

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 *ALL BABIES CRY* 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 *All Babies Cry* 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 *All Babies Cry* 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 those using *All Babies Cry* materials 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) to learn more about efforts going on in specific states, or to download tools and resources to support Strengthening Families implementation within a program.



ALL BABIES CRY

All Babies Cry is the product of two years of National Institutes of Health sponsored research by experts in maternal/child health, fathering, infant development, pediatric abusive head trauma and injury prevention working with health educators and instructional designers at Vida Health Communications. The multi-dosed, multi-media intervention is meant to be introduced to parents as part of bedside education during maternity stays. The components include:

- 11-minute video program for hospital closed-circuit TV systems
- media for families to access at home or on mobile platforms
- 28-page booklet with checklists and activities
- online video streaming
- online training course for maternity staff implementation
- Facebook community manager

All materials are in English and Spanish. The intervention satisfies mandates to educate about pediatric abusive head trauma.

To learn more, visit:
www.allbabiescry.com

HOW *ALL BABIES CRY* LINKS TO THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

All Babies Cry is a maternity education and injury prevention media program for new mothers and fathers. An evidence-based intervention, *All Babies Cry* empowers new parents with practical demonstrations of infant soothing and clear strategies for managing normal stress in parenting. Designed to promote healthy parental behaviors and prevent child abuse in the first year of life, *All Babies Cry* is a just-in-time, multiple dose intervention for use beginning at discharge from hospital maternity stays and continuing through the first months of life.

All Babies Cry explicitly promotes the protective factors of the Strengthening Families approach. Examples of this include:

Parental Resilience: *All Babies Cry* helps parents understand that early infant crying is normal. The program clearly demonstrates ways that a diverse set of families uses to manage the normal stress of parenting, emphasizing the need for self-care and the value of asking for help when it's needed.

Social Connections: The *All Babies Cry* Facebook page provides a way for parents to connect online and share strategies and support. Additionally, part of the services and support a state or agency receives when it adopts *All Babies Cry* is a customizable website which offers links to local and national resources and sources of support.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Drawing on decades of scientific research, *All Babies Cry* illustrates infant behaviors and demonstrates clear strategies for infant soothing, with a particular focus on including and empowering fathers.

Concrete Supports: *All Babies Cry* gives parents concrete tools and strategies in a time of need to deal with a particularly stressful phase of early infancy. Materials also provide information about when and how to seek help (including from a medical professional).

Children's Social Emotional Competence: By reducing parental frustration and helping parents develop soothing strategies, *All Babies Cry* helps to support early attachment - a crucial building block to children's social emotional development.