CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY'S
strengthening families
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

MAKING THE LINK

DEVEREUX CENTER FOR RESILIENT CHILDREN

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

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.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND RESOURCES FROM THE DEVEREUX CENTER FOR RESILIENT CHILDREN

Strengthening Families efforts provide a cross-systems framework for family support and capacity building in the majority of states and in many communities. Strengthening Families 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 resources from the Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC) in the context of broad cross-disciplinary thinking about how to leverage existing systems to support families and build resilience.

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. The language and approach used in these materials will be easily understood by those already familiar with materials from DCRC. All of these resources can be used together to help build a more comprehensive family support strategy that will complement existing work. Other programs implementing the Strengthening Families approach may also be potential partners for those using DCRC materials. 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.

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

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The Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC) is part of Devereux, one of the largest non-profit behavioral health organizations in the United States.

DCRC's mission is to promote social and emotional development, foster resilience and build skills for school and life success in children birth through school-age, as well as to promote the resilience of the adults who care for them.

DCRC's resilience-building assessment and strategy resources:

- Support the well-being of children and the adults who parent, nurture and educate children
- Provide strength-based approaches
- Build strong partnerships between parents and child-serving professionals
- Encourage collaboration to optimize positive outcomes
- Foster data-driven decision making

Your Journey Together is a curriculum for parents to build the resilience of their children and themselves.

Building Your Bounce is a journal with reflective readings, activities and a research-based survey to help adults assess and build their resilience.

Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever is a guide to help families understand and support children's social and emotional health and resilience in simple ways.

Many more resources are available! See http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/.

Devereux
CENTER FOR RESILIENT CHILDREN

HOW RESOURCES FROM THE DEVEREUX CENTER FOR RESILIENT CHILDREN SUPPORT FAMILIES IN BUILDING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Resources developed by DCRC to support resilience in children and adults are consistent with the Strengthening Families approach and can be a valuable tool in helping families to build their protective factors. For example:

Parental Resilience: DCRC's Adult Resilience Initiative focuses on promoting the health and well-being of all adults who parent, nurture and/or work with young children. DCRC's Adult Resilience Initiative emerged in response to the growing understanding and appreciation that promoting children's resilience depends significantly on the resilience of the adults caring for them.

Social Connections: *Your Journey Together* is grounded in a relationship-based approach with rapport between parent and professional being central to the process of building family resilience. In addition, Devereux's Adult Resilience resources include "Relationships" as a key protective factor for adults, and encourage adults to build supportive friendships, find mentors, support others and build skills in empathy and trust.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: DCRC uses a strength-based, reflective approach in efforts to increase parents' knowledge of parenting and child development. DCRC assessments and resources are parent friendly, strength-based, attractive materials that allow parents the opportunity to reflect upon their child's strengths and needs. Strategies for parents to use that support the development of their child are simple, effective and research-informed.

Concrete Supports: DCRC has not developed resources to explicitly address provision of concrete support in time of need. The Adult Resilience resources in *Your Journey Together* strengthen parents' relationship skills, internal beliefs, initiative and self-regulation, preparing parents to seek assistance and cope during times of crisis when concrete supports are essential to the family's well-being. DCRC values parents as able to make their own decisions and choices related to their readiness to move forward with learning and growing. As such, *Your Journey Together* is designed to allow time for the coach to support parents in resolving issues related to basic needs and crisis situations.

Children's Social and Emotional Competence: The significant adults in a child's life work together to collect information, including social and emotional screening and assessment data, and use the information to develop plans that promote children's social and emotional skills and resilience. Families, educators, consultants and other significant adult caregivers continuously monitor, evaluate and modify the plans as needed, ensuring positive outcomes. DCRC's strength-based approach is prevention oriented, meaning that it is designed to benefit all children and the families and adults in their lives.