

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES MICHIGAN STATE PROFILE

Infrastructure

The Strengthening Families initiative in Michigan was originally led by the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) in 2008 with a primary focus on increasing the dialogue about the protective factors and to integrate the Strengthening Families approach at both the state and local level. Since then, the Michigan Statewide Strengthening Families Council (MI SSFC) has formed and is coordinated by CTF in partnership with ECIC, Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and other state departments.

There are currently no direct funds supporting the state level collaboration efforts, however, several of the MI SSFC partners at the table fund the work happening at the local levels.

MI has over 140 Strengthening Families trainers across the state. Over the years the states Strengthening Families initiative has expanded to professional development systems, child welfare services, early childhood development and learning, and other services.

Parent Partnerships

The Michigan Statewide Strengthening Families Council (MI SSFC) has developed a mission to partner with parents in state level activities. Several state partners have active parent partnerships as well as at the local levels. MI SSFC plans to build off what is happening at the local levels and embed these practices into the growing infrastructure within the MI SSFC.

Through Michigan's Great Start Collaboratives (GSC) at the local level, all 61 Great Start Parent Coalitions (GSPC) have completed at least one Strengthening Families assessment with Coalition members. Completing the assessment allows members to understand how the GSPC is addressing the Protective Factors within their local work and promoting authentic parent voice. At the end of the assessment, each GSPC chose a set of goals to incorporate into their yearly plan. Goals focused on continuation of successful work and areas to strengthen.

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.

Nationally, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) coordinates Strengthening Families and works with more than a dozen national partner organizations and federal partners to create a new vision in which communities, families, institutions, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on protective and promotive factors
- Recognize and support parents as decision-makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

Implementation Checklist

Strengthening Families is used in state or local early childhood systems planning efforts	✓
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) efforts include a focus on protective factors	✓
Strengthening Families is integrated in a Quality Rating and Improvement System for early care and education	✓
Strengthening Families is included in the state's Home Visiting Plan	✓
Strengthening Families is being implemented in the child welfare system	✓
Strengthening Families efforts are linked to work to advance equity, anti-racism, and social justice	✓
The state's work around Adverse Childhood Experiences includes a focus on protective factors and positive childhood experiences	✓

Learn More

www.michigan.gov/ctf

State Contact

Heidi Coggins
Direct Services Coordinator
Michigan Children's Trust Fund
cogginsh@michigan.gov
(517) 335-7770

Profile last updated: June 2021

Deepening Knowledge and Understanding

Michigan has focused on providing support to prevention and early learning programs as they build relationships with the families and communities they serve. In partnership with ECIC, CTF has provided a two-day Bringing the Protective Factors to Life in Your Work training to over 100 prevention programs in Michigan to enrich their work with children and families in their respective communities.

ECIC provides Strengthening Families trainings, both virtual and in-person, to early childhood educators, childcare providers, and parents in various formats, including parent-café-style conversations.

Shifting Practice, Policies and Systems

MDHHS Child Welfare began implementing use of the Protective Factors Framework in its statewide, contracted, family preservation programs in 2017. This has resulted in more individualized assessments and relevant, family-centered treatment plans.

In 2021, all statewide family preservation programs will begin using the Protective Factors Survey – 2 (PFS-2). This will enhance the family assessment process by providing even more family input and metrics in which to determine progress.

CTF requires all grantees and local councils to have at least two staff trained in Strengthening Families and embed the strength-based approach, including all five protective factors into their work with children and families.

Ensuring Accountability

Each GSC must include the goals the GSPC created while completing the Strengthening Families assessment within the yearly work plan. These goals and strategies are reported on during the year and are often connected to the required parent-led strategies.

All CTF Local Councils must base their programming within the Protective Factors framework. Moving forward, Local Councils will be required to capture predetermined qualitative data which will demonstrate a clear relationship between their protective factors-related programming and progress towards meeting their stated objectives. They will be required to report on these qualitative measures twice a year.

The PFS-2 is used by several state departments and programs to evaluate program effectiveness in strengthening families' protective factors.

Evolving Work

Michigan Statewide Strengthening Families Council will continue to evaluate the work being done at the state and local levels. CTF will continue to provide Strengthening Families training to various prevention programs, ECIC and MDE are integrating Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors into the MI Quality Rating and Improvement System indicators. ECIC & CTF are actively working to begin folding HOPE and ACEs into Strengthening Families trainings that take place across the state.