



Strengthening Families: 5 Protective Factors

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau,
Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, and Child Welfare Information
Gateway**

**FRIENDS National Resource Center for
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention**



Five Protective Factors

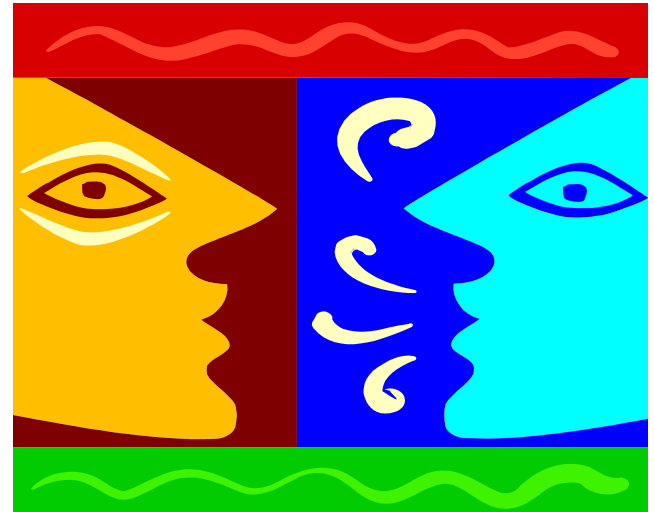
- ◆ **Nurturing and Attachment**
- ◆ **Knowledge of Parenting and Youth Development**
- ◆ **Parental Resilience**
- ◆ **Social Connections**
- ◆ **Concrete Supports for Parents**

Nurturing and Attachment

- ◆ **Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to, and communicate with their children.**
- ◆ **Babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens and adults who are happy, healthy and competent.**

Things to Consider

- ◆ **How much time do you spend with your child or teen?**
- ◆ **When do you spend time with your child or teen, what do you like to do together?**
- ◆ **What games/activities does your child or teen like?**



Things to Consider

- ◆ What does your child or teen do when she/he is sad tired or angry?
- ◆ What happens when your child (cries for a long time, has a tantrum, wets the bed, skips school)?
- ◆ How do you know when your child or teen is happy? Sad? Lonely? Hurt?
- ◆ How do you comfort your child?

Things to Consider (cont.)

- ◆ How do you show affection in your family?
- ◆ How do you let your child know that you love him or her?
- ◆ What are your child's greatest gifts and talents?
- ◆ How do you encourage these talents?
- ◆ What do you do when your child does something great?

Things To Consider (cont.)

- ◆ How many people provide care for your baby or toddler? How often do these people change?
- ◆ What routines do you keep in caring for your child?
- ◆ How do you keep your child or teen safe at home? In the neighborhood or community?
- ◆ All families experience conflict from time to time. What happens when there is a conflict in your house?

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

- ◆ Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence.
- ◆ Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.

Things to Consider

- ◆ What does your child do best?
- ◆ What do you like about your child?
- ◆ What do you like about being the parent of an infant (or preschooler, or teenager)?
- ◆ What are the things you find challenging as a parent?
- ◆ What kinds of things make your child frustrated, sad or angry?
- ◆ What does your child do when happy, Sad? Angry?

Things to Consider

- ◆ What works best for your child when she/he is sad, angry or frustrated?
- ◆ How have you let your child know what to expect?
- ◆ What happens when she does what's asked?
- ◆ What discipline methods work best for you?
- ◆ How does your child respond?

Things To Consider

- ◆ How do you think your child compares to other children of his/her age?
- ◆ Are there things that worry you about your child?
- ◆ Have others expressed concern about your child's behavior?

Parental Resilience

- ◆ Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience.
- ◆ They have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well.

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- ◆ All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience.
- ◆ These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supportive caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access outside resources and services when needed.

Things To Consider

- ◆ What helps you cope with everyday life?
- ◆ Where do you draw your strength?
- ◆ How does this help you in your parenting?
- ◆ What are your dream for yourself and your family?
- ◆ What kind of frustrations or worries do you deal with during the day?
- ◆ How do you solve these everyday problems as they arise?

Things To Consider (cont.)

- ◆ Has something happened recently that has made life more difficult?
- ◆ How are you able to meet your children's needs when you are dealing with stress?
- ◆ How are your children reacting to crisis?
- ◆ When you are under stress, what is most hopeful to you?
- ◆ Are there places in the community where you can find help?

Social Connections

- ◆ Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves.
- ◆ Parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Things to Consider

- ◆ Do you have family members or friends nearby who help you out once in a while?
- ◆ Do you belong to a church, temple, mosque, women's group, men's group?
- ◆ Do you have a child in the local school or Head Start program?
- ◆ Who can you call for advice or to talk?