

About Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families strives to ensure the wellness and resiliency of children by building the capacity of parents to access support and meet the needs of their children. Through the development of five protective factors, **Strengthening Families** helps parents gain the resources, social connections and knowledge to draw from in times of need. This initiative is based upon the **Strengthening Families** framework developed by the **Center for the Study of Social Policy** (www.strengtheningfamilies.net).

Strengthening Families is an initiative funded by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) through Hamilton and Butler Counties' Family and Children First Councils. Additional information: www.ConnectCommunitySupport.org

Program Highlights

Parents want what is best for their children and yet meeting all the demands of parenting can become overwhelming. It is the premise of **Strengthening Families** that at some point in time, all families require support. By incorporating five protective factors, **Strengthening Families** improves the lives of parents and children by helping to eliminate the stress and isolation that leads to decreased resilience and incidences of child abuse and neglect. **Strengthening Families** in Southwest Ohio is delivered through two integrated efforts designed to reach early childhood programs, parents and community partners.



For Early Childhood Providers:

- Over 800 hours of leadership and classroom coaching were provided to 44 early childhood programs.
- 26 **Strengthening Families** training classes were offered to 332 early childhood professionals.
- **Strengthening Families** expanded into the Price Hill Community – 5 early childhood programs serving this community joined the initiative.
- 14 early childhood programs, over a period of three years, completed all of the **Strengthening Families** core benchmarks and training.

For Parents and Community Partners:

- 12 community-based Parent Cafés were offered to 225 parents.
- Bi-lingual Parent Cafés were developed and offered to Spanish speaking parents.
- Six protective factors presentations were delivered, reaching 153 parents and community stakeholders.
- **Strengthening Families** received funding to begin the initiative in Butler County.

Program Outcomes and Achievements

Strengthening Families in Southwest Ohio is serving:

- 6 early childhood programs in the city of Middletown in Butler County
- 8 western communities of Hamilton County including:
 - ~ 44 early childhood programs
 - ~ 1,995 children in 1,527 families
 - ~ 284 early childhood providers



Strengthening Families has had a positive impact on the parents, providers and communities it serves. Evaluation surveys have indicated that both parents and providers have gained knowledge and skills. More specifically, the **Protective Factors Survey** results indicated that parents reported: *increased supports, resiliency and access to resources; and increased knowledge of parenting practices.* Individualized early childhood program results at the end of the 2012 school year indicated that:

- in 93% of the early childhood programs, parents viewed the functioning of their family as improved;
- in 78% of the early childhood programs, parents reported improved emotional support for themselves and their children;
- in 78% of the early childhood programs, parents reported improved knowledge of and access to concrete support in times of need; and
- in 68% of the early childhood programs, parents reported change in behavior that better ensured the nurturing and attachment of their children.



The **Strengthening Families Provider Survey** indicated that early child care professionals:

- Consistently reported the importance of engaging parents through strategies supported by SF.
- Increased the use of parent engagement skills by 12.1%.
- Increased their confidence or comfort in the use of parent engagement skills by 11.6%.

Lorna Wells, a family child care provider enrolled in Strengthening Families reported that being a part of this initiative has "meant a world of difference" to her. Lorna stated: "It has helped me to know how to better help parents, especially by being better able to deal with families in crisis. I have learned different ways to respond to these families and also to value and nurture parents."

How You Can Get Involved

Attend a Parent Café. Inquire about Parent Cafés being offered this year and refer parents who could benefit from networking and learning from other parents: www.ConnectCommunitySupport.org

Support the Protective Factors. Learn about the five protective factors and seek ways to employ these concepts in your work with families.

Contact Carolyn Brinkmann, Strengthening Families Project Manager and Director of Parent Services at 4C for Children.

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4C for Children serves at the fiscal and managing agent for **Strengthening Families.**

Thank you to our Funders:



About the Consortium for Resilient Young Children

The Consortium for Resilient Young Children is a collaboration of early childhood and mental health organizations dedicated to supporting young children's social and emotional development. The Consortium was founded in 2004 in response to community conversation about young children's social, emotional and behavioral challenges and the capacity of child-serving agencies to address these needs.

To learn more please visit:

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