

Parent Engagement through Strengthening Families

a pilot approach with child care
centers in Maine

Strengthening Families

- Began as a family support approach to child abuse prevention
- Research based (CSSP)
- Focused on strengths not risks
- For ALL families
- Start where families already go
- Build on existing programs and strategies, not inventing new ones

Turning strategies into practice

Connections to partners in the
Strengthening Families National
Network



Outcomes

- Provider change in practice
- Provider change in attitude
- Parent involvement
- Parent leadership
- Policy changes

Grounded in protective factors



- parental resilience
- social connections
- knowledge of parenting and child development
- concrete support in times of need
- social and emotional competence of children

Moving from Protective Factors to Strategies

- Facilitate friendships and mutual support
- Strengthen parenting
- Respond to family crises
- Link families to services and opportunities
- Facilitate children's social and emotional development
- Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse and neglect
- Value and support parents

Measuring Success in Maine

- Strengthening Families self-assessment
 - Provides baseline measure for family support
 - Technical assistance
 - Website
 - Learning hubs
 - Resource Development Centers
 - Child Abuse Prevention Councils
- Incentives for Providers
 - Connection to the Quality Rating System measure of family engagement
 - NAEYC accreditation
- Incentives for Parents
 - Leadership training
 - Social supports
 - Informed consumers

Implications for State Administrators

Challenges

- Linking research to policy
 - Independent measures in complex systems
 - Tools still under development in SFNN
- Modifications for Family Child Care
- Considerations for legal, unlicensed care

Opportunities

- Embed protective factors language in state contracts and statute
- Use of non-traditional partners to promote consistent messages of quality to providers and parents
- Link to existing research projects (e.g., Educare, CCRCF)