

APPENDIX 7

Children's Trust Fund

25-RFA-13772

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Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework

The Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework (“SFPFF”) is an approach to working with families that builds upon family strengths, rather than focusing on deficits. It is not a curriculum or a program, but instead offers a framework of five research-based protective factors that give parents what they need to parent effectively. Ongoing research conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (“CSSP”) has shown that the presence and prominence of these five protective factors in families reduces the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, strengthens families, and contributes to excellent outcomes for young children. This approach benefits all families, not just those experiencing stress.

The five protective factors are:

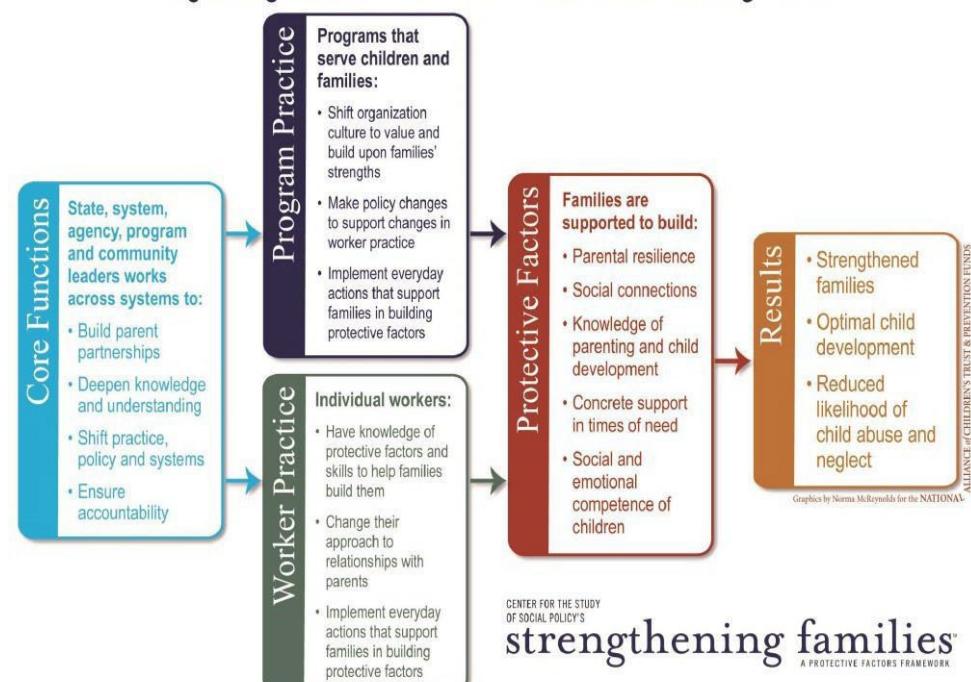
- **Parental resilience** – managing stress and functioning well—facilitated by individual, relational, community, or societal factors—when faced with stressors, adversity, or trauma;
- **Social connections** – healthy, meaningful, trusting, and sustained relationships with people, institutions, communities, or a higher power that promote a sense of connectedness, belonging, and mattering;
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development** – Learning about prenatal, infant, and child development, and using developmentally and contextually appropriate parenting practices;
- **Concrete support in times of need** – Identifying, accessing, advocating for, and receiving high quality and equitable support including the basic necessities everyone deserves and specialized services to address specific needs;
- **Social and emotional competence of children** – Providing environments and experiences—grounded in early relational health—that build positive social skills; enable children to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviors; and promote effective communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.¹

To further explain how the SFPFF approach is implemented and how organizations and direct service workers can create environments where families build these protective factors, CSSP has developed the logic model found below.

For more information about the Strengthening Families™ approach and the five protective factors please visit [CSSP](#) and [Pennsylvania Strengthening Families](#).

The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model



¹ Harper Browne, C. (2024, January). Expanding the Perspectives and Research Foundation for the Strengthening Families & Youth Thrive Frameworks. Center for the Study of Social Policy. Retrieved 10/7/2024: <https://cssp.org/resource/expanding-the-perspectives-and-research-foundation-for-the-strengthening-families-youth-thrive-frameworks/>