what we **know** and what we **do** to support the healthy development of young children, their families, and our communities.

Despite significant budget challenges in the last few years, implementation of the original Child Care Policy Framework, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 6, 2009, resulted in significant accomplishments by several departments, a deeper understanding of ongoing challenges and a host of lessons learned; however, much work remains. The Child Care Policy Framework 2011-2013 builds on those successes, shared learning across departments, community-based agencies and clients, and seeks to engage new partners who share the vision of promoting healthy children, strong families, and vibrant communities.

### Goals for 2011-13

**Goal One:** The quality of child development services for children birth to five years of age in Los Angeles County will be improved as the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) is expanded and support services to STEP participants are intensified.

**Strategies:** Expand STEP to additional communities, grow STEP's on-site coaching and link STEP participants to County resources to offer families "concrete supports in times of need".

**Partners and Commitments:** Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

**Goal Two:** Utilization of local, State, and Federal child development resources will be maximized. All available resources and policies will help strengthen the child development infrastructure and support the expansion of high quality child development programs that integrate family support, health, mental health and other relevant services.

**Strategies:** Continue efforts to enlist public and private sector partners to advocate for the maintenance and/or expansion of funding for high quality, comprehensive services that ensure the safety of children and promote school success, strong families and communities; and expand efforts to assure that all available resources are used to benefit families and children.

**Partners and Commitments:** Chief Executive Office Intergovernmental Relations and External Affairs Branch and external advocacy groups including but not limited to Advancement Project, First 5 LA, Los Angeles County Office of Education - Head Start (LACOE-HS), LAUP, LAUSD, and Preschool California

**Goal Three:** County departments will work collaboratively with each other and community partners to maximize the utilization of available child development resources, support quality improvements and promote the delivery of integrated services for children and their families.

**Strategies:** Develop strategies to make the subsidized child development system more accessible to vulnerable children and families in Los Angeles County; convene a forum with after school community-based providers to identify opportunities to increase the enrollment of youth under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation in safe and educationally enriching activities during non-school hours; convene Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Agencies and child development stakeholders

to explore possible collaborative efforts to include child development personnel in Team Decision Making conferences; launch a targeted outreach effort aimed at CalWORKs participants with young children who are experiencing homelessness; promote, among Children's Services Workers, an understanding of the lifelong impacts of early brain development including cognitive, emotional and physical well-being.

**Partners and Commitments:** County departments (DCFS, Probation, Department of Public Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Library, Los Angeles County Office of Education/Head Start (LACOE/HS)), R&R agencies, LAUP, California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD)-contracted California State Preschool Programs, Long Beach Unified School District Head Start Programs, Regional Centers, Children Today, ICAN (Inter-agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect) Task Force on Pregnant and Parenting Teens, DCFS Pregnant and Parenting Teens Work Group, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, University of Southern California-School of Social Work

**Goal Four:** County departments will work collaboratively with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), key school districts and community-based child development services to integrate services, thereby supporting effective: a) articulation between child development and kindergarten, including approaches to effectively engage parents in the education of their children; b) design of developmentally appropriate transitional kindergarten programs; and c) identification and/or utilization of new or nontraditional funding for child development services such as, but not limited to, Federal Title 1 funds, to serve special populations.

**Strategies:** Promote articulation between child development programs and grades K-3, and the establishment of developmentally appropriate transition kindergartens with effective parent engagement practices in school districts throughout the County; support the development of an Educare site in Los Angeles County and promote co-location of County and other family services at the site; engage the CDE/CDD in a dialogue regarding the potential long term impacts of child abuse and neglect and the role of high quality child development services to mitigate those impacts; explore regulatory or legislative remedies to facilitate access to high quality child development services for children determined to be at risk or who have experienced child abuse and/or neglect; and identify and/or access new or nontraditional funding for child development services to serve special populations.

**Partners and Commitments:** LACOE and other local school districts, LAUSD, R&Rs, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

**Goal Five:** The Chief Executive Office (CEO) will facilitate County department efforts to work internally, across departments, and with community partners, to integrate the Strengthening Families Approach (SFA) and Protective Factors into their work with children, families and communities and engage families in high quality child development services. The CEO, with assistance from the Center for the Study of Social Policy and key local partners, will establish a multidisciplinary SFA learning community designed to support ongoing professional development and SFA projects that are underway or emerging in County departments.

**Strategies:** Promote the integration of the SFA into County department practices; facilitate collaborative partnerships among community stakeholders and County departments; support departments in accessing child development services for their clients; and work collaboratively to align countywide place-based effort in the promotion of the SFA.

**Partners and Commitments:** Center for the Study of Social Policy, First 5 LA, LAUP, Los Angeles Partnership for Early Childhood Investment, Education Coordinating Council, County Commissions, CEO Public Information, Cable and Telecommunications

The Los Angeles County Child Care Policy Framework is available in full on the home page of the Office of Child Care website at [www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov) or a copy may be requested by telephone at (213) 974-4103.

## RESULTS OF THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES SURVEY

Representatives from seven of the nine departments participating in the Strengthening Families Learning Community completed the on-line survey. Here is what we learned:

1. The Strengthening Families Approach is being implemented, at varying levels, in departments.
  - Eight respondents stated that SFA was guiding the work of a unit, bureau or project in their department.
  - Five respondents reported that SFA was guiding overall department operations.
2. Respondents reported that their departments are promoting the Protective Factors.
  - Seven respondents reported that their departments were very involved in:
    - Promoting knowledge of parenting and child development, and
    - Providing concrete support in times of need.
  - Six respondents reported that their departments were very involved in:
    - Promoting parental resilience,
    - Promoting social connections, and
    - Promoting the social and emotional competence of children.
3. Nine respondents reported that their departments have processes to engage parents as partners in ensuring the healthy development of their children.
  - Those respondents also indicated they would be willing to share their parent engagement strategies with their County colleagues.
  - The respondent without a parent engagement strategy is interested in developing such a strategy.

4. All respondents indicated that they refer clients to other County departments, community agencies and to child development resources as needed.
5. Five respondents reported that they have staffs that are collocated with other County departments.
6. The following opportunities for collaborative staff development were identified:
  - All respondents were interested in online training opportunities on the Strengthening Families Approach,
  - Eight respondents reported that their department offers training or professional development opportunities to assist employees in working across disciplines, and
  - Seven of these respondents were willing to include persons from other departments in these training efforts.
7. 100 percent of the respondents reported an interest in using the Strengthening Families Approach to implement a common language and common goals across department.