

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 when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma;
- **Social connections** – positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support;
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development** – understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development;
- **Concrete support in times of need** – access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges; and
- **Social and emotional competence of children** – family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.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 on the next page.²

In addition to the logic model, CSSP has developed everyday actions which are the small but significant changes in our approach to parents and caregivers that create an environment where families can build protective factors. The second graphic on the next page shows the everyday actions identified by CSSP.³

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

¹ Center for the Study of Social Policy (2015). *Core meanings of the Strengthening Families protective factors*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors-2015.pdf>

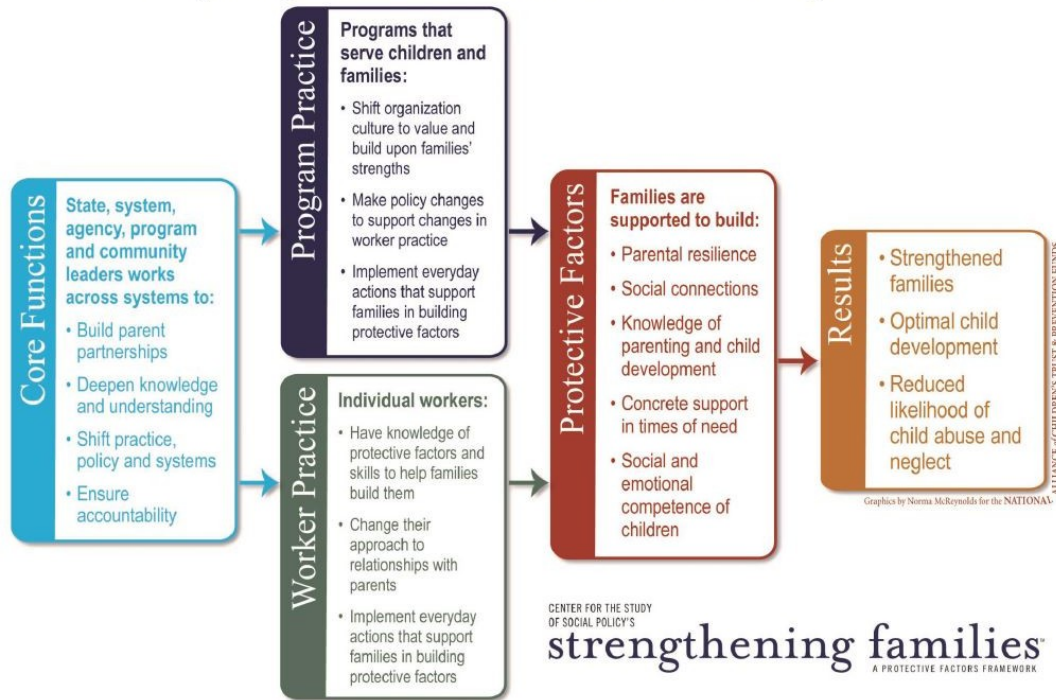
² Center for the Study of Social Policy (n.d). *About Strengthening Families™ and the protective factors framework*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>

³ IBID

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The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model



The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families Everyday Actions That Help Build Protective Factors

