COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Division of Procurement
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Director

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April 1, 2011

FLYER 2

SUBJECT: RFA NO. 01-11 Children's Trust Fund

Dear Prospective Offeror:

The attached package represents a formal issuance of materials related to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Public Welfare Request for Application (RFA) 01-11.

The attached power point presentations have been revised to include additional notes presented at the pre-proposal webinar.

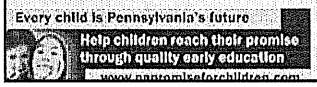
All other terms and conditions remain the same.

Sincerely,

Daniel R. Boyd, Director
DPW Division of Procurement

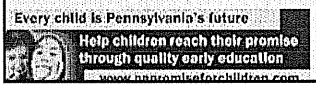
Children's Trust Fund

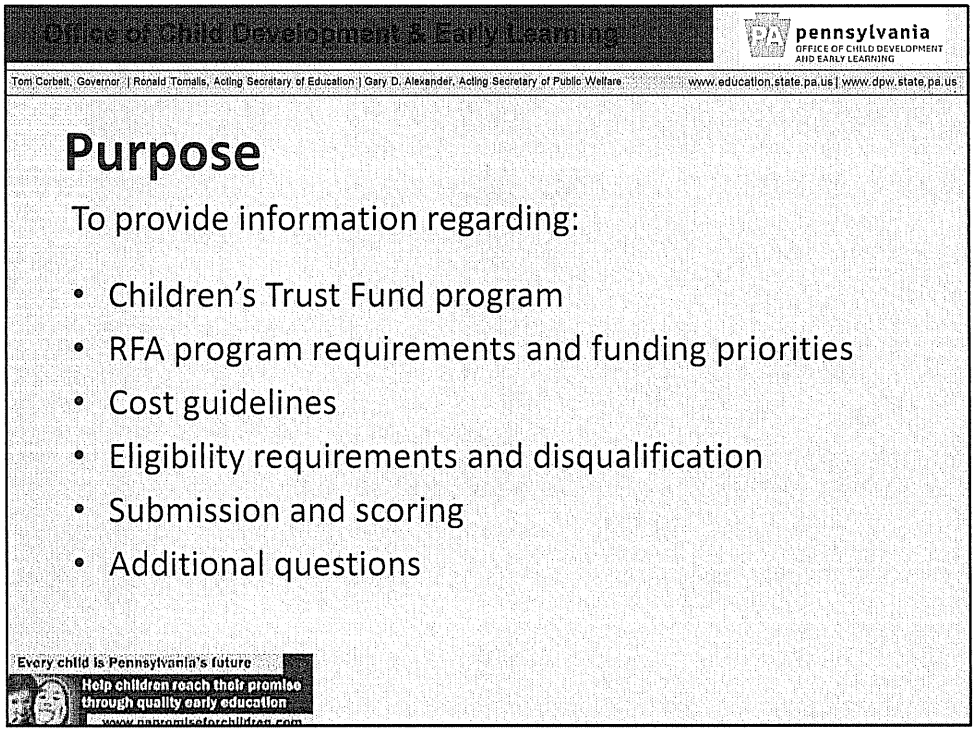
Pre-proposal Webinar for RFA #01-11 March 24, 2011



Introductions

- **Carrie Collins – OCDEL**
  CTF Program Manager and RFA Project Officer
- **Lynda Martino – Center for Schools and Communities**
  CTF Technical Assistance
- **Marcellus Simmons and Eric Ebersole**
  Contractor Partnership Program
  Department of Public Welfare
  Bureau of Employment and Training Programs





•The purpose of today's webinar is to provide you with information regarding the Children's Trust Fund program, the RFA requirements around program, cost, eligibility and submission. You will also have the opportunity to submit any additional questions you may have regarding the RFA.

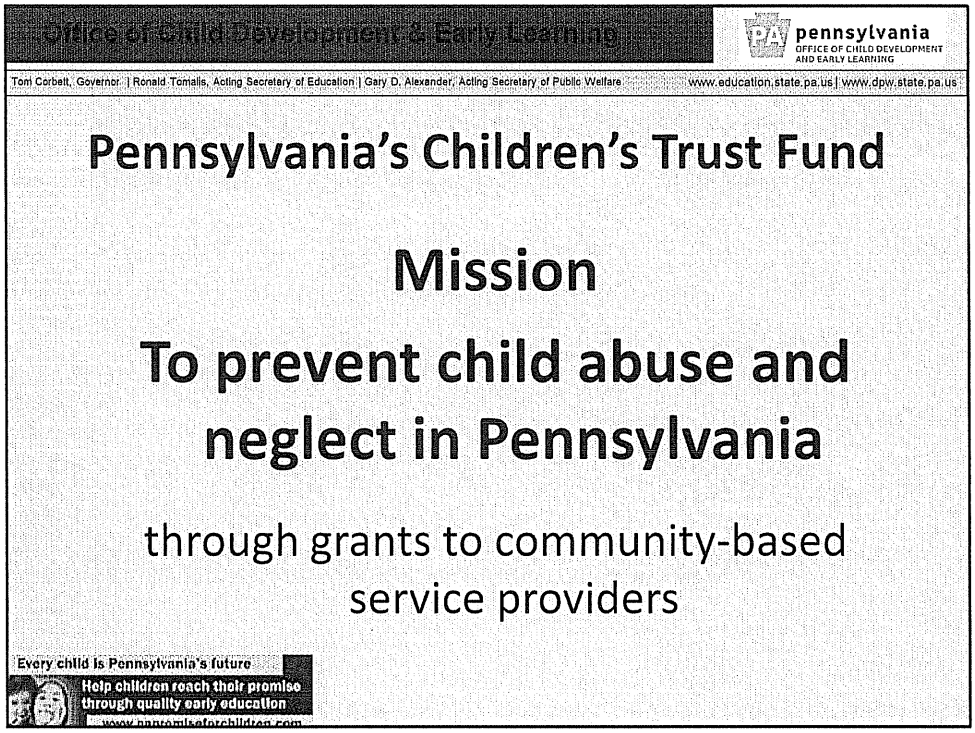
•Questions that were submitted prior to this webinar were reviewed and will hopefully be answered within this presentation.

•You are able to submit additional questions during the webinar as well as after the webinar **until 12:00 p.m.**

•Questions must be submitted in writing to Carrie Collins at ccollins@state.pa.us or within the chat box on the webinar.

•No questions will be accepted either verbally or in writing after 12:00 p.m. on March 24th.

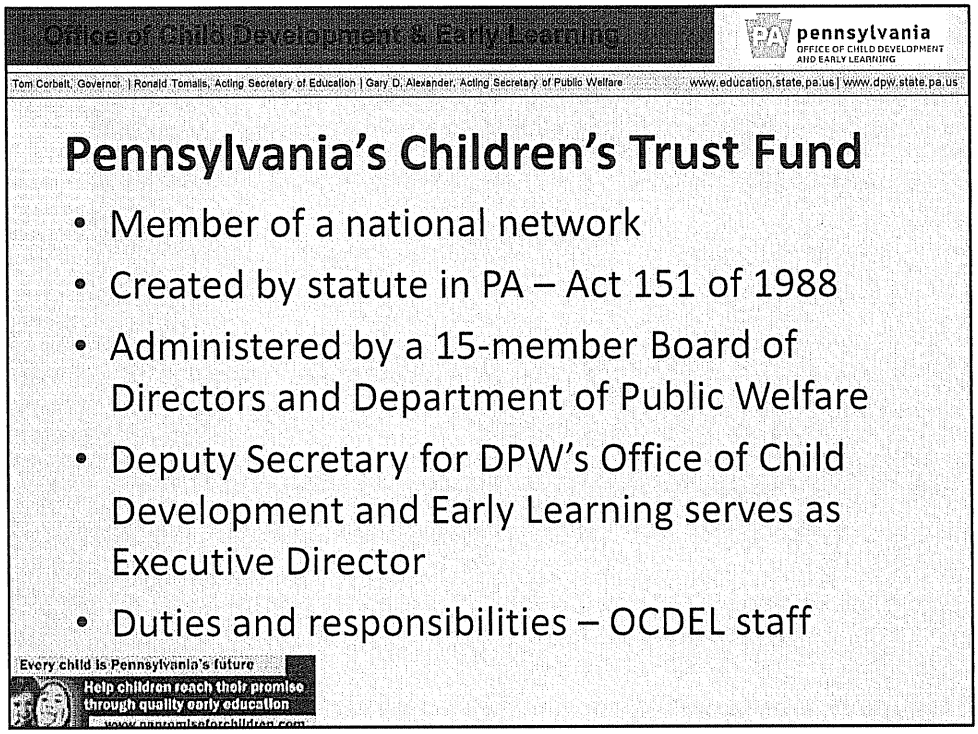
•Any answer provided during this webinar is not official until it is verified, in writing, by the Issuing Office. An official Questions and Answers document will be posted on the DGS website as an addendum to the RFA in approximately one week after the webinar.



•Children's Trust Fund grants are intended to develop new and innovative child abuse and neglect prevention programs in Pennsylvania.

•Specific emphasis for funding is placed on primary and secondary prevention services, which focus on the prevention of abuse before it occurs for the first time.

•For more information about primary and secondary prevention, refer to pages 8 and 9 of the RFA.



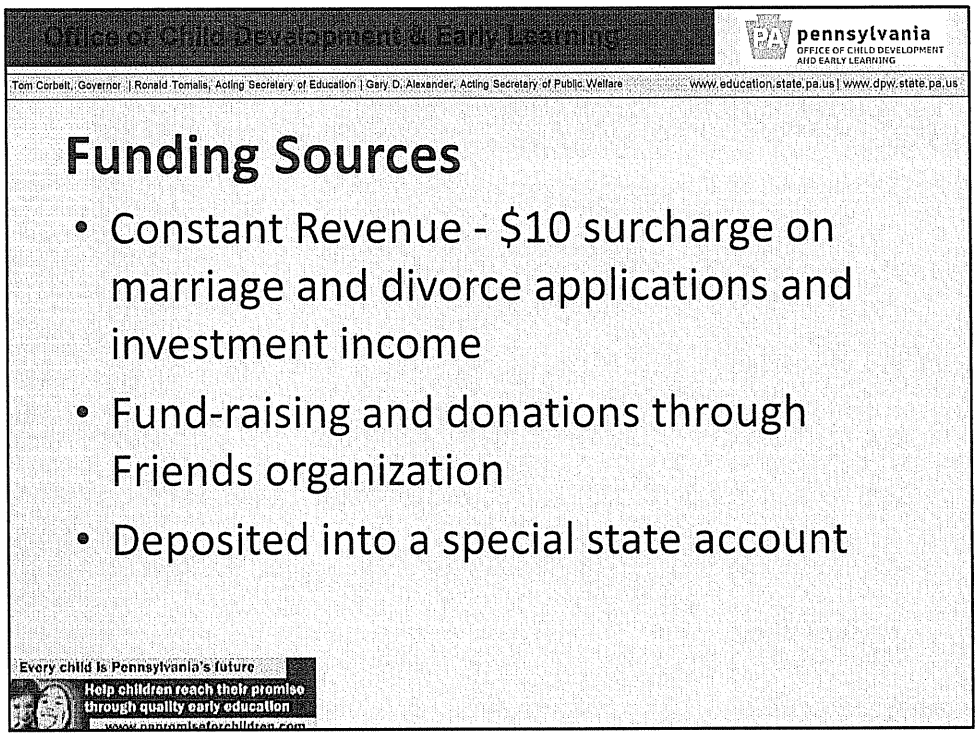
•The concept of Children's Trust Funds originated with Dr. Ray Helfer, a pediatrician, who saw trust funds created for the care of our highways and wildlife and thought that a trust fund should also be created for the care and safety of our children. His idea served as a catalyst for the development of a nationwide network of state children's trust funds that would support community-based efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect.

•The first children's trust fund was established in Kansas in 1980. Since then, children's trust funds have been established in most of the 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico. The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds was established in 1989 to serve as a membership organization for state children's trust funds.

•Pennsylvania's CTF was created in 1988 under Act 151 – the Children's Trust Fund Act.

•The CTF operates under the administration of a 15-member Board of Directors, comprised of 9 public members appointed by the Governor and 6 legislative members appointed by General Assembly leadership. The board guides the work of the CTF, sets priorities for funding and promotes the mission of the CTF through collaboration with other statewide prevention organizations. A list of current CTF Board members can be found in Appendix A of the RFA.

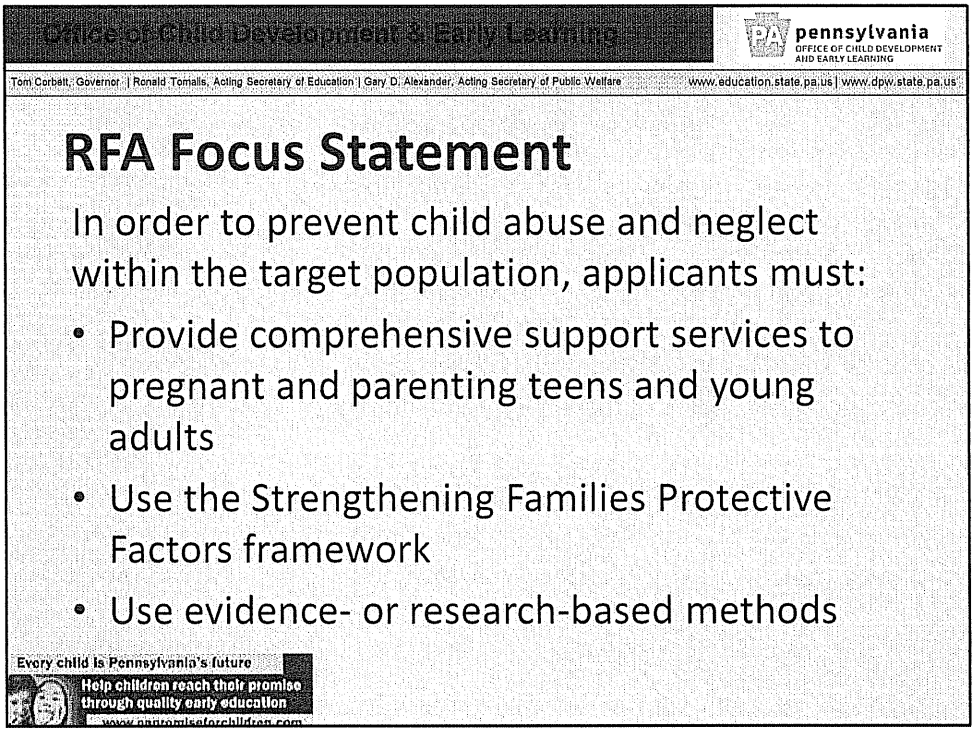
•CTF is also supported by leadership and staff within the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.



•CTF receives its constant revenue through a $10 surcharge on all marriage licenses and divorce decrees collected at the county level. CTF also receives income from investments.

•In 2008, CTF established the nonprofit supporting organization, Friends of the Children's Trust Fund (Friends), to raise additional funds through philanthropy and promote awareness of CTF and its mission. The main objective of Friends will be to increase CTF revenues and identify and secure new areas of funding.

•These funds are deposited into a special non-lapsing account separate from the general account and is used solely for Children's Trust Fund grants and activities.



•Young parents are simultaneously faced with the developmental challenges of adolescence; the demands of parenting; and the responsibility for the cognitive, social and emotional development of a child. The most effective teen parenting programs are multi-faceted and comprehensive, addressing adolescent issues, parenting concerns and child development topics.

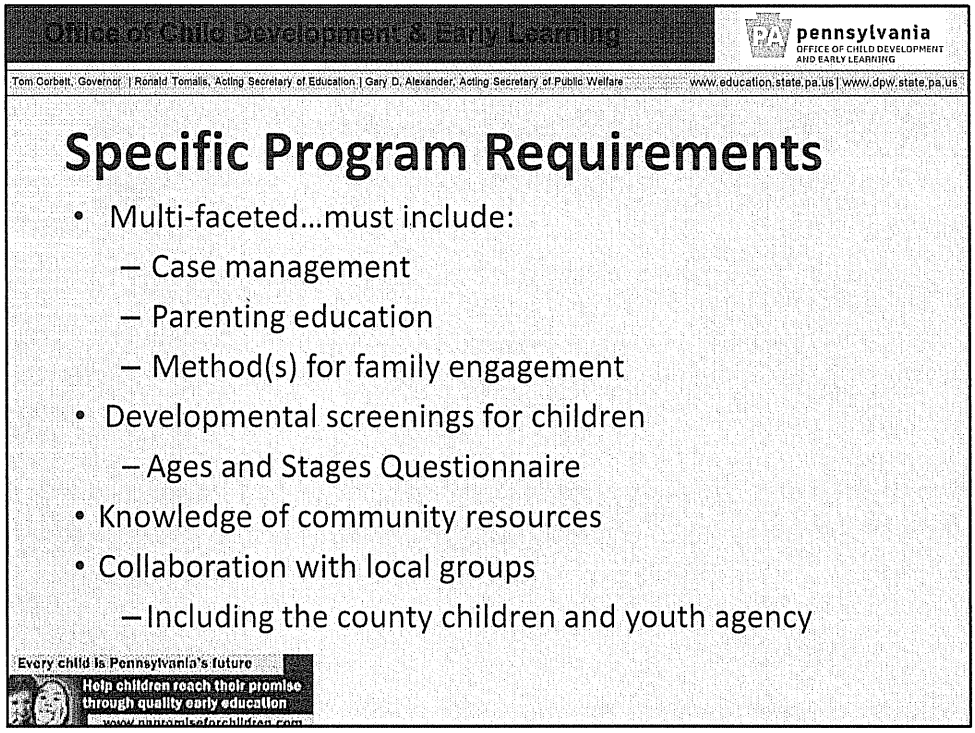
•Selected grantees will use evidence- or research-based methods to provide comprehensive support services to pregnant and parenting teens and young adults that will strengthen families and build protective factors to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Specific applicant requirements include:

•To develop and implement strength-based strategies for supporting pregnant and parenting teens and young adults
•The age range for these groups is broad, but services should focus primarily on teenagers (most will likely be 15-18, but not limited to that age range) as well as young adults (early 20's, possibly attending higher education while parenting, etc.)
•However, this would not preclude services to those that are younger or older if the need is demonstrated within the application or through the course of the grant
•There is no specific expectation for the number of clients to be served annually. Applicants will demonstrate need for the proposed services within the application, which will include the estimated number of clients to be served.

•These strategies must align with the Strengthening Factors Protective Factors framework to prevent child abuse and neglect
•More information on the Strengthening Families framework will be provided later in the webinar

•Curricula, materials and/or resources that are used within the identified strategies must be based in evidence or research
•Applicants must demonstrate within the work statement the research or evidence base of the curricula, materials and resources and how they will be used with fidelity to the model
•CTF and OCDEL do not endorse the use of any particular model, curriculum, materials or resources



•Comprehensive programs are multi-faceted and include multiple support services and education topics that focus on the various aspects of young parents' lives. Comprehensive strength-based pregnant and parenting programs for teens and young adults funded under this application *must* include:

- •case management services to address the individual needs of each teen or young parent and their children;
- •parenting education on such topics as child development, brain development, attachment, play, literacy, discipline, pre- and post-natal care, nutrition, safety, child abuse and neglect prevention; and
- •family engagement using one or more methods, including home visitation, support groups, community classes, individual or group counseling, and/or technology such as texting and virtual home visits.

•The Ages and Stages Questionnaire will be utilized to identify potential developmental delays and refer for Early Intervention services when appropriate

•Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of community resources and linkages that will be used to help strengthen and support pregnant and parenting teens and young adults.
•They must also detail how they will effectively share this information with parents and the extended family when a need is present.

•Applicants must collaborate and coordinate with overarching county or community collaborative or advisory groups and services that focus on early childhood and child abuse and neglect prevention issues

- •to identify needs
- •avoid duplication of services
- •ensure your program fits with the goals of these groups
- •assure sustainability of the services

•This includes, *but is not limited to*:

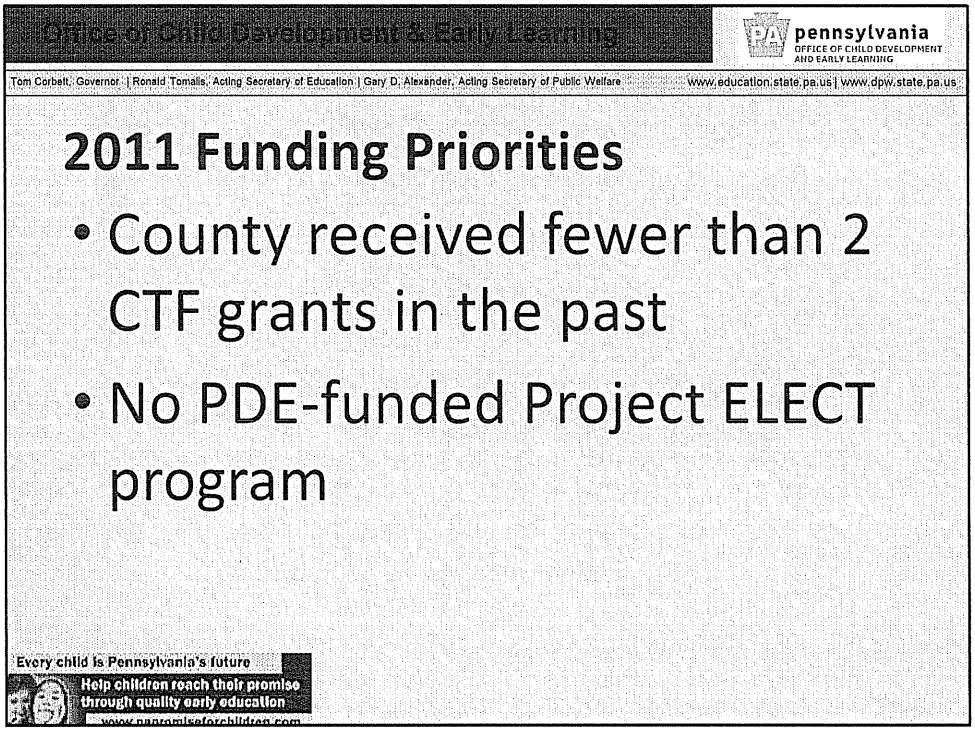
- •the county children and youth agency
- •school districts, Intermediate Units, and Title IX Coordinators
- •existing pregnant and parenting teen programs and advisory groups
- •the county's Community Engagement Group (CEG)
- •health departments
- •other early childhood, home visiting, child abuse and neglect prevention and family support services within the community

•The county children and youth agency's support for the proposed program is required so that they are aware of proposed prevention programs in their county.

- •The agency representative must provide his/her signature within #8 of *Attachment 1 – Applicant Data Form*

•Representatives from other agencies that were involved in the planning and implementation of the proposed program are very strongly encouraged to provide their support by signing #8 of the *Applicant Data Form*

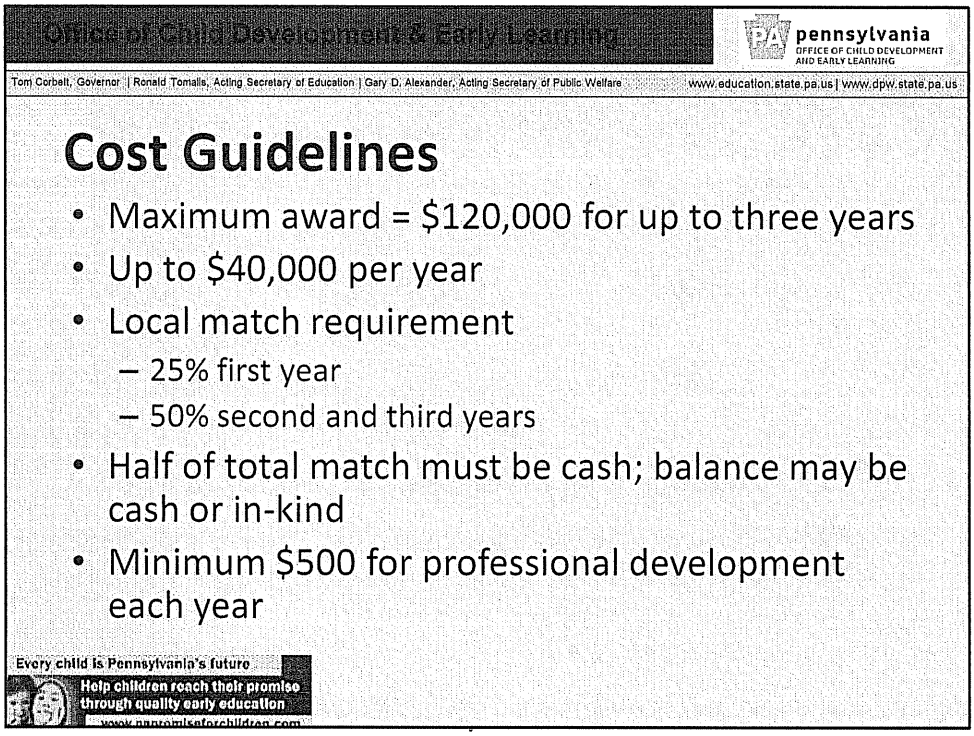
- •All of these partners are also very strongly encouraged to provide letters of support for your proposed program (letters of support/agreement are allowable attachments to the RFA submission)



Priority, in the form of additional points, will be given to:

•Applicants whose legal address is located in a county that has received fewer than two CTF grants since 1990.
•Refer to Appendix B for a listing of CTF grants awarded by county.

•Applicants that provide services to counties or communities that do not have a Project ELECT (Education Leading to Employment and Career Training) program funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).
•Refer to the Center for Schools and Communities website at http://ppt-elect.center-school.org/index.cfm?pageid=3488 for a listing of PDE-funded Project ELECT sites by county.
•Priority will be given to proposed service areas that have no ELECT program in place or do not have the possibility of receiving ELECT services through a consortium agreement with another school district. This does not preclude applications for proposed service areas that have access to such programs, provided the applicant can demonstrate a compelling need for expanding services to pregnant and parenting teens and young adults in these areas within the application.

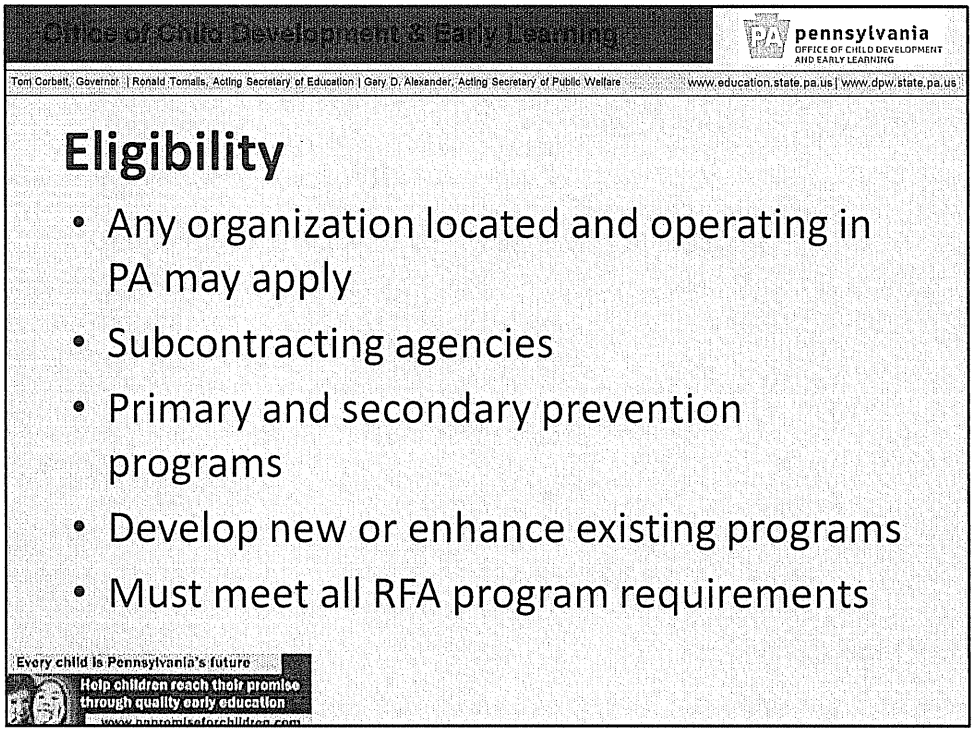


•The maximum award request from each applicant is $120,000 for up to three years – or up to $40,000 each year.

•Applicants must provide matching funds from a local source
- •Local match is derived from a local source of funding vs. a state government or federal government source of funding.
- •Some examples of local sources of funding include, but are not limited to, local school district or Intermediate Unit funds that are not derived from state or federal sources (i.e. Department of Education); local Children and Youth Agency funds that are not derived from state or federal sources (i.e. TANF, Human Services Development Fund or Needs-Based Budget); agency fund raising dollars; donations (of money or time/materials), businesses and service clubs.
- •Applicants are not required to investigate the sources of local funds; however, by signing the Local Match Verification Letter, the contributor(s) of the match are certifying that the match does not include state or federal dollars.
- •CTF funds must be used for direct services as required in this RFA and may not be used as match for another grant.

•Half of the total match must be cash; the balance may be either cash or in-kind (refer to page 28 of the RFA for example formulas)
- •Cash match is actual money that is provided as match.
- •These funds can be obtained from fundraising, local business investments, contributions from private or public donors (such as those listed in the previous question), service club donations (Rotary or Women's Club funds), foundation grants, or any other source that is not a state or federal source of funds.
- •In-kind match is anything that is donated.
- •This may include, but is not limited to, volunteer services, space, rent, equipment, furniture, etc., provided it was not purchased using state or federal funds.
- •Staff salaries may also be used as in-kind match, provided the staff is not funded with state or federal dollars.

•Opportunities for continued professional development are an integral part of program development.
- •Therefore, all CTF applicants are required to allocate a total of at least $500 within each budget year (under line item 390) to attend appropriate professional development events.
- •All selected grantees will be invited to attend a statewide CTF meeting, held annually. This meeting is not required, but grantees are strongly encouraged to attend.
- •Additionally, first-year grantees will be required to attend a New Grantee Orientation meeting held in the first month of the grant.
- •Grantees will be required to outline their annual staff training plan and report on all professional development opportunities attended within the Quarterly Program Report.



•Any organization located and operating in PA may apply and/or be designated a subcontracting agency to the applicant (if applicable).
- •This includes governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, school districts and Intermediate Units, for-profit companies, etc.
- •No priority will be given to any one type of applicant organization.

•Applicants may submit only one application per year.
•No single entity may be the primary recipient of more than one CTF grant at any time.
- •Current third-year CTF grantees may apply, as their current grant will end before this grant round begins.
- •Organizations with multiple partners may apply, with one entity named as the lead applicant.
- •Organizations that receive other funding sources within the agency, whether they are local, state or federal funds, are eligible to apply for CTF funding, provided the state and federal funds are not used for match.

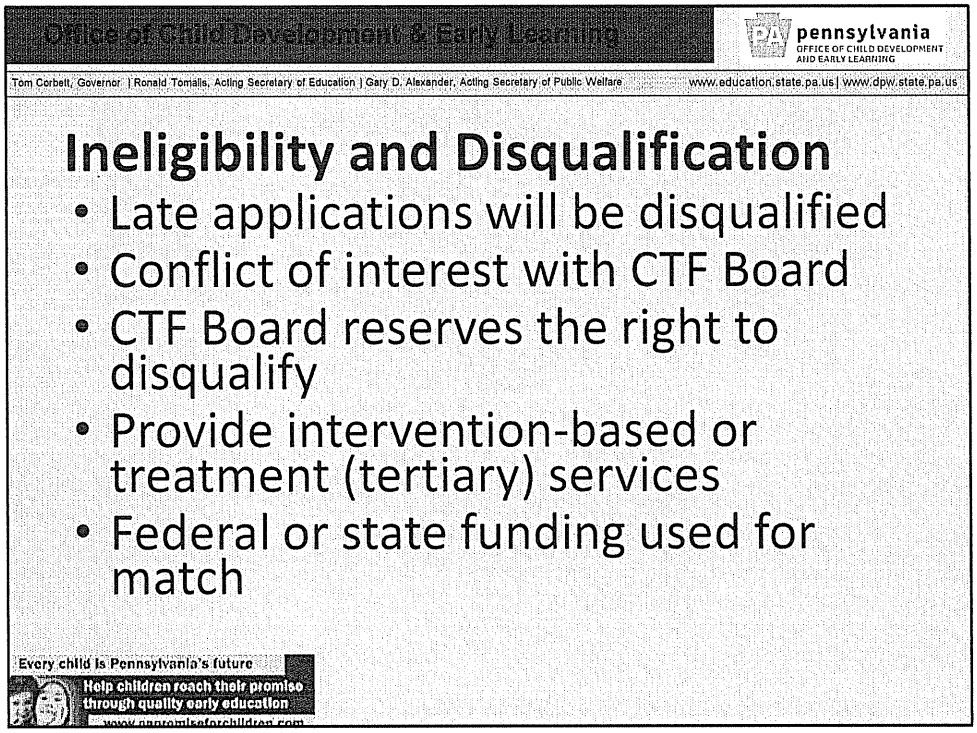
•If an applicant is a subcontracting agency of a current CTF grantee, the applicant must ensure that they are not receiving any more than 25% of the current grantee's CTF award in order to be eligible to apply.
•The same is true in the reverse situation, if an applicant will subcontract with a current CTF grantee, that CTF grantee may not receive more than 25% of the applicant's proposed grant award.

•When an applicant proposes to use subcontracting agencies to provide specific services under the grant, the applicant agency's policies and procedures will be utilized in establishing the subcontract.
- •OCDEL and CTF will not have direct oversight of the subcontracting agencies; however, applicants will be required within the work statement to identify any subcontracting agencies, the experience and qualifications of the subcontracting agency staff, and the applicant agency's plans to assure the quality of their work.
- •There is no priority given to applicants for the types of subcontracting agencies they will utilize (i.e. Minority/Woman Business Enterprises or certified small, disadvantaged businesses).

•Proposed programs that provide *primary* and *secondary* child abuse and neglect prevention services, as opposed to tertiary prevention services, will be eligible for funding. Primary and secondary prevention efforts take measures to keep abuse and neglect from occurring for the first time in a family and build on family strengths, as opposed to family deficits.
- •Primary prevention services include those that promote the general welfare of children and families by *preventing the first occurrence* of child abuse and neglect.
- •Primary prevention services are available to the general public and there is no screening for child abuse risk.
- •Secondary prevention includes services that identify children and families who are in circumstances where there is an increased risk for child abuse and neglect.
- •Although these families are thought to be at greater risk, the provision of assistance is also to *prevent the first occurrence* of child abuse and neglect.
- •Refer to pages 8 and 9 of the RFA for more information.

•CTF funds may be used to develop new programs or to enhance existing programs that meet the requirements outlined in this RFA. There is no preference for one over the other. Applicants must demonstrate within the application the need to develop new services or expand existing services in the proposed target area.

•All requirements outlined in the RFA must be met in order to be considered for funding.



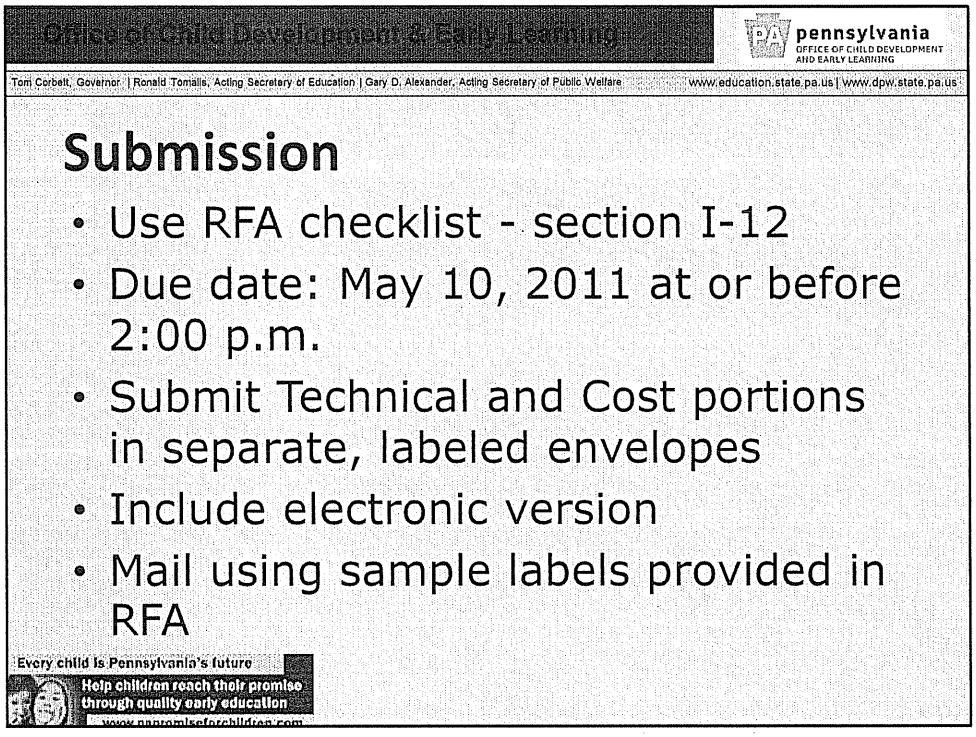
•Applications must be received and date-stamped no later than 2:00 p.m. on May 10, 2011 by the Department of Public Welfare, Division of Procurement (Issuing Office). A sample label is included on page 7 of the RFA for mailing. Applications received and date-stamped any time after the due date and time specified, including those that are late due to the delivery service used, will automatically be disqualified and will not be opened for review. Refer to page 5 of the RFA for more information.

•Disqualification may occur if a grant applicant or an agent of the grant applicant attempts to unduly influence a member of the CTF Board, Evaluation Committee or CTF staff. Refer to Appendix A for a listing of CTF Board members.

•The CTF Board reserves the right to disqualify any program they feel to be programmatically or clinically unsound or that does not meet the eligibility requirements stated in this RFA.

•Tertiary prevention services are services that provide intervention-based or treatment services after abuse has already occurred and are not eligible for funding.

•Matching funds may not be from a state or federal source or the program will be ineligible for funding.

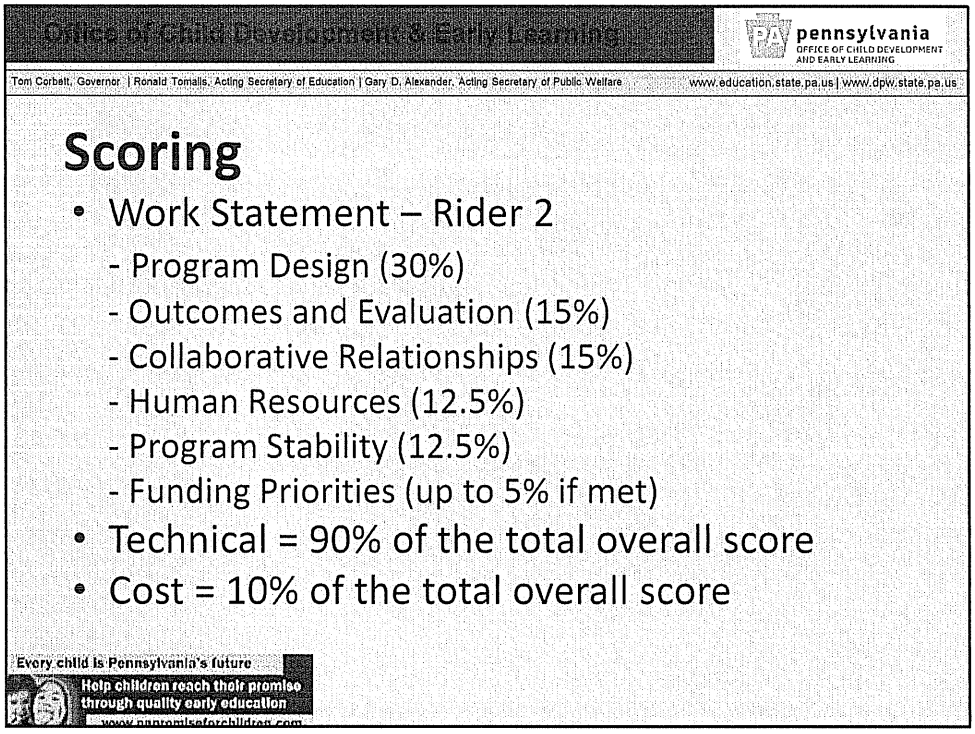


•Refer to pages 6 through 8, the RFA Checklist, for further information on how to submit your application.
•The Technical and Cost portions must be submitted in separate, labeled envelopes, although those two sealed envelopes may be mailed in one larger envelope.
•Remember to include an electronic version of the entire application on either a flash drive or a CD-ROM.

•Also refer to the cover page of Rider 2 Work Statement for further information on how to complete this form.

- •The Work Statement must be no more than 15 pages, not including the cover page.
- •Respond to each question directly and include the text of the question within your page limit.
- •Any information provided outside of the 15 page limit will not be review (with the exception of permissible attachments (listed on page 6), which will affect your score.
- •Use a font size of 10 to 12 points in normal font style (not bold or italics)
- •Use an easily-readable font, i.e. Calibri, Arial or Times New Roman
- •Right and left margins may not be less than one inch
- •Top and bottom margins may not be less than a half inch
- •Text may be single-spaced, but must be legible.

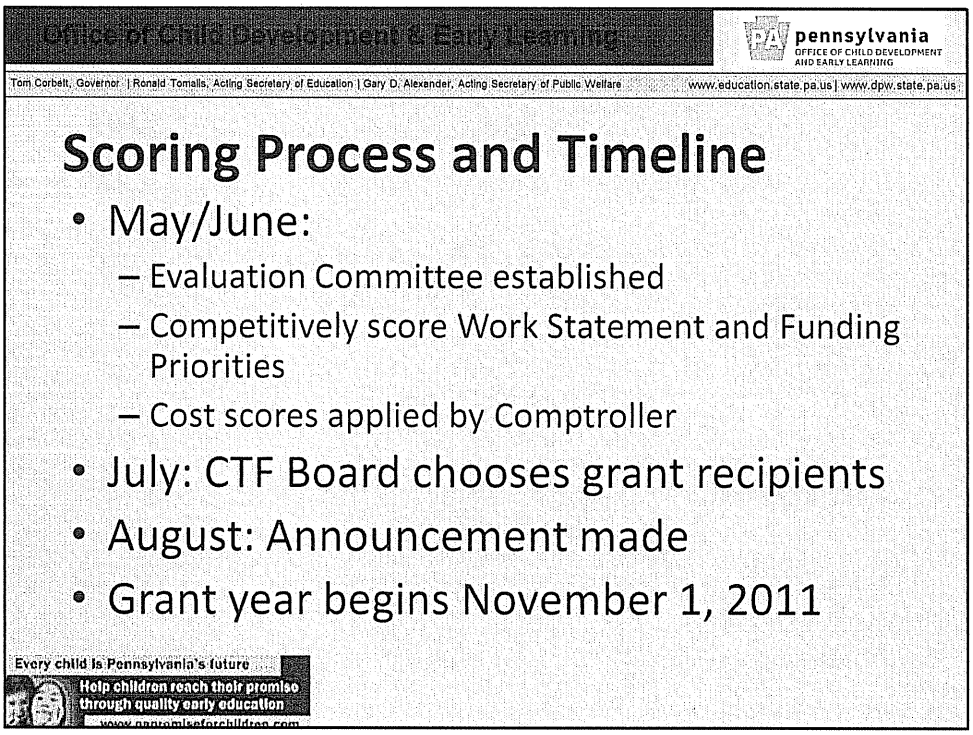
•Remember NOT to include any cost information or dollar amounts within the technical portion of the application. Refer to the RFA checklist for the components of the Cost and Technical portions of the application. Also refer to the reminders throughout the RFA regarding keeping cost information separate from the technical narratives.



•The Evaluation Committee will evaluate each proposal using the percentages of the total overall score outlined in the slide.

•Applicants may receive up to 5% in additional points depending on how many of the two funding priorities are met.

•The Technical Score, including the funding priorities, is 90% of the total score.
•The Cost Score is 10% of the total score.



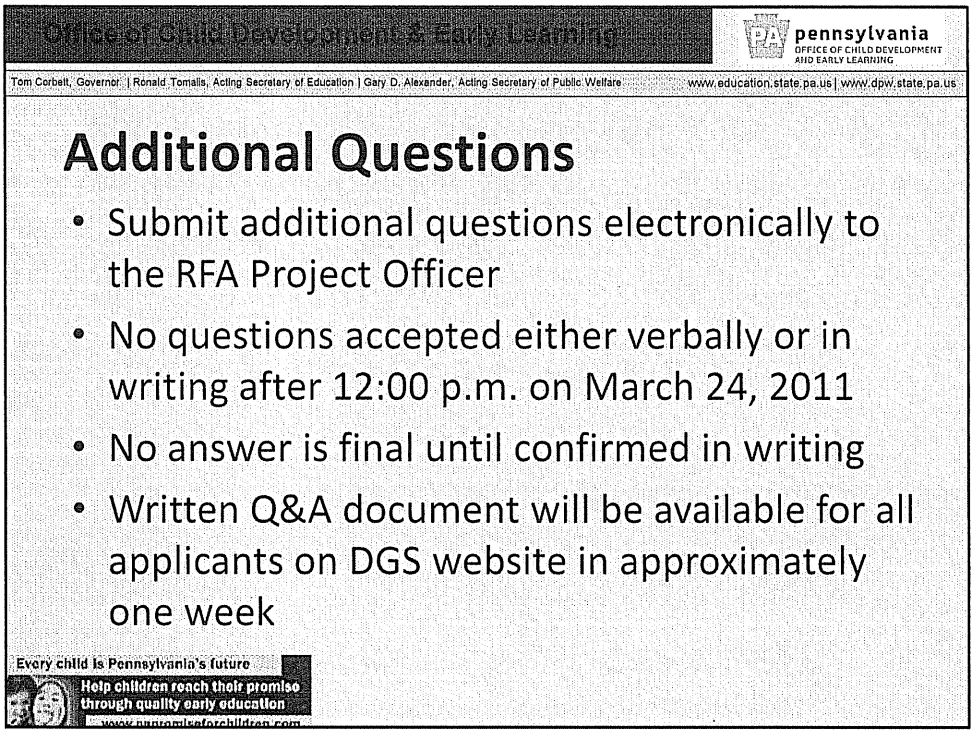
•May/June – Evaluation Committee will be established and competitively score each proposal individually and assign the appropriate funding priority points. The Comptroller's Office will assign the cost scores for each application.

•June – Evaluation Committee along with the Comptroller's Office will review final total scores and determine the number of grantees based on the funding available.

•July – the CTF Board will review the Evaluation Committee's recommendation and approve grantees for funding. The Department of Public Welfare will provide concurrent approval.

•August – Grant announcements will be made.

•November 1 – grant year begins and the New Grantee Orientation Meeting will be held in early November.



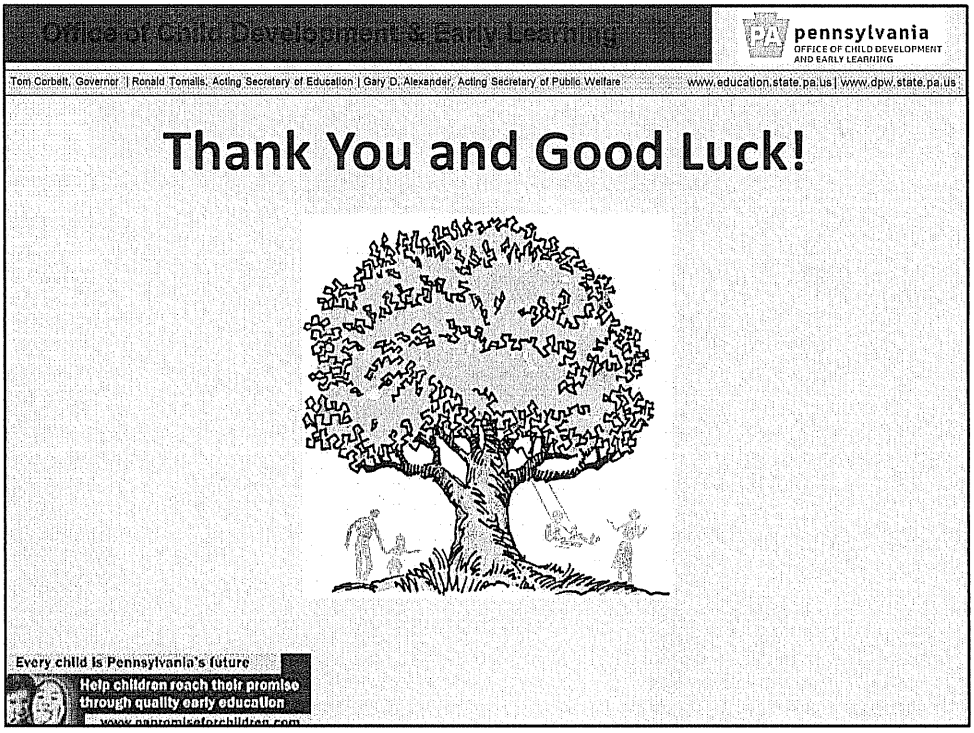
•You are able to submit additional questions during the webinar as well as after the webinar until 12:00 p.m.

•Questions must be submitted in writing to the RFA Project Officer, Carrie Collins, at ccollins@state.pa.us or within the chat box on the webinar.

•No questions will be accepted either verbally or in writing after 12:00 p.m. on March 24th.

•Any answer provided during this webinar is not official until it is verified, in writing, by the Issuing Office.

•An official Questions and Answers document, along with the powerpoint presentations and the registration list for this webinar, will be posted on the DGS website as an addendum to the RFA in approximately one week after the webinar.



I will now turn the presentation over to Lynda Martino, Family Support and Community Development Coordinator with the Center for Schools and Communities, who will provide more detailed information for you about the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework.

strengthening families

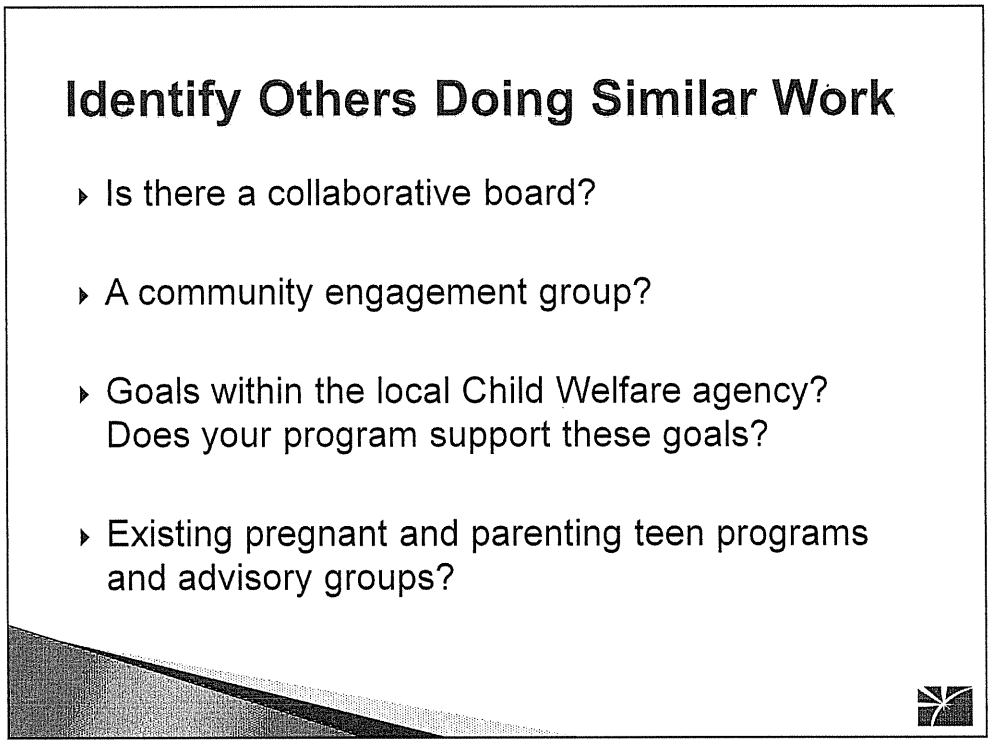
THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Strengthening Families

CTF Pre-proposal Conference
March 2011

Center for Schools and Communities

As Carrie said, the focus of this year's CTF grant is to ***use evidence- or research-based methods to provide comprehensive support services to pregnant and parenting teens and young adults that will strengthen families and build protective factors to prevent child abuse and neglect.***



As you begin the process of completing the application – we encourage you to identify others in your community who are doing similar work.

Is there a county wide collaborative board operating in the county? What are their goals and initiatives? Does your proposed project fit with any of their goals?

What are the goals of the Community Engagement Group in your area? You can find your CEG group on the PA KEYS website at www.pakeys.org –in the "community outreach" section.

Do the services of your proposed program fit into any current goals of the local Children and Youth agency?

Where are the closest pregnant and parenting teen programs? Can you work with them to avoid duplication of services? To enhance existing services?

Is there a teen pregnancy task force or advisory group operating in your area? What are their goals?

By contacting others who are doing similar work, you begin early to ensure that you proposed program will offer a needed service in the community and you will begin to collect data that will assist with sustainability efforts down the road.

•Establish networking and links

- •Networking with others will assist your efforts at sustaining the program

•Continuum of services

- ➢How do you fit into the continuum of services within your organization and within the community? How do you work with these other organizations/programs that serve the same or similar people?

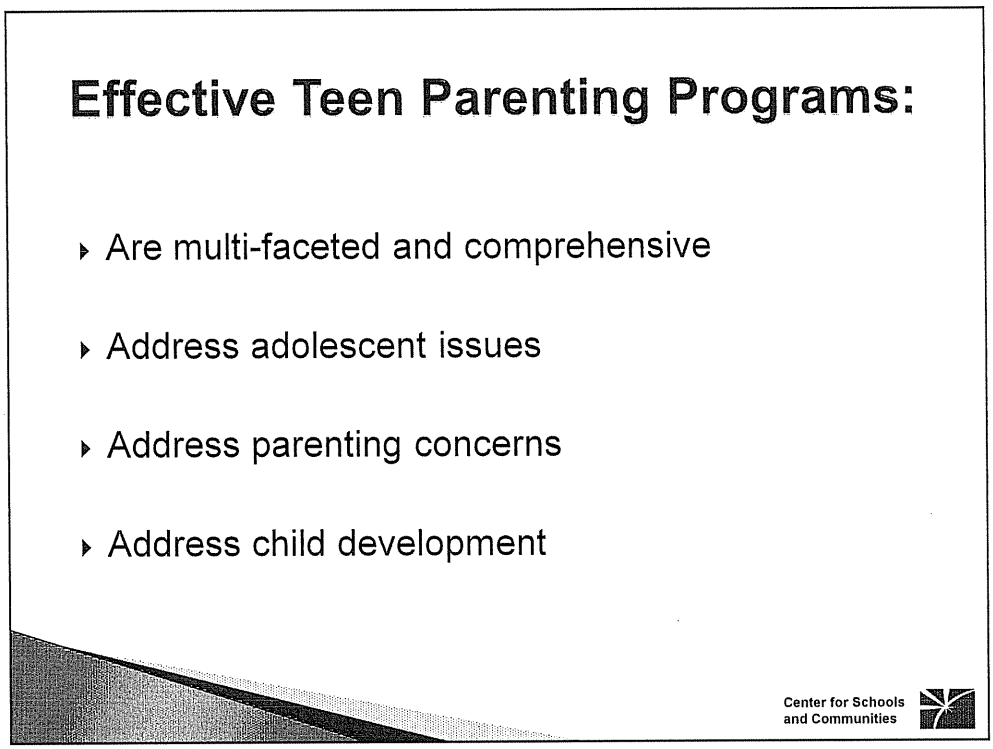
•Consortium of like services-Collaboration

- •Have you found others who also serve your targeted population?
- •Do you meet to discuss your programs, plan joint activities, consider ways to share costs, avoid duplication, serve distinct groups of people, identify gaps that still exist?

➢Collaboration of community services

- •Are you connected to that collaborative board?
- ➢What is your place in the community collaborative? (May be occurring through community collaboration.)

The process of seeing yourself in community partnerships builds opportunities for sustainability.

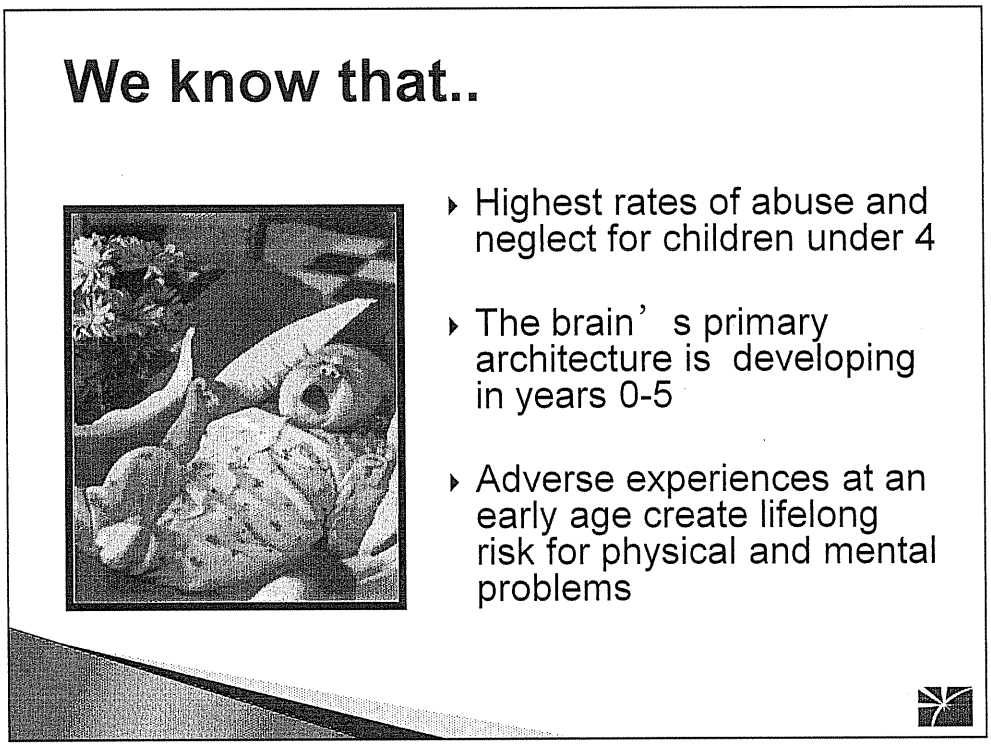


Young parents are simultaneously faced with the developmental challenges of adolescence; the demands of parenting; and the responsibility for the cognitive, social and emotional

development of a child.

Research tells us that the most effective teen parenting programs are multi-faceted and comprehensive, addressing adolescent issues, parenting concerns and child development

topics.



SF began with a focus on children birth to five.....because the highest rates of abuse and neglect occur in children under 4 years old.
This is also the time that the brain is rapidly developing and adverse experiences at this age create lifelong risk for physical and mental problems later in life.

We know that fewer than 10% of this age group are reached by any kind of preventive action such as home visiting or parent education.

It is important to focus on families as they begin on their journey as parents.

In addition, the focus was to change the way child welfare in particular thought about the young children in their care: children who had been traumatized in many ways and who needed the s
system to respond more effectively to their developmental needs as well as the system's need to make sure they were safe. Safety and well being needed to be the common goal.

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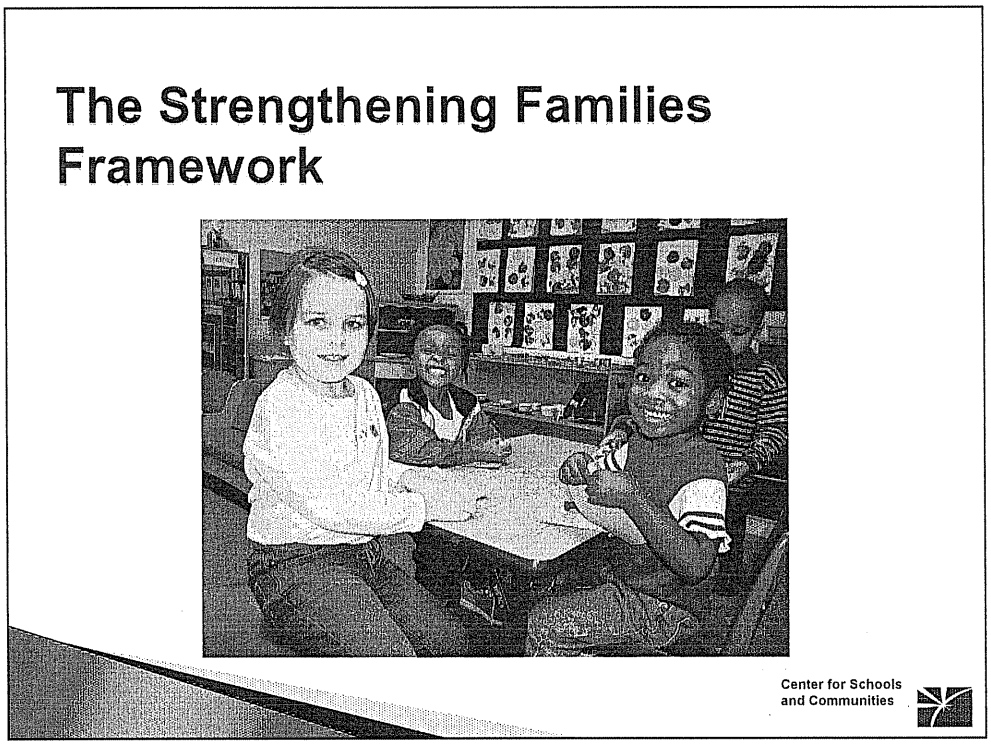
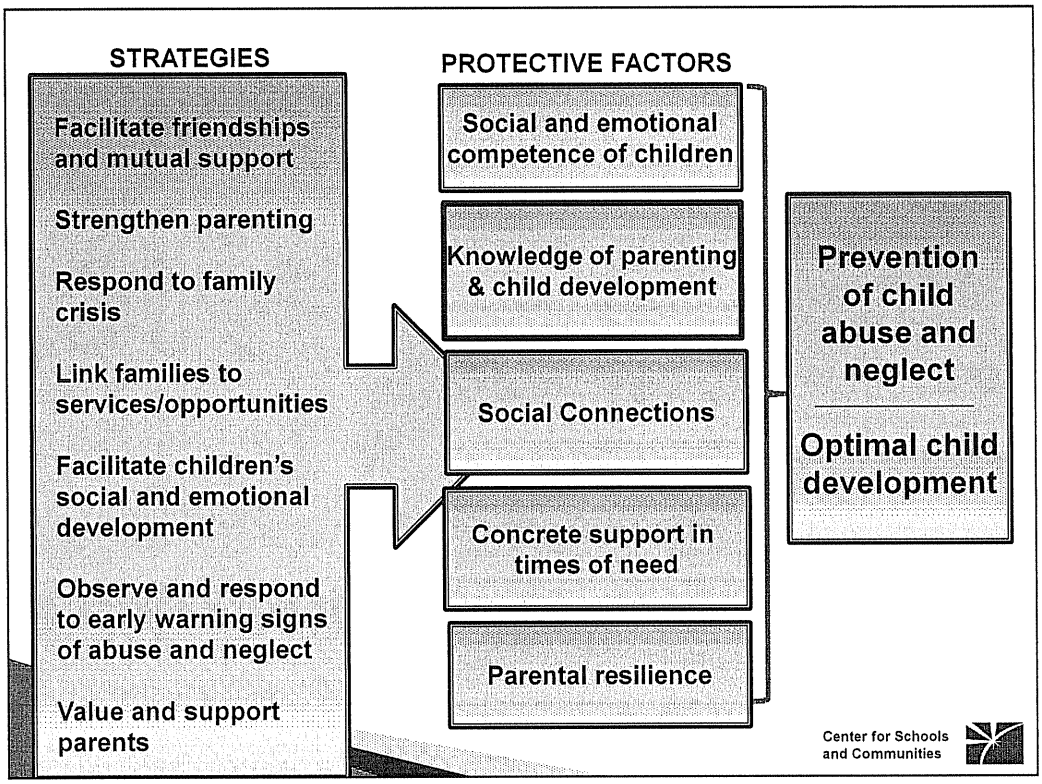


Let's take a look at the Strengthening Families Framework as developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. This is not a program (mention SF Program....) This is a conceptual framework.

•Strengthening Families is built on two key beliefs:

- **All families have strengths**, and **all families need support**. It might be hard sometimes to see some families' strengths. Some other families might already be getting all the support they need. Most families are probably somewhere in the middle.

•Strengthening Families is not like traditional child abuse prevention programs that target certain families because of risk factors. The idea is to reach a large number of families, and focus on protective factors that all families need.



The Strengthening Families logic model was developed by first identifying protective factors that were correlated to child abuse and neglect prevention and then identifying program strategies that build these protective factors. The program strategies listed here can be effectively used to develop programming related to strengthening and supporting families, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect and enhance optimal child development.

•The Center for the Study of Social Policy began by searching the evidence to identify **what factors really reduce child abuse and neglect**. They identified 5 overall protective factors that when combined contribute to overall family and child well-being.

•Getting to this list of protective factors was a multi-stage process which involved:

- •A review of existing literature (this literature review is available to the public on CSSP website)
- •Discussion with a national advisory committee
- •A national, site based, consultation process

•Their research tells us that when these protective factors are used, the result is less abuse and neglect.

•A protective factor is sort of like the opposite of a risk factor. Instead of looking at what characteristics make a child or family more likely to have negative outcomes, we look at what characteristics make people more likely to have positive experiences and more likely to have positive outcomes despite the risk factors they might face.

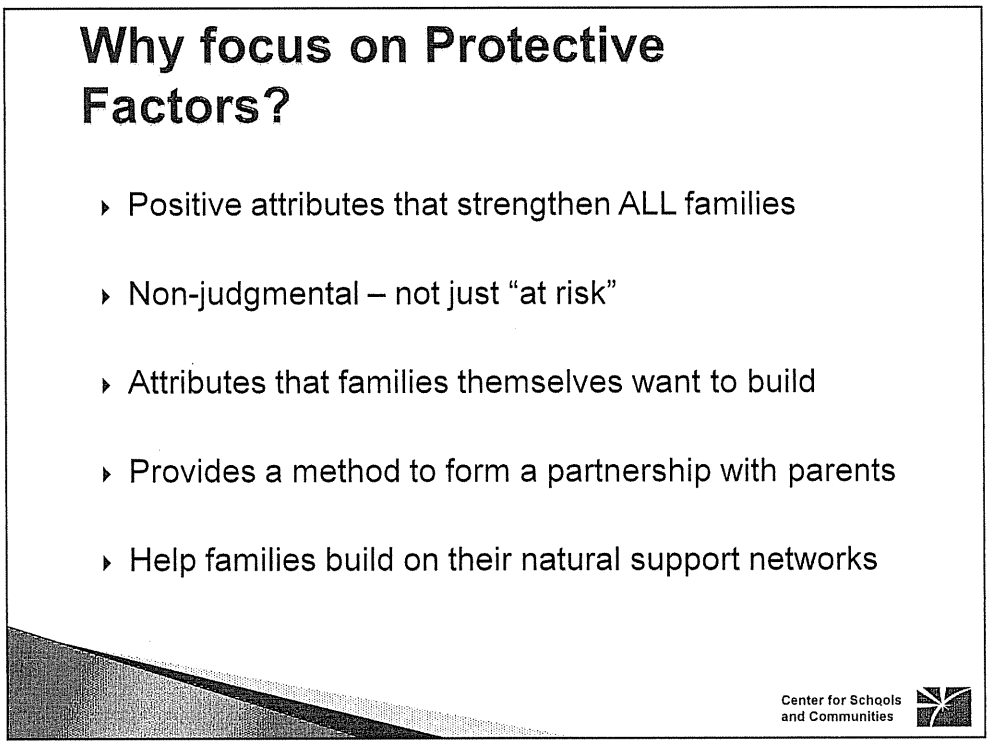
- •In this initiative, we focus on protective factors that make children and families less likely to experience child abuse and neglect.

•One of the protective factors relates to children, and the other four are about parents

•Note: These are not the only protective factors that keep families strong.

•We're going to review each of the protective factors listed here.

•The Five Protective Factors are the foundation of the SF approach. Extensive research supports the common-sense notion that when these PF are present and robust in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminish

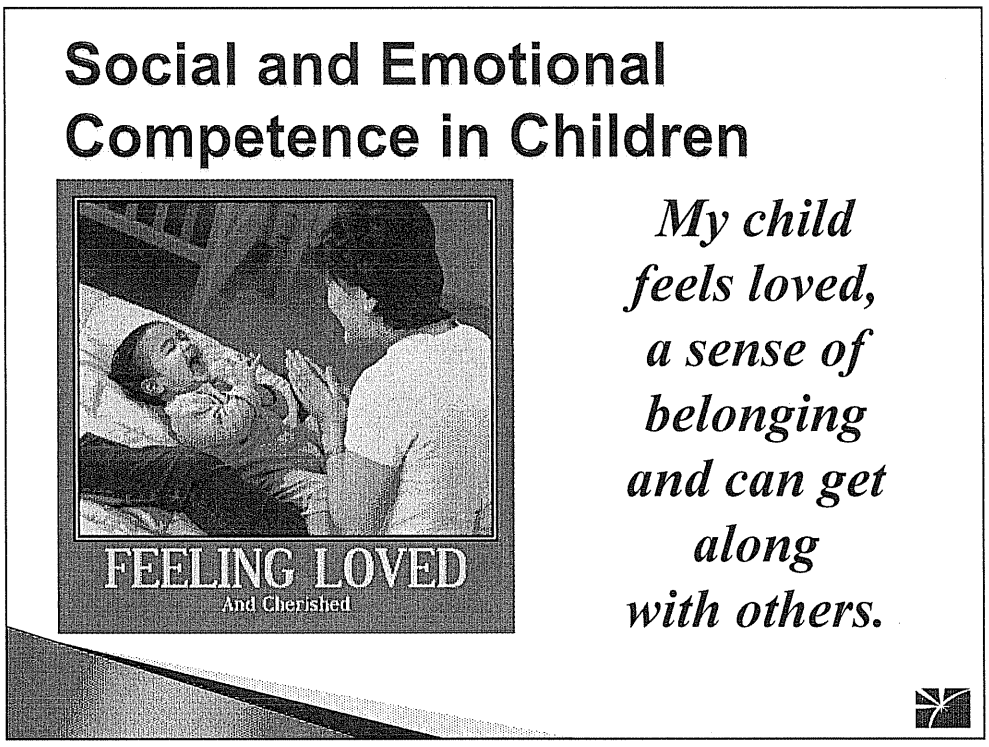


•You may have noticed that the protective factors include characteristics your family has, and the families you know have them.

•As the Center for the Study of Social Policy developed this framework, they found that the protective factors resonated with parents, who stated that they themselves wanted to build these characteristics within their families. The framework provides a method to form partnerships with parents, using a language that is easily understood.

•All families need these protective factors, and we all need support to develop them. A lot of us get that support from our families, friends, partners, and so on. At different times in our lives we may need support from outside those informal networks to develop or maintain our protective factors.

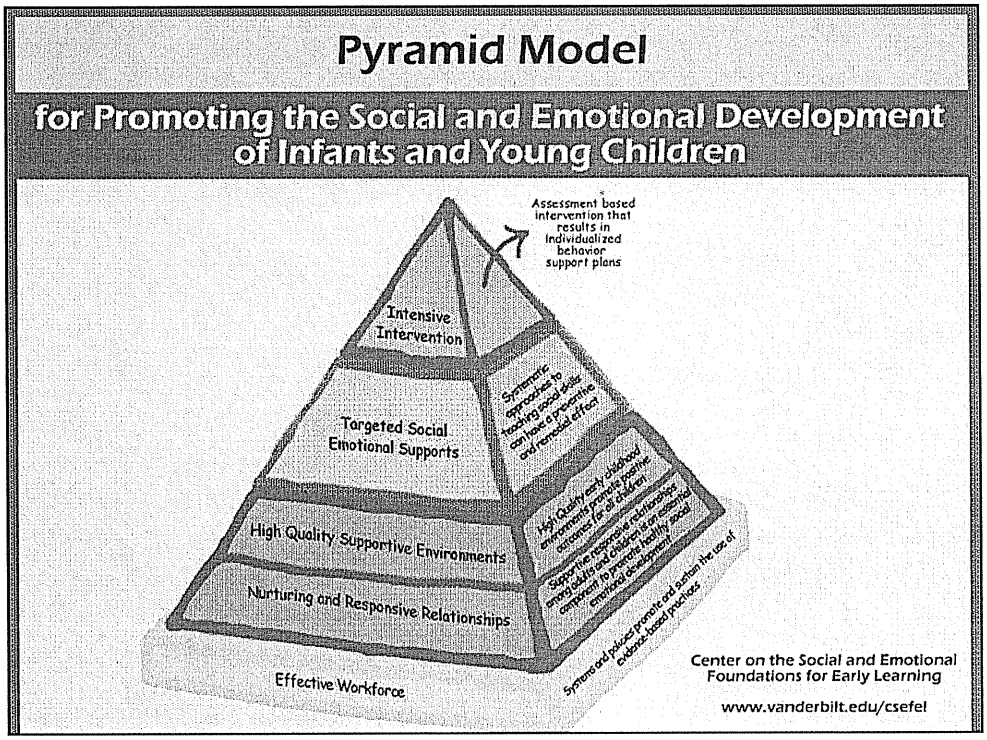
So, let's briefly review each of the factors....



Social and emotional competence of children means that parents work with their children to help them learn to interact positively with others, communicate their emotions, and feel good about themselves.

In several states, parents have recrafted the wording of the protective factors to make them more easily understood. Here are the words one parent group uses to describe social and emotional competence….

"My child feels loved, a sense of belonging, and can get along with others. "



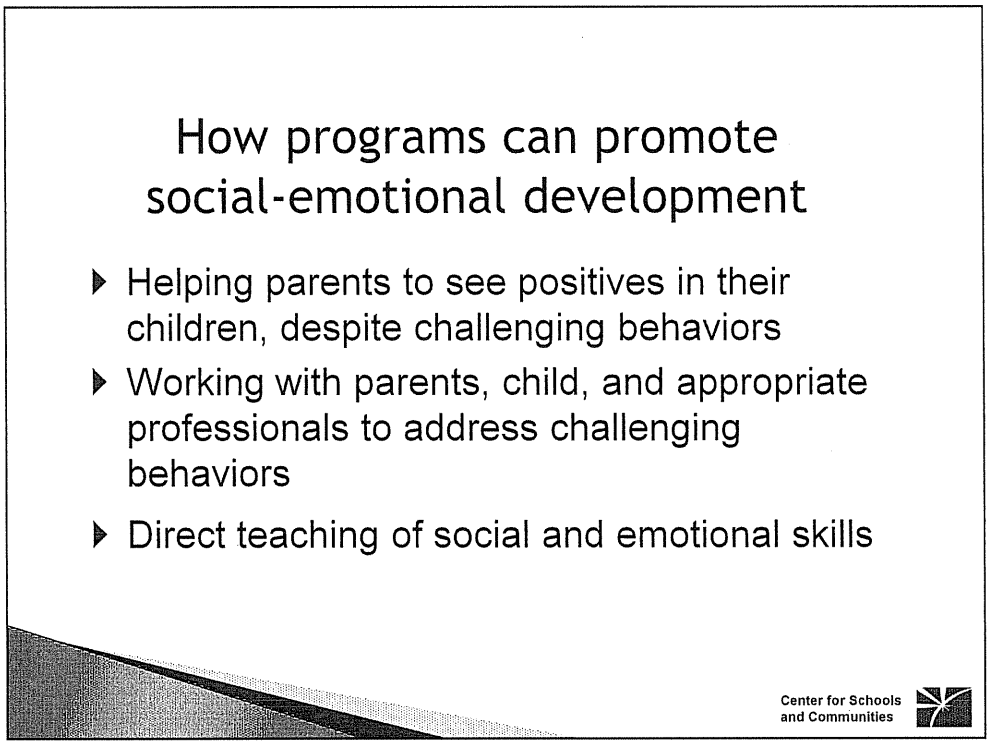
In Pennsylvania, this pyramid model has been adopted by the Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Committee as a framework for looking at what early childhood programs need to know and be able to do. Variations of this model may also be found in school wide effective behavior support and school-based "response to instructional intervention" programs. This particular graphic representation was created and distributed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

•Social emotional issues of young children are becoming an increasing issue in early care and education settings.

•In addition to preparing kids for school and dealing with problems before they get too serious, promoting children's social-emotional development also changes how they are parented.

•Social-emotional development actually refers to activities on three different levels:

- •For typically developing children, help parents understand their child's temperament and how to react to them. Each child is different and parents need to understand the differences in their children in order to parent effectively.
- •For children who have challenging behaviors – whether they are indicative of more serious problems or not – how we respond to that behavior will affect the child's development and how their parents deal with it as well. Resolving those behavior problems will promote a healthy, positive relationship between the child and her parents.
- •Finally, for those children who have serious social-emotional difficulties, or who have experienced trauma, we need to pay special attention to their social-



•Programs can support this protective factor by:

•Helping parents to understand the importance of building social/emotional competence in their children

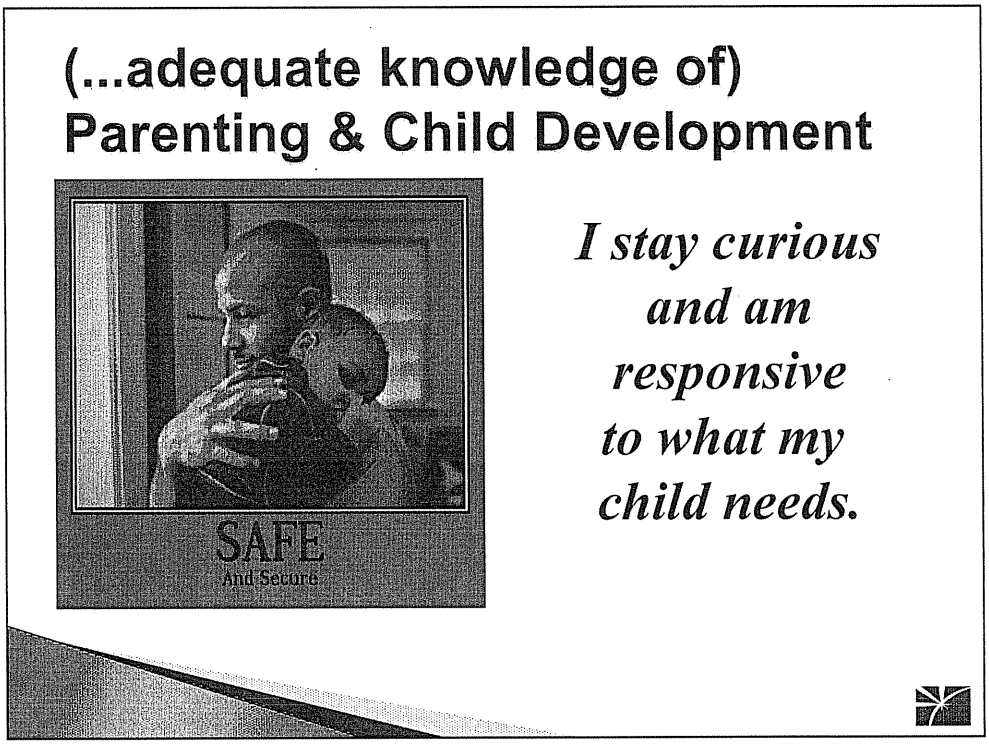
•Help parents to understand how to respond when a child exhibits challenging behavior. Parents can easily internalize messages that their child is bad, unlovable or uncontrollable. It is important to provide adequate supports to these parents to help them develop coping behaviors and see positives in their child.

•Help parents to figure out what their child is achieving through use of the challenging behavior. Help the parent find new ways for that child to express the need and have it met.

In early care settings -

•Teaching social and emotional skills is one of the core activities. Some programs use specific curricula like *Mind in the Making or the Incredible Years.*

•In the research that was done to develop this initiative, parents reported that the biggest way their early childhood program affected their parenting was through the social emotional skills their children brought home. When children come home talking about their feelings and with new skills, it makes their parents more receptive to their child's experiences.



Adequate knowledge of parenting and child development....

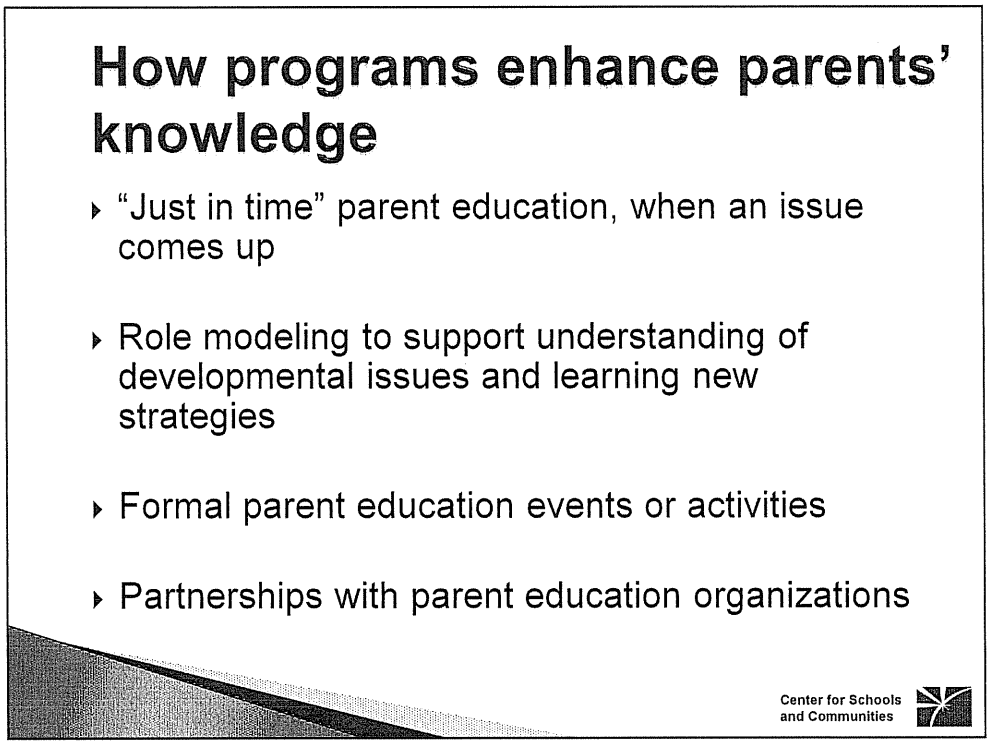
•Crying babies, challenging children, and children with special needs are at the highest risk of abuse and neglect

•Parents need:

- •information to help them understand the reasons behind their child's behavior,
- •techniques to manage those behaviors and guide development, and
- •perspective, to put their child's behavior in the context of overall development for example:
  - •understanding that intense infant crying is a phase that will pass;
  - •knowing that stubborn and independent behavior in toddlers is normal as they develop autonomy

•Parents have teachable moments just like children do – usually when their child has presented them with a new challenge or they are trying to tackle a new task like toilet training

•Finally parents need to have alternative ways of responding to their children rather than simply the ones they learned from how they were parented, especially parents who were abused or neglected as children – but also for people who grew up in families that over-relied on physical punishment and spanking



•Most parents will be more receptive to information right when an issue (e.g. biting) comes up – take the opportunity to have a conversation, role model some techniques, and/or provide the parent with a brochure or other written information

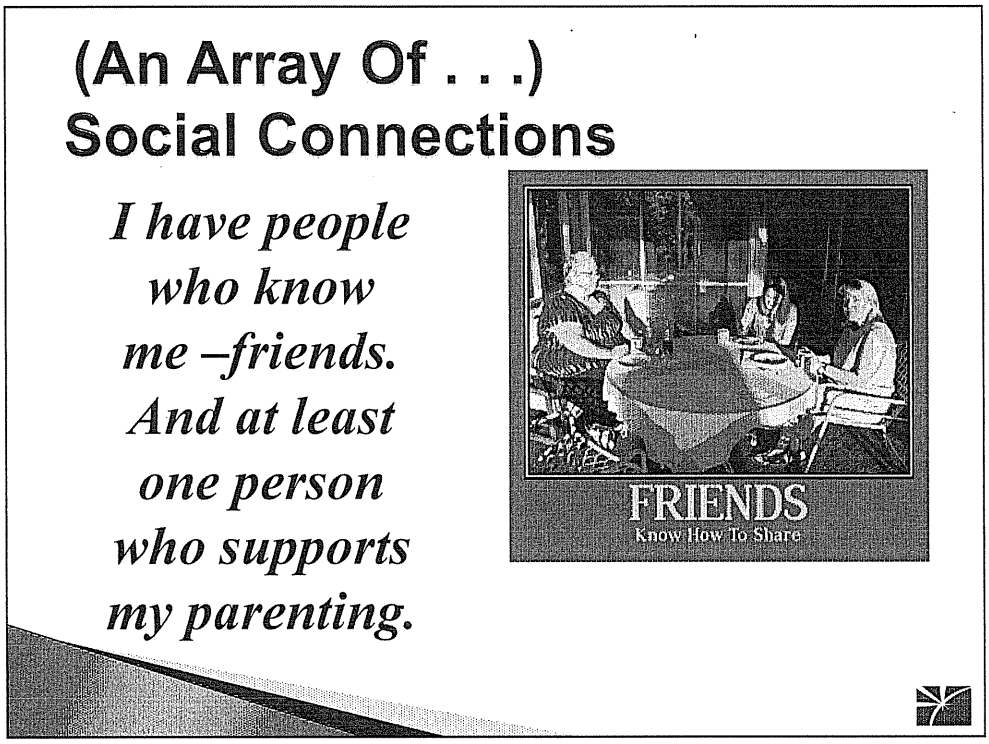
•Role modeling is a great strategy to demonstrate new behaviors or to support understanding of developmental issues. Be a role model for parents, let them watch how you handle their child.

•Formal parent education events will be most successful if they target specific concerns. For example, an event for all parents of 2-year-olds that addresses the so-called Terrible Twos, or an event focusing on sibling rivalry.

•Some programs partner with parent education programs in their community so that a parent educator is available to parents.

•This should be a win-win situation – family resource centers and other parent education programs are often seeking ways to reach more parents and raise visibility of their programs.

•Always keep in mind that parent education needs to be provided within a context of trust and mutual respect. Parents are receptive when they believe that you know their child and you have the child's best interests in mind.



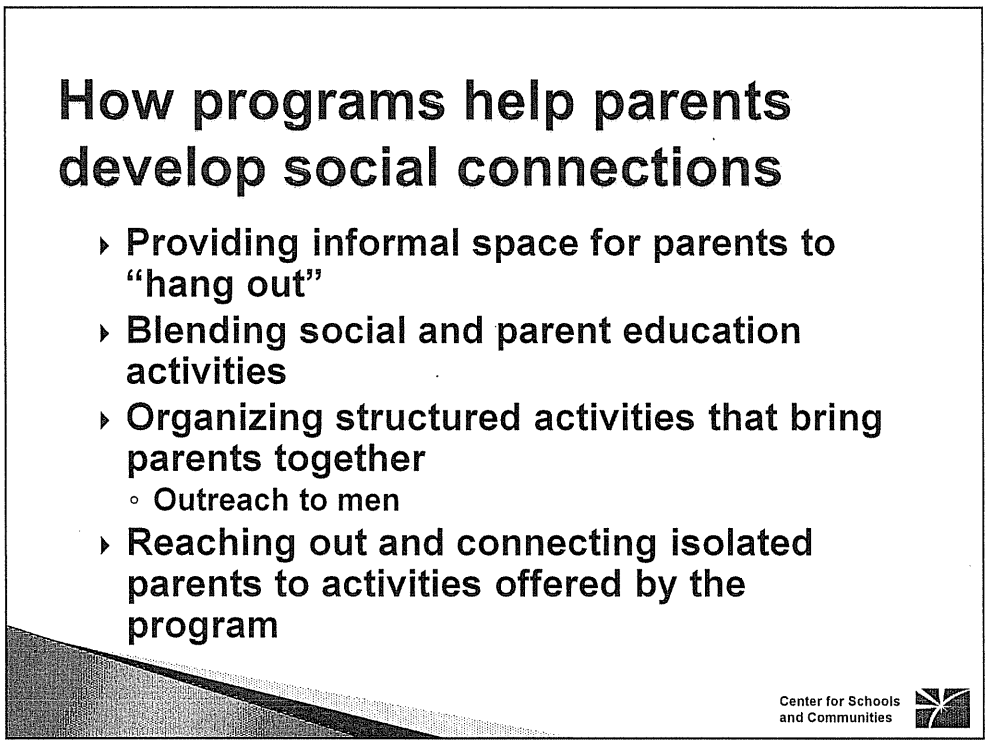
Social isolation is strongly connected to child maltreatment!

•More families than ever before are living far away from their extended families and need to develop their own social support networks with friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other parents with children of similar ages

•For preventing child abuse and neglect, it's not just having social connections, but the quality of the connections:

- •Having someone to talk to and vent frustration, especially about parenting challenges
- •Connections that help families to access resources – e.g. a friend that will provide babysitting
- •Opportunities to see other parents parenting – this allows parents to pick up some good techniques and perhaps also recognize some strategies that don't work
- •Social networks that include **positive norms** about parenting – conversations with other parents about the joys of raising children and sharing tips for positive things to do with children

•This is particularly important for teen parents, since many times they are now in a different place than their peer group.



•How can you create a quote "place" unquote where teen parents meet and develop social networks with other parents? This may not be a physical space – today's young adults are very comfortable with social networking media and other non-traditional methods of engaging with their peers.

•Programs need to be intentional about supporting the development of those relationships…..

•If you do have a physical location that is easily accessible to teen parents, just by providing a space there where parents can sit or stand and talk for a few minutes, you can promote social connections

•Blending educational and social activities makes it "safe" for parents who might shy away from purely social events. It also helps to develop or reinforce positive norms about parenting within the social network because they can talk about what they learned.

•Providing structured social activities with child care provided is another method to connect parents

•Often we assume that men will know they're welcome at events, but we don't take any steps to make them feel welcome or make our events attractive to men. Tailor some events toward the men in children's lives – is there a local fatherhood program that could assist your efforts?

•And, don't forget to be open to grandfathers, uncles, and other men who are important in children's lives.

•Finally, in any group there will be the ones who join in every activity, but it's important to look at who is NOT participating in events and might be socially isolated. Extending a personal invitation to those parents might be enough to

All families have strengths, all families have needs is one of the basics of the strengthening families approach…

•We can be the gateway to services for families when they are in need

•Providing concrete supports is an important way of intervening before a crisis happens, ensuring that teen parents are connected to needed community services can prevent the crisis from occurring. Ensuring adequate food, shelter, clothing.

•Assistance with daily needs: health care, education, job opportunities

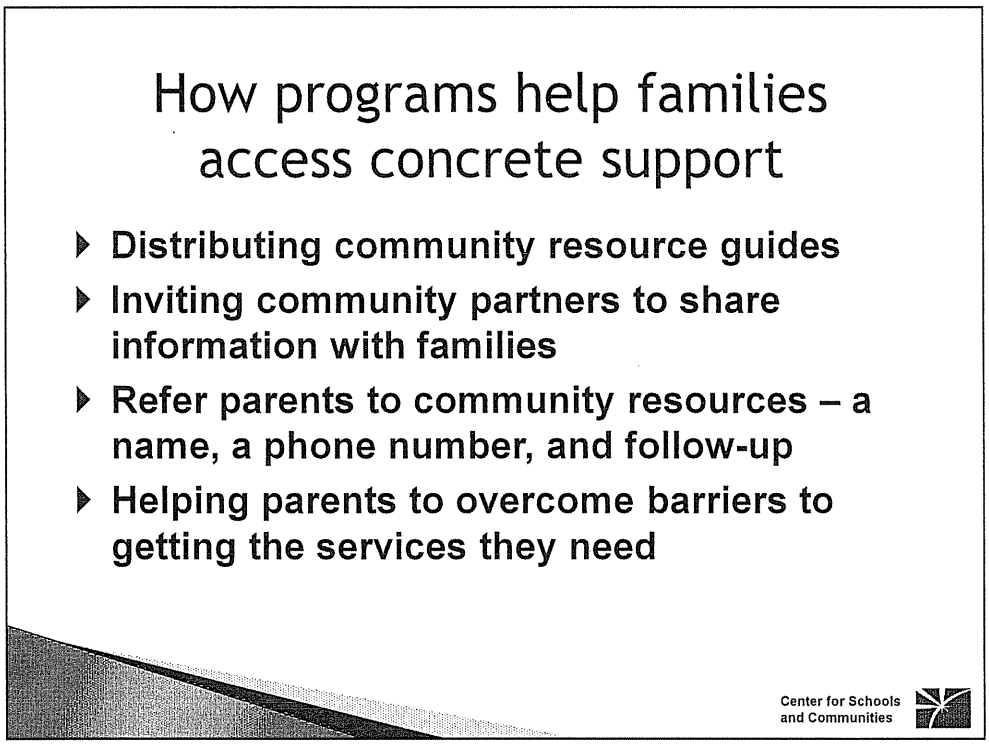
•Parents that are struggling to meet basic needs for their families will not be able to focus on less-immediate concerns like positive discipline and enhancing their child's development.

•Services for parents: depression and other mental health issues, domestic violence, substance abuse

•Specialized services for children – for example, assessment and services for children with special needs.

•"Times of need" don't only occur in families in poverty.

- •All families have times of need, whether it's at the birth of a new child, health problems, etc.
- •Mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence can happen in any family



•Programs don't need to provide all of these services themselves

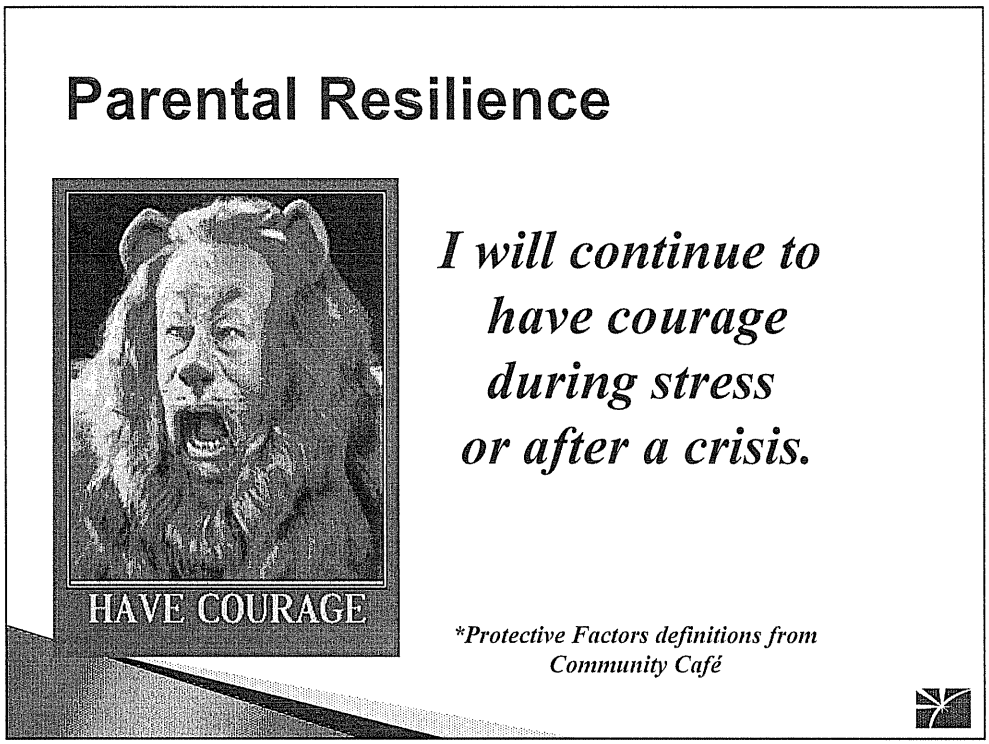
•One important service is just helping teen parents get connected to what is available in the community and letting them know that you are a source for that information.

- •If your county or community has a resource guide, get enough copies so that they can be distributed to all families.
- •If you are having a parent event, invite other community partners to bring information or speak briefly to let parents know about the services they offer.
- •As a first step, you might just want to use time in a staff meeting to make sure all the staff are aware of the resources in your community

•A referral has more meaning – and is more likely to be followed up on – when it is offered in the context of a personal relationship. Both that you know the parent and that you know the person or program you are referring them to.

- •Don't just provide a referral and not follow up. Follow up, ask the parent if they made the call and if they need anything else.

•For the more intense interventions (e.g. mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse) the issue is often not only the lack of knowledge about the services but stigma and lack of trust. Use your trusting relationship with families to help them overcome these barriers to accessing the services they need.

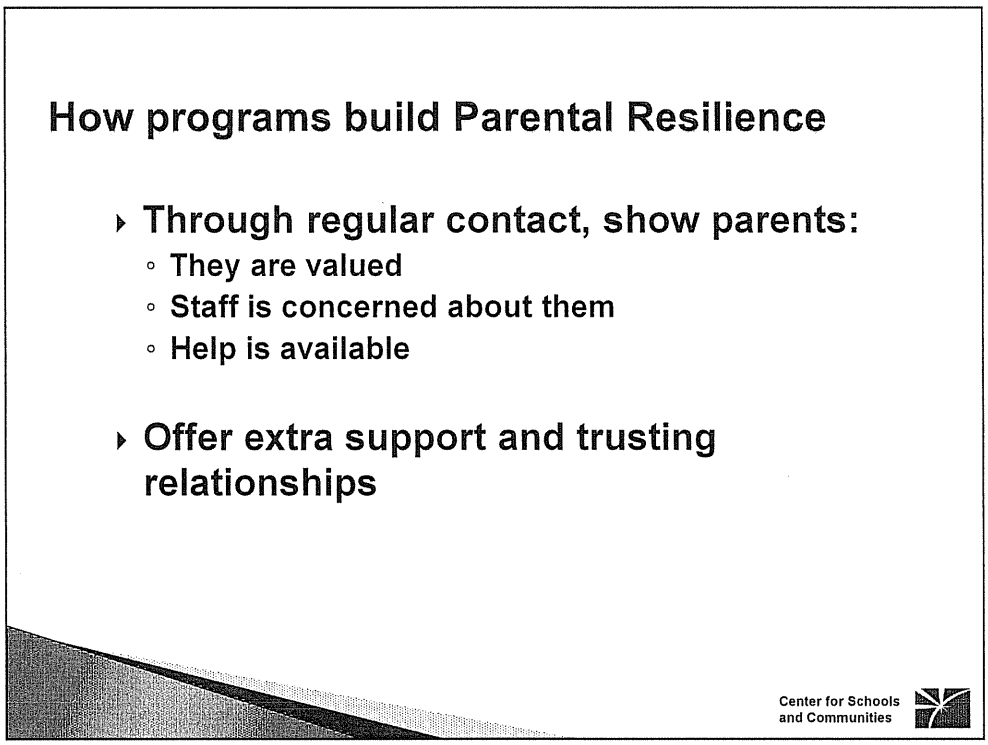


The last factor we'll talk about is Parental Resilience…..

Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are generally able to cope on their own, but they also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, and domestic or community violence--and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness--may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supportive caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed. All of these strengthen the capacity to parent effectively. In addition, community services that help families in crisis include mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, family and marital counseling and special education and treatment programs for children with special needs.



•Use your daily contact with parents to send consistent messages. Parents need to know that they are valued, that others care about them, and that help is available

•When you have a pattern of caring relationships with all families in the program, it will be more natural for parents who are having difficulties to ask for help and enter into the conversations that will help them and their children

•Parents who had difficult childhoods may need "re-parenting" to help them internalize new messages that they **are** capable, that when bad things happen others will support and help them, that things are fixable. – Again, the same things that we try to instill in children as they grow.

•As one staff member put it, "Sometimes we have to help the parents grow up, too"

•Be sensitive to where parents are coming from and where they are in their development of resilience. Think about the kind of scaffolding we do for children as they develop new skills.

•These are the seven strategies for building the protective factors from the Strengthening Families Framework.

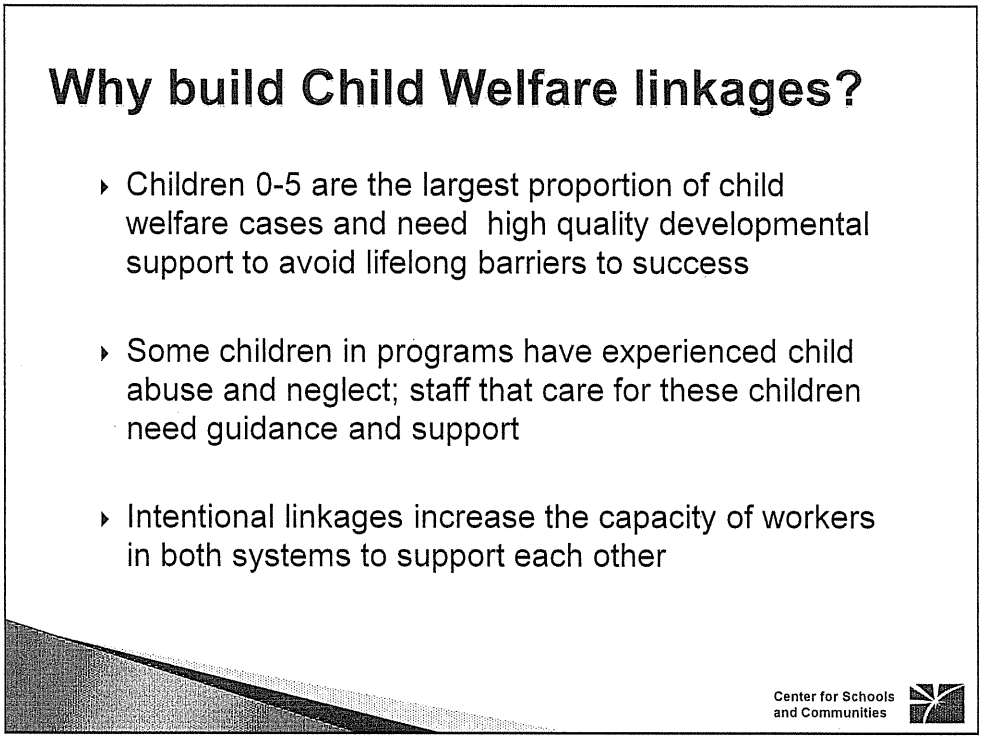
•We've touched on all of these strategies as we discussed each of the protective factors.

•As you can see, the program strategies support multiple protective factors at once.

•The one program strategy we really haven't gotten to is the last one listed here: Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect.

•In Pennsylvania, high-quality training is available on how to recognize and respond to warning signs – from the Family Support Alliance or your county Child Welfare agency.

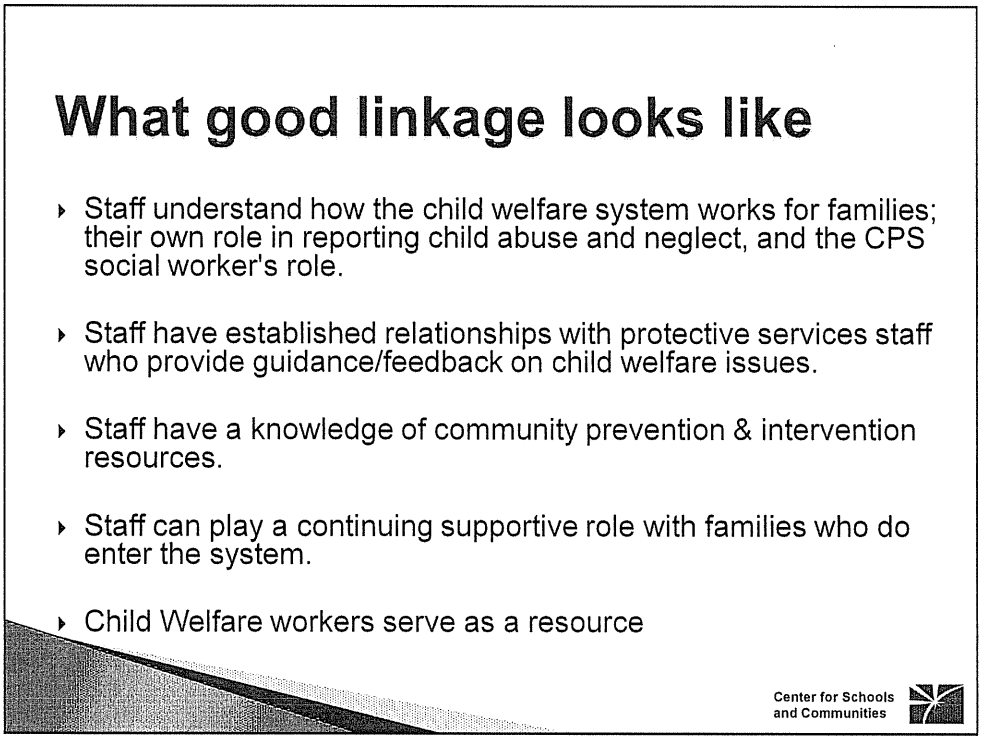
•But let's talk for a minute why it is important to



The need for linkages was highlighted when the Center for the Study of Social Policy examined exemplary early childhood programs across the country. CSSP found that children in foster care, in the guardianship of relatives, and children with open child protection cases all attend early care and education programs – and that by and large, child welfare agencies had no systematic links with these programs. The programs often developed informal relationships with case workers of children enrolled in their centers but there was no other effort to make this happen.

A 50 state scan revealed that no state required that young children in their care be enrolled in a high quality early childhood program – a huge oversight on the part of both early childhood advocates (who did not focus attention on this group of young children most urgently in need of high quality developmental help) and child welfare agencies (who have not focused on the developmental needs of children under school age).

As early childhood programs are recognized as highly desirable partners with child welfare agencies, a stronger more systematic link is required. Children and their families will benefit from linkages among the adults charged with improving their developmental outcomes.

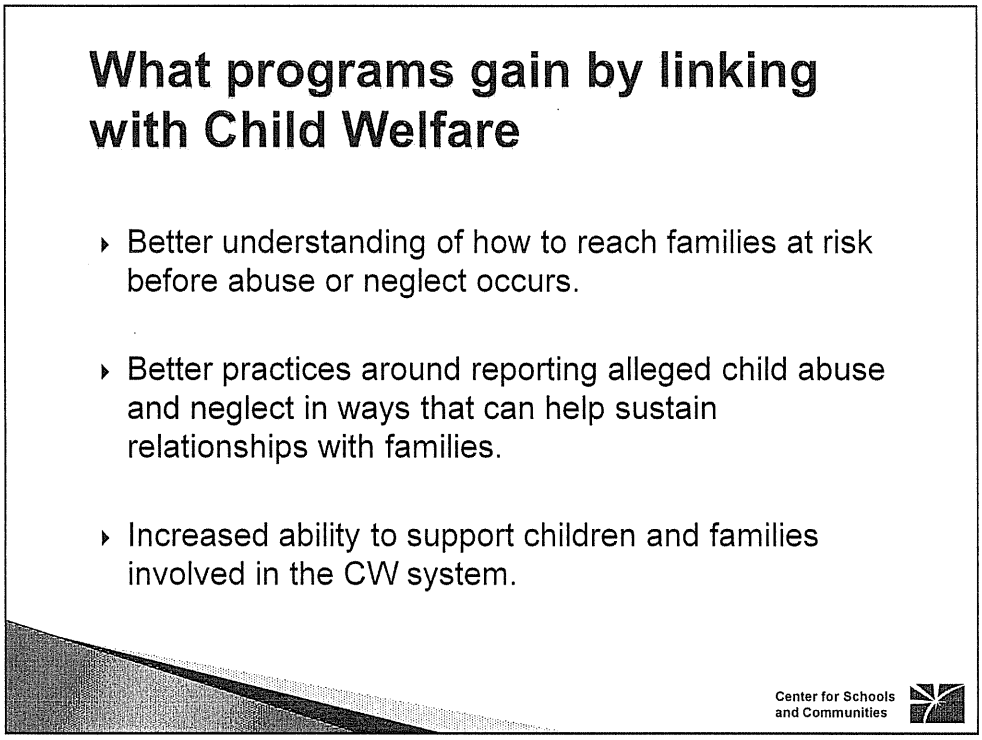


Although Mandated reporter training is indeed needed, Good linkages go beyond this requirement. Linkages are about building relationships with the casemanagers and supervisors within the local child welfare system. Staff in this system have a wealth of information that can assist the teen parents who you will serve.

If teens are already involved with the child welfare system, good relationships between your program staff and child welfare will help to support the teen parent's effort to parent her child effectively.

Staff who provide services to teen parents should be involved in Family Service Planning and other activities offered by the child welfare agency, such as Family Group Decision Making.

Child Welfare case managers can serve as a resource to your program when concerns arise or another family is in need of services.



When relationships are built with staff in the child welfare system, it can improve the reporting process. If staff working with teen parents understand how the local CYS system works, they will be able to assist parents involved in that system to meet requirements and improve their parenting skills.

Relationships: The foundation

- Mutual respect and partnership with parents
- Trusting relationships with parents, developed over time
- Relationships with other community agencies and services

Center for Schools and Communities

•The foundation of all success in strengthening families and building protective factors is RELATIONSHIPS

•Parents need to know that they are respected and that staff care about their children.

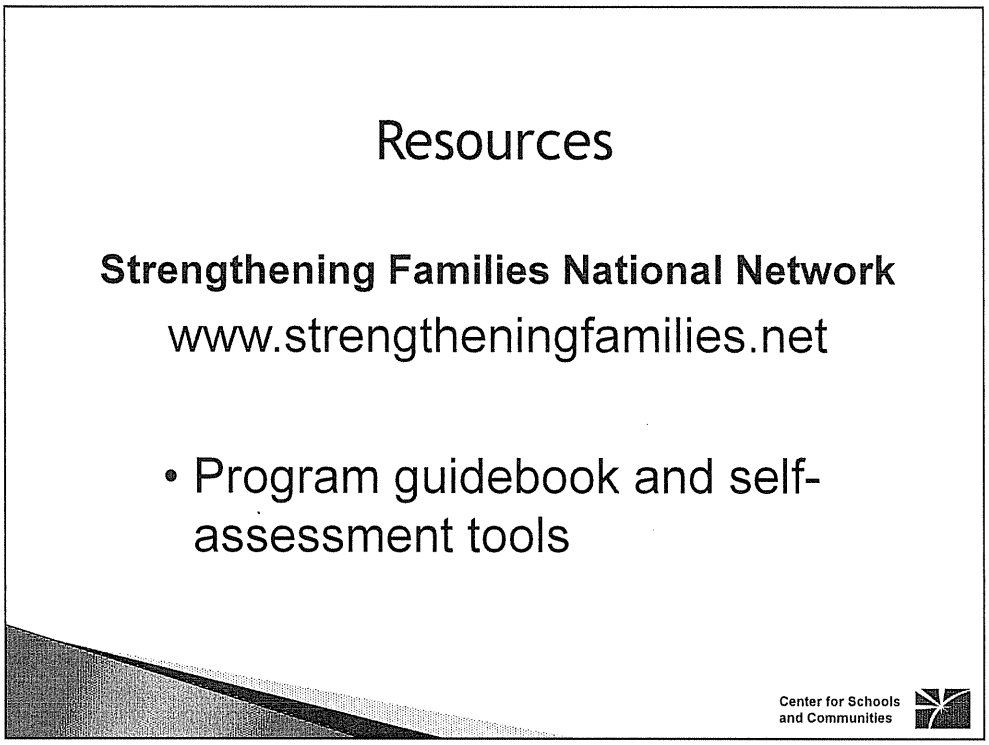
•Communication between parents and staff must be two way and meaningful.

•SF is a universal approach – again, all families have strengths and all families need support.

•Organizational-level relationships are also important:

- •It means to having a strong relationship with the local Children and Youth Services and other family serving agencies.
- •Having a relationship where staff can call and express concerns and determine whether you need to make a formal referral
- •Being informed when a teen parent in your program is involved with the child welfare system, in foster care placement or involved with other systems like MH/MR.

•The benefit of using the Strengthening Families Framework is that it is easily understood and the focus is on relationship building.



More information about the Strengthening Families Framework can be found at www.strengtheningfamilies.net

There is an online self-assessment that provides concrete ideas for implementing each of the seven strategies in the framework. You may find it useful as you develop your CTF proposal.

Thank you for your time this morning.