



## THE PERIOD OF PURPLE CRYING

### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Strengthening Families is a research-informed, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It builds five protective factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Through the Strengthening Families Initiative, more than thirty states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states also use the Strengthening Families approach to inform state prevention strategies, strengthen families in the child welfare system and engage parents and communities in building protective factors.

### WHY THE *PERIOD OF PURPLE CRYING* PROGRAM SITES AND STATE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ EFFORTS SHOULD CONNECT

Strengthening Families efforts provide a cross-systems framework for family support and capacity building in more than 30 states. State initiatives are led by cross-system leadership teams generally representing a diverse set of disciplines, including early childhood, child abuse and neglect prevention, child welfare and public health. In most states, Strengthening Families is being implemented broadly in settings as diverse as early childhood centers, family support programs, parenting programs and other venues that serve young children and their families. Connecting to these leadership teams provides an opportunity to place the *Period of PURPLE Crying* program work in the context of broad cross-disciplinary thinking about how to leverage existing systems to support families and prevent abuse and neglect.

At the programmatic level Strengthening Families provides a framework and set of tools to help any environment that supports young children and their families enhance their capacity to build protective factors that promote optimal development and prevent abuse and neglect. For sites implementing the *Period of PURPLE Crying* program, Strengthening Families materials and tools can be used to help build a more comprehensive family support strategy that will complement their existing work. Existing programs implementing the Strengthening Families approach in states may also be an important resource for the *Period of PURPLE Crying* program sites to refer families to. These programs are already working with families in a strengths-based, capacity building way and may be an important resource to families who need additional supports as they navigate the stress of early infant crying.

Visit the Strengthening Families website ([www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)) to learn more about efforts going on in specific states, or to download tools and resources to support Strengthening Families implementation within a program.



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The program is based on 50 years of scientific research on infant crying and the connection between the crying curve and the incidence of shaken baby syndrome. It has undergone extensive evaluation with randomized controlled trials with 4,400 participants and over 40 parent focus groups.

The program materials include a 10-page booklet and a DVD with both a 10-minute *PURPLE* film and a 17-minute soothing and coping film. The materials (1) are educational and attractive to parents of newborns on the first day of life (2) contain clear, memorable, meaningful, attractive, positive messages (3) are written at a third grade reading level (4) are intended to be multicultural both through translation and the visuals (5) are designed to be acceptable to public health nurses (i.e. no bottles, blankets, bumper pads, etc.) (6) are provided free of charge to parents so that they can review them when needed and share the materials with others who may care for their child.

To learn more about the program visit:  
[www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)

[www.PURPLEcrying.info](http://www.PURPLEcrying.info)

### HOW THE PERIOD OF PURPLE CRYING PROGRAM LINKS TO THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

The *Period of PURPLE Crying* program is an evidence-based intervention shown to change how parents understand early infant crying and how they respond to the frustration associated with that crying. Parents receive program materials - generally in the hospital at the time of birth. They are also provided with guidance from a trained professional, often a nurse. The *Period of PURPLE Crying* program approach is consistent with Strengthening Families efforts and serves to build the protective factors.

For example:

**Parental Resilience:** The *Period of PURPLE Crying* program builds parental resilience by providing the information that helps parents understand that early increases in infant crying are normal. The program helps parents deal with the stress of early infant crying, understand that crying peaks, decreases and comes to an end around the fourth or fifth month of life.

**Social Connections:** The program materials are often personalized to reflect local parent-help numbers and resources for parental support.

**Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** The program synthesizes more than 50 years of scientific research on infant crying into easy to understand and actionable strategies for parents to use.

**Concrete Supports:** Program materials provide information about when and how to seek help (including by a medical professional). More importantly, the program gives parents concrete tools and soothing and coping strategies to deal with a particularly stressful phase of early infancy.

**Children's Social Emotional Competence:** By reducing parental frustration and helping parents develop soothing strategies, the *Period of PURPLE Crying* program helps support early attachment, a crucial building block to children's social emotional development.

States such as New Hampshire and Kansas are linking their *Period of PURPLE Crying* program campaigns to their larger Strengthening Families efforts.