

# 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.

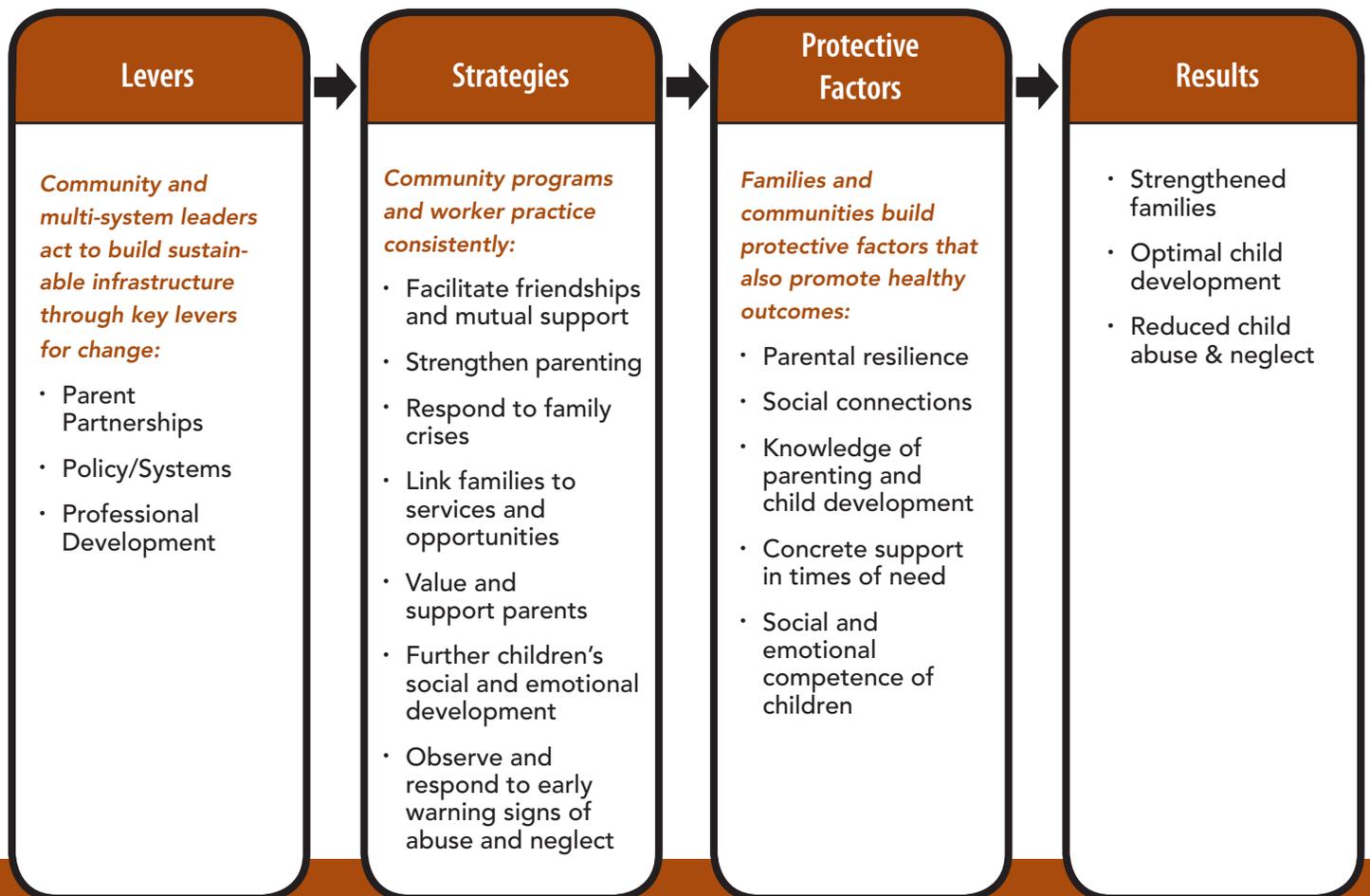
Several counties and local communities have developed their own local implementation of Strengthening Families, using the approach as a powerful tool to increase collaboration among agencies, engage parent leaders more consistently and link state and community resources more effectively.

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

## Strengthening Families: Creating a New Normal

### The Strengthening Families Approach:

- Benefits ALL families
- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions
- Builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities
- Is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge



### 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