

## ABOUT STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ AND THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five key protective factors:

**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

**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

At its heart, Strengthening Families is about how families are supported to build key protective factors that enable children to thrive. The five protective factors at the foundation of Strengthening Families also offer a framework for changes at the systems, policy and practice level – locally, statewide and nationally.

Using the Strengthening Families framework, more than 30 states are shifting policy and practice to help programs and providers working with children and families to take everyday actions that support parents to build their protective factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems.

The “Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families” on the next page articulates the core functions of Strengthening Families implementation which drive changes in program and worker practice to support families to build protective factors and improve outcomes. The lower graphic shows the everyday actions that can help families build each of the protective factors.

### What is the Protective Factors Framework?

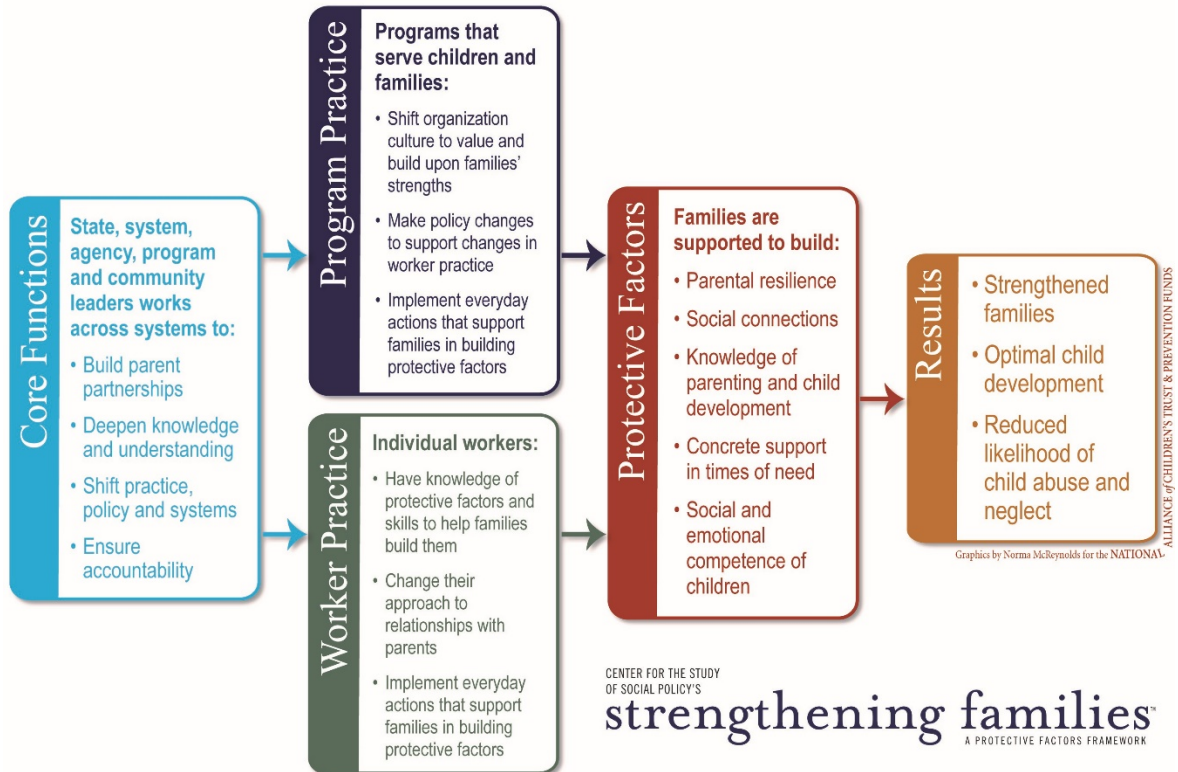
Protective factors are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development. Most often, we see them as attributes that help families to successfully navigate difficult situations.

A protective factors framework is an organized set of strengths-based ideas that are used to guide programs, services, supports and interventions aimed at preventing child maltreatment and promoting healthy outcomes.

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework from the Center for the Study of Social Policy distills extensive research in child and family development into a core set of five protective factors that everyone can understand and recognize in their own lives.

For more information, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net).

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



**Everyday Actions That Help Build Protective Factors**

