Strengthening Families: 5 Protective Factors

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, and Child Welfare Information Gateway

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
Why Promote Protective Factors?

- Positive attributes that make families healthier & stronger
- Help to develop positive relationships with parents
- Help families build and draw on their support system within family and community
Five Protective Factors

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
Nurturing and Attachment

- Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to, and communicate with their children.

- Babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens and adults who are happy, healthy and competent.
Things to Consider

- How much time do you spend with your child or teen?
- When do you spend time with your child or teen, what do you like to do together?
- What games/activities does your child or teen like?
Things to Consider

- What does your child or teen do when she/he is sad tired or angry?
- What happens when your child (cries for a long time, has a tantrum, wets the bed, skips school)?
- How do you know when your child or teen is happy? Sad? Lonely? Hurt?
- How do you comfort your child?
How do you show affection in your family?

How do you let your child know that you love him or her?

What are your child’s greatest gifts and talents?

How do you encourage these talents?

What do you do when your child does something great?
Things To Consider (cont.)

- How many people provide care for your baby or toddler? How often do these people change?
- What routines do you keep in caring for your child?
- How do you keep your child or teen safe at home? In the neighborhood or community?
- All families experience conflict from time to time. What happens when there is a conflict in your house?
Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence.

Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.
Things to Consider

- What does your child do best?
- What do you like about your child?
- What do you like about being the parent of an infant (or preschooler, or teenager)?
- What are the things you find challenging as a parent?
- What kinds of things make your child frustrated, sad or angry?
- What does your child do when happy, Sad? Angry?
Things to Consider

- What works best for your child when she/he is sad, angry or frustrated?
- How have you let your child know what to expect?
- What happens when she does what’s asked?
- What discipline methods work best for you?
- How does your child respond?
Things To Consider

- How do you think your child compares to other children of his/her age?
- Are there things that worry you about your child?
- Have others expressed concern about your child’s behavior?
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.
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.
Things To Consider

- What helps you cope with everyday life?
- Where do you draw your strength?
- How does this help you in your parenting?
- What are your dream for yourself and your family?
- What kind of frustrations or worries do you deal with during the day?
- How do you solve these everyday problems as they arise?
Things To Consider (cont.)

- Has something happened recently that has made life more difficult?
- How are you able to meet your children’s needs when you are dealing with stress?
- How are your children reacting to crisis?
- When you are under stress, what is most hopeful to you?
- Are there places in the community where you can find help?
Social Connections

- Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it’s easier to care for their children and themselves.

- Parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.
Things to Consider

- Do you have family members or friends nearby who help you out once in a while?
- Do you belong to a church, temple, mosque, women’s group, men’s group?
- Do you have a child in the local school or Head Start program?
- Who can you call for advice or to talk?
Concrete Support for Parents

- Families that can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation,

- Know how to access essential services such as child care, health care, and mental health services are better able to ensure their children’s safety and well-being.
NEED ASSISTANCE?

Contact your child’s school or The Head Start Program.