



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ AND CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE SKILLS

	Practice Skills	Strengthening Families Contribution
Engaging	The process of developing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship (whether short or long-term) that is built on respect, trust and genuineness. Engagement requires creating an environment where willingness to plan and act together is the goal. Active listening skills are critical.	Strengthening Families™ serves as a concrete platform for strengths-based family engagement.
Assessing	A dynamic process of gathering, analyzing and organizing information in support of understanding and decision-making that continues throughout the life of a case.	Assessment tools and processes include information on protective factors. Information is collected on existing protective factors that can serve as building blocks for addressing issues that brought the family to the attention of the system. Protective factors are used as an organizing lens and for family goal setting.
Decision-Making / Teaming	A deliberate and structured approach to involving youth and families in decision-making through facilitated meetings of family, their identified supports and professionals working with the family.	Protective factors are discussed during teaming conversations and are used to inform decisions about who will attend teaming meetings.
Services and Supports Planning	Engaging parents, caregivers and youth in identifying services and supports that can assist them in achieving jointly developed goals. This process can also serve as an opportunity to assist the parent, caregiver and youth in recognizing and understanding developmental needs.	Case plans include specific elements to build protective factors focused on services the system can implement, actions by the parent/youth and actions of the case worker.
Intervening	Use of self as an active change agent with the family by engaging in purposeful interactions, capturing “just in time” moments to transfer information, gain understanding, take action and adjust plans based on the outcomes of these actions. Observation, active listening and influencing skills are necessary. Actions in this arena are dependent on the worker’s ability to continuously assess and intervene in a timely and constructive manner, based on ongoing assessment and furthered by understandings of family situations. Appropriate adjustments are made over time to family goals, resources and supports.	Case workers have the knowledge related to child and development and the skills and capacities needed to use every interaction with families as an opportunity to support the family in building protective factors.
Monitoring and Case Closure	Creating clarity with families about the conditions for case closure, decision making around closure, preparation for transitioning from system involvement and consolidation/continued strengths development.	Protective factors are integrated into the case closing decision-making matrix. Families leave system involvement with an active plan for continuing to build their protective factors. Warm handoffs are made to community partners that can continue to support families.