



## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IMPLEMENTATION IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Over the last fifteen years, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has built Strengthening Families into one of the most widely recognized approaches to child abuse and neglect prevention in the country. At its heart, Strengthening Families is about how families are supported to build key protective factors that enable children to thrive.

States and communities are integrating Strengthening Families into at least one of four key sectors: early care and education, child abuse and neglect prevention, home visiting, and child welfare. In each of these fields, Strengthening Families offers:

- An intuitive explanation of what families need to thrive, and what programs can do to support them
- A common framework and a shared set of results for families
- A broad range of concrete, low- and no-cost actions that many types of programs can implement
- Free and easily accessible tools to support implementation at the program, policy and systems levels

### How Strengthening Families is used in Early Care and Education

States and communities are implementing Strengthening Families in their early care and education systems in several different ways. Key strategies include:

- **QRIS:** The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is integrated into the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). (Integration strategies vary by state.)
- **Planning and policy:** The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is used as a shared outcomes framework in high-level planning and policy efforts (e.g., Early Childhood Advisory Council).
- The **childcare resource and referral (CCR&R)** network is engaged in professional development and support for programs that are implementing the Strengthening Families approach.
- **Knowledge & Competency framework:** The Strengthening Families approach and Protective Factors Framework is integrated into state early care and education workforce knowledge and competency framework.
- **EC system development:** The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is used in state or local early childhood (EC) systems development efforts (e.g., ECCS).
- **FFN providers:** The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is used to support family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care providers (also referred to as informal or license-exempt child care providers).

The grid on the following page shows which of these strategies states report using in their implementation of Strengthening Families.

### Strengthening Families

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 protective factors:

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

Using the Strengthening Families framework, more than 30 states are shifting policy and practice to help programs working with children and families focus on protective factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems.

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



## Implementation in Early Care & Education

State	Last updated	QRIS*	Planning and Policy	CCR&R	Knowledge & Competency Framework	EC Systems Development	FFN Providers
Alabama	2020			X	X	X	
Alaska	2020		X	X	X	X	X
Arkansas	2020	X				X	
Arizona	2020				X		
Georgia	2020	X		X	X		
Guam	2020		X			X	
Kentucky	2020	X					
Maine	2020						X
Maryland	2020			X		X	
Michigan	2020				X	X	X
Missouri	2020				X	X	
New Hampshire	2020	X	X	X	X		
North Carolina	2020		X				
Ohio	2020			X	X		X
Pennsylvania	2020	X			X		
Tennessee	2020			X		X	
Utah	2020					X	
Washington	2020	X		X		X	X
West Virginia	2020		X		X		
Wisconsin	2020	X		X	X	X	X
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

*Based on state reports, last updated January 2021*

*\* Includes states that have integrated Strengthening Families into QRIS that have not yet been implemented.*