

# Promoting Healthy Families in Your Community

2007 Resource Packet





## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
1250 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20024

### Letter from the Associate Commissioner

Nurturing and effective parenting are critical to children's development, health, and lifelong well-being. All children need parents who can identify, meet, and advocate for their needs. While all parents want to do their best, they cannot always do it alone. By recognizing and building upon existing strengths within the family and community, we can partner with parents and caregivers as they work to strengthen their families and provide a safe, loving environment for their children.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, its Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention created this resource packet to support a wide range of service providers who work with parents, other caregivers, and their children with the common goal of promoting healthy families. This packet is targeted specifically for service providers, so that they can more effectively promote healthy families.

Research has demonstrated that five important factors can help families protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect. This packet supports strategies to develop and enhance these five factors:

- Nurturing and attachment
- Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete supports for parents

The packet also contains resources to promote community awareness of these protective factors, for use during Child Abuse Prevention Month and throughout the year. These resources were developed with input from numerous national organizations, Federal partners, and parents committed to promoting healthy families.

We all can play a part in creating safe homes and communities for children. Thank you for all that you do to protect children and strengthen families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Orr", with a long, sweeping tail.

Susan Orr, Ph.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Children's Bureau



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# Chapter 1: Overview





# About This Packet

For years, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect and its National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information—now known as Child Welfare Information Gateway—have created an annual Community Resource Packet to support State and local agencies and concerned citizens in promoting public awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month each April. Previous editions of this packet have described both community strategies and family activities for supporting parents and promoting safe children and healthy families.

This packet continues to support child maltreatment prevention efforts by describing strategies and activities that not only reduce risk, but also promote protective factors associated with the prevention of child maltreatment. These protective factors increase the capacity of parents, caregivers, and communities to protect, nurture, and promote the healthy development of children.

## Intended Audience

This year's packet suggests strategies and provides numerous resources for building the protective factors associated with child abuse prevention. It was created for service providers who work with parents and their children, including parent educators, family support workers, health-care providers, teachers, childcare providers, mentors, clergy, and many more.

While the packet as a whole is not intended for use by families, Chapter 3 contains a number of tip sheets on specific parenting topics that can be used in the context of discussions or visits with caregivers. As with the entire packet, these tip sheets were created with input from experts and national organizations that protect children and promote healthy families. They were designed to engage parents in understanding the key protective factors. Other resources for promoting healthy families are available from the national organizations listed on page 61.

## Goals

The goals of the packet are to:

- Promote five protective factors that research has shown to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect
- Encourage service providers to engage and partner with parents
- Provide suggestions for community-wide efforts to raise awareness of the importance of strengthening families



# About This Packet

## Using the Packet

The national organizations, Federal partners, and parents who support this effort hope that community agencies and service providers will use this packet to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by strengthening families and building on the five protective factors. By working together, community agencies, service providers, and parents can protect children and ensure a positive future.

The packet is organized into five chapters:

- **Chapter 1, Overview** introduces the packet and its purpose, the five protective factors that serve as building blocks for protecting children and promoting healthy families, and why service providers must partner with families to achieve these goals.
- **Chapter 2, The Five Protective Factors** provides greater detail about each of the protective factors, with tips for exploring parents' strengths and needs and suggestions for resources to share with parents.
- **Chapter 3, Tip Sheets for Parents** includes five short factsheets, in English and Spanish, written at an accessible reading level and tested with parents. These tip sheets are offered for providers to use when working directly with moms, dads, and other caregivers on specific parenting strategies that build upon the protective factors.
- **Chapter 4, Engaging Your Community** includes strategies for sharing the message of child abuse and neglect prevention, including talking points, community awareness activities, and tips for working with the media.
- **Chapter 5, When Children Are at Risk** includes information about why child abuse occurs, risk factors, consequences, and identifying and reporting maltreatment.

At the end of the packet, you will find a list of national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families, including those that participated in creating this packet.

## On the Child Welfare Information Gateway Website

This packet and a companion poster can be ordered or downloaded from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. Also available on the website are downloadable logos and graphics that may be used to personalize resources developed for Child Abuse Prevention Month in local communities: [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing)

Child Welfare Information Gateway provides links to resources and information about child abuse prevention, family strengthening, family-centered practice, family support, and family preservation services. The Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect section includes information on the five protective factors, supporting and engaging families, creating supportive communities, and much more. Throughout this packet, links to related Information Gateway web pages will provide you with a wealth of additional information: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)



# Protective Factors for Promoting Healthy Families

Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. They are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise be at risk of abusing their children to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

For years, researchers have been studying both the risk factors common among families experiencing abuse and neglect and those factors that protect families who are under stress. There is growing interest in understanding the complex ways in which these risk and protective factors interact, within the context of a child's family, community, and society, to affect both the incidence and consequences of abuse and neglect.

## Why Focus on Promoting Protective Factors?

Research has found that successful interventions must both reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the well-being of children and families. Focusing on promoting protective factors is a more productive approach than reducing risk factors alone because:

- Protective factors are positive attributes that strengthen all families, not just those at risk, so families do not feel singled out or judged.
- Focusing on protective factors, which are attributes that families themselves often want to build, helps service providers develop positive relationships with parents. Parents then feel more comfortable seeking out extra support if needed. This positive relationship is especially critical for parents who may be reluctant to disclose concerns or identify behaviors or circumstances that may place their families at risk.
- When service providers work with families to increase protective factors, they also help families build and draw on natural support networks within their family and community. These networks are critical to families' long-term success.

## Which Protective Factors Are Most Important?

Research has shown that the following protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:

- **Nurturing and Attachment.** A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development.** Discipline is both more effective and more nurturing when parents know how to set and enforce limits and encourage appropriate behaviors based on the child's age and level of development. Parents who understand how children grow and develop can provide an environment where children can live up to their potential. Child abuse and neglect are often associated with a lack of understanding of basic child development—or an inability to put that knowledge into action. Timely mentoring, coaching, advice, and practice may be more useful to parents than information alone.



# Protective Factors for Promoting Healthy Families

- **Parental Resilience.** Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises. Parents who are emotionally resilient have a positive attitude, creatively problem solve, effectively address challenges, and are less likely to direct anger and frustration at their children. In addition, these parents are aware of their own challenges—for example, those arising from inappropriate parenting they received as children—and accept help and/or counseling when needed.
- **Social Connections.** Evidence links social isolation and perceived lack of support to child maltreatment. Trusted and caring family and friends provide emotional support to parents by offering encouragement and assistance in facing the daily challenges of raising a family. Supportive adults in the family and the community can model alternative parenting styles and can serve as resources for parents when they need help.
- **Concrete Supports for Parents.** Many factors beyond the parent-child relationship affect a family's ability to care for their children. Parents need basic resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and access to essential services that address family-specific needs (such as childcare, health and mental health care) to ensure the health and well-being of their children. Providing concrete supports, information, and access to community resources that families need is critical. These combined efforts help families cope with stress and prevent situations where maltreatment could occur.

These protective factors are critical for all parents and caregivers, regardless of the child's age, sex, ethnicity or racial heritage, economic status, special needs, or whether he or she is raised by a single, married, or divorced parent or other caregivers. All of these factors work together to reinforce each other—for example, parents are more likely to be resilient in times of stress when they have social connections and a strong attachment to their child. Protective factors can provide a helpful conceptual framework for guiding any provider's work with children and their families.

## References

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# Partnering With Parents and Caregivers

All parents and caregivers share a deep concern and love for their children.<sup>1</sup> Their desire to do the best they can for their families provides a foundation for working with them to explore strategies for caring effectively for their children. Approaching parents as the experts on their own children, listening openly to their concerns and perspectives, and seeking solutions with them (rather than providing for them) help foster a trusting relationship.

When we work with parents in a spirit of true partnership, mothers, fathers, and other caregivers are more likely to invite and welcome providers' support in evaluating needs, developing goals, and identifying effective ways to strengthen the family and provide care for children.

## Benefits of Partnership

Partnering with parents and caregivers:

- Focuses attention on the overall well-being of the child and family, rather than on specific “symptoms” in isolation
- Results in more competent and relevant supports, as providers gain a greater understanding of families' perspectives, homes, and environments
- Fosters parent leadership skills, resulting in more confident parenting and an enhanced ability of mothers, fathers and other caregivers to advocate for their families' needs
- Promotes lasting change, as parents build on existing skills and enhance natural support networks that will extend beyond the time frame of a provider's involvement

## The Meaning of Partnership

Working in partnership with parents and caregivers means:

- Understanding that all parents have strengths, and helping families build on their strengths and recognize their personal power to ensure family success
- Viewing parents as the experts on their own children, supporting them with resources and sharing responsibility for outcomes
- Listening carefully to parents' concerns and helping them identify solutions that will work for their family
- Including parents in the development, implementation, and evaluation of processes and programs that are driven by parents' needs and incorporate their ideas and suggestions
- Helping parents take responsibility and learn to advocate more effectively for themselves and their children
- Working to understand parents' language and culture, and adjusting communication to reflect differences

<sup>1</sup> Although the term “parents” is used throughout this packet for brevity, we recognize that these considerations are applicable when working with all caregivers, including grandparents and other relatives.



# Partnering With Parents and Caregivers

## Building Successful Partnerships

Successful partnership includes being respectful and responsive to parents' concerns about work schedules, family responsibilities, and past experiences. Parents need to be empowered to identify solutions that make sense within their cultural and family context and that fit with their individual parenting style. The following is a list of questions to ask yourself to help ensure you are doing everything possible to structure your program or service in a way that welcomes moms, dads, and other caregivers, invites their trust, and helps them to feel comfortable:

- Are parents' opinions solicited and considered? Are parents invited to “translate” the five protective factors in ways that make sense for their lives and cultures?
- Are parents encouraged to identify strengths in themselves, in their children, and in their family and community? Do these shape the focus of discussion?
- Are meeting times flexible, depending on the family's availability?
- Are meetings held in locations that are convenient for parents? Are transportation and childcare offered?
- Are parents given the opportunity to identify new roles or ways of approaching things?
- Do staff members speak the parents' language fluently?
- Are materials provided in the parents' native language and tested with parent groups?
- Are materials and messages provided in multiple formats to reflect various literacy levels and preferences (written, oral, graphic)?
- Are the traditions and values of the family's culture that influence child rearing recognized and respected?
- Are elements of the family's culture incorporated into the look and feel of the meeting space, curriculum or other text, and materials?
- Are parent leaders involved in all aspects of program planning, implementation, and evaluation?

Also, be sure to ask parents and caregivers how *they* envision a “partnership” with their service providers. Solicit feedback about their satisfaction with the service provider's ability to promote the partnership and identify family strengths.

For more on partnering with families and youth, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway web page on Engaging Families: [www.childwelfare.gov/highlights/engaging\\_families/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/highlights/engaging_families/)



## Chapter 2: The Five Protective Factors





# Promoting the Five Protective Factors

This chapter provides background and guidance for service providers and others on exploring each of the five protective factors with parents. Each protective factor is addressed individually, and for each one you will find:

- Brief background on why the protective factor is important for strengthening families and reducing the risk of abuse or neglect
- Areas to explore with parents as you both identify strengths and needs, and questions for parents to consider that will facilitate the dialogue
- Strategies and resources that may serve to strengthen families

For each protective factor, the focus is on helping parents identify and build on their strengths and on empowering them to identify strategies for enhancing their parenting capacity. This provides the foundation for the provider to work in partnership with the parent and family to explore opportunities for supporting the family.

The resources and suggestions provided in this chapter are just a starting point for developing the parent-provider partnership. Other considerations are equally important. For example, the parent and provider should find a mutually comfortable place to meet, such as the parent's home, a coffee shop, a picnic bench in a nearby park, or at a religious institution or school. A casual setting may facilitate a more friendly and conversational discussion.

The five protective factors covered in this chapter are:

- **Nurturing and attachment**—The importance of early bonding, as well as nurturing throughout childhood. Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to, and communicate with their children.
- **Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development**—Information about what to anticipate as children develop and strategies for effective parenting. Parents learn what to look for at each age and how to help their children reach their full potential.
- **Parental resilience**—How parents' ability to cope and problem solve affects their ability to deal effectively with everyday stress or a major crisis. Recognizing the signs of stress and knowing what to do about it can help parents build their capacity to cope.
- **Social connections**—Identifying ways to help parents expand their social networks to build a broader base of parenting support. Parents with an extensive network of family, friends, and neighbors have better support in times of need.
- **Concrete supports for parents**—Finding out what basic resources are available in the community and how to access them to address family-specific needs. Caregivers with access to financial, housing, and other concrete resources that help them meet their basic needs can better attend to their role as parents.

For more information on protective factors that reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway web page on Protective Factors:

[www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/protectfactors](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/protectfactors)



# Nurturing and Attachment



**Parents today have a lot on their plates.** Juggling the demands of work, home, and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children. But even small acts of kindness, protection, and caring—a hug, a kiss, or a smile—make a big difference to children. Research shows time and again that 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. Research also shows that a relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated in later life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.

Brain development in infants is positively affected when parents work to understand and meet their basic needs for love and affection or provide comfort when they are hungry, bored, tired, wet, or cold. Conversely, neglectful and abusive parenting can have a negative effect on brain development. Research shows that a lack of contact or interaction with a caregiver can change the infant's body chemistry, resulting in a reduction in the growth hormones essential for brain and heart development. Furthermore, the ability to feel remorse and empathy are built on experience. Children who lack early emotional attachments or who grow up fearful and expecting to be hurt will have a difficult time relating to peers.

As children grow, nurturing by parents and other caregivers remains important for healthy physical and emotional development. While physical contact becomes less important, listening and talking become more vital to the relationship. Parents nurture their older children by being involved and interested in the child's school and other activities, aware of the child or teen's interests and friends, and willing to advocate for the child when necessary.

When parents spend time and energy discovering and paying attention to their children's needs, they are rewarded with positive, open, and trusting relationships with their children. Parents who develop the ability to respond sensitively to the needs of their child, no matter what age, will find parenting easier and more enjoyable.



# Nurturing and Attachment

## Exploring Strengths and Needs

Regardless of the child's age, parents can take advantage of opportunities in their sometimes hectic lives to listen and respond to their child in a nurturing way. Even a few minutes of quality time in the car, at the store, or while cooking dinner mean so much to a child. Your role as a partner with the parent is to model and acknowledge nurturing behaviors as parents make connections with their baby, child, or teen.

In order to explore . . .	Ask the parent . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent is handling the basic needs of the child—nutrition, safety, health care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What does your child like to eat?</li><li>■ How much does your child sleep?</li><li>■ What happens during a usual day or night? At school? After school?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent observes and attends to the child</li><li>■ Specific play or stimulation behaviors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ When you spend time with your child, what do you like to do together? How long are you able to spend on that activity?</li><li>■ What kinds of games do you like to play with your child?</li><li>■ What does your child like to do?</li><li>■ What is your child's favorite book or story?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent responds to the child's behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What does your child do when he/she is sad, angry, tired?</li><li>■ What happens when your child: _____ [tantrums, bedwetting, skipping school]?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent responds to emotional needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How do you know when your child is happy? Sad? Lonely? Hurt?</li><li>■ How do you comfort your child?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent demonstrates affection</li><li>■ How the parent models caring behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How do you show affection in your family?</li><li>■ How do you let your child know that you love him or her?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent recognizes accomplishments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What are your child's greatest gifts and talents?</li><li>■ How do you encourage these talents?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How the parent provides a safe home and family environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ All families experience conflict from time to time. What happens when there is conflict in your house?</li><li>■ How do you keep your child safe at home? In your neighborhood or community?</li></ul>



# Nurturing and Attachment

## Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Nurturing and Attachment

You can share resources available from your agency and throughout the community on how parents can connect with their children, listen to them, and become more involved in their lives. It is important to note that bonding is a two-way street. As children grow and develop the ability to socialize, relate, and communicate, it is easier for parents to respond positively to them. When a child does not show a positive response to the parent (due to age, a disability, or other factors), the parent may need additional support.

Resources to promote nurturing may include information about:

### Impact of nurturing on development

- Information about infant and toddler development, including brain development
- The importance of an early secure attachment between parents and young children
- Information on shaken baby syndrome and sudden infant death syndrome
- Examples of secure parent-child attachment at all ages

### Parenting strategies that promote nurturing

- Infant care and strategies that promote bonding and attachment (e.g., breastfeeding, rocking, using a baby carrier, responding to crying)
- Cultural differences in how parents and children show affection
- What to do when your child has an emotional or behavioral disability that limits his or her ability to respond to parental nurturing
- Ways to nurture children at every age
- How fathers nurture children
- How other important adults build caring relationships with children
- Ways to create and sustain healthy marriages that better support a nurturing home environment for children
- Ways to create quality time to play with children in the context of daily activities
- Communicating effectively with older children and resolving conflicts

Many parents, especially parents of infants, find that home visits are a convenient way to access resources. For providers, home visits allow you to visit with parents in an environment where parents and children may be most comfortable. Home visits also give you a chance to talk to parents about any material or safety needs in the home. However, some families may not feel comfortable having strangers in their home and may prefer to meet in another setting, such as a church, school, park, or office. For some families, a “neighborhood helper” or other person who shares the family’s ethnic and cultural background may provide a bridge for connecting with the parent or caregiver.

There are a number of other resources for parents, including parenting support groups, parenting classes, and home visits from specific types of providers. Activities that provide a chance to get to know other parents, such as play groups, support groups, or classes, have the added bonus of giving parents the opportunity to form social relationships and supports.



# Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development



**Parents know their children best—their unique behaviors, interests, and abilities.**

But it is challenging for any parent to be an expert on all aspects of infant, child, and teenage development or the most effective ways to support a child at each stage. When parents are not aware of normal developmental milestones, or they do not know how to respond to and effectively manage a child's behavior, they can become frustrated and may resort to harsh discipline or emotional withdrawal.

There is extensive research linking healthy child development to effective parenting. 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. Parenting skills cannot be static; as children grow and mature, parents need to change the way they respond to their children's needs. In addition, parenting styles need to be adjusted for each child's individual temperament and unique circumstances.



# Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development

## Exploring Strengths and Needs

All parents have questions about raising their children, and they need timely answers and support from someone they trust. Parents may feel more comfortable voicing concerns and exploring solutions when providers:

- Focus on the parents' own hopes and goals for their children
- Help parents identify and build on their strengths in parenting
- Model nurturing behavior by acknowledging frustrations and recognizing the parents' efforts

In order to explore . . .	Ask the parent . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The parent's view of their child's strengths</li> <li>■ Any problems or concerns identified by the parent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What do you like about being a parent of an infant (or preschooler, or teenager)?</li> <li>■ What are some of the things that you find challenging as a parent?</li> <li>■ How would you like your child's experience to be the same as or different from your own?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How the parent observes and interprets the child's behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What does your child do best?</li> <li>■ What kinds of things make your child happy?</li> <li>■ What kinds of things make your child frustrated, sad, or angry?</li> <li>■ What does your child do when happy? Frustrated? Sad? Angry?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ways the parent is currently responding to the child's needs and behaviors</li> <li>■ How the parent encourages positive behavior through praise and modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What works best for your child when he/she is sad, angry, or frustrated?</li> <li>■ How have you let your child know what you expect?</li> <li>■ What happens when she/he does what you asked?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How the parent understands the child's development</li> <li>■ Any parental concern that the child's behavior appears to be outside the normal range</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How do you think your child compares to other children his/her age?</li> <li>■ Have others expressed concern about your child's behavior?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whether the parent can identify alternative solutions for addressing behaviors</li> <li>■ Community, cultural, and ethnic expectations and practices about parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How have you seen other parents handle this?</li> <li>■ What would your parents have done in this situation?</li> <li>■ All parents use certain methods to teach their children how to behave or to address a behavior problem. What methods work best for you?</li> <li>■ How does your child respond?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How the parent encourages healthy development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How do you challenge your child to try new things and do things on his/her own?</li> <li>■ What works in encouraging your child to be more independent and competent?</li> </ul>



# Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development

## Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Parenting

When parents have shared their concerns and perspectives on their children, there is an opportunity to explore solutions and share resources. Educational materials about parenting and child development may help parents assess their child's development relative to others of the same age, have realistic expectations for their child's behavior, and explore ways to communicate those expectations effectively. Helpful resources for enhancing knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development may include information about:

### Child and youth development

- What parents can expect and look for as the child or youth grows
- The ability of children or teens to understand and control their behavior at different ages
- Addressing developmental challenges such as inconsolable crying, bedwetting, eating or sleeping problems, lying, school issues, problems with peers, and puberty
- How to keep children safe, including information on shaken baby syndrome, sudden infant death syndrome, childproofing strategies, appropriate childcare, and safety in the community

### Parenting

- How a parent can guide a child's behavior and reinforce desired/appropriate behavior
- Ways that a parent can model desirable behavior
- Nonpunitive disciplinary techniques, such as setting limits, redirecting attention or behavior, and logical consequences for actions



# 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. Parents with resilience are generally able to cope on their own, but they also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, and domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

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. All of these strengthen the capacity to parent effectively. In addition, community services that help families in crisis include mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, family and marital counseling and special education and treatment programs for children with special needs.



## Exploring Strengths and Needs

By partnering with parents, you can help them pinpoint the factors contributing to their stress, as well as their successful coping strategies and their personal, family, and community resources.

In order to explore . . .	Ask the parent . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What the parent identifies as his or her coping strengths and resilience</li><li>■ The parent's strengths in parenting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What helps you cope with everyday life?</li><li>■ Where do you draw your strength?</li><li>■ How does this help you in parenting?</li><li>■ What are your dreams for yourself and your family?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What the parent identifies as everyday stressors</li><li>■ Stressors precipitated by crises</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What kinds of frustrations do you deal with during the day?</li><li>■ Has something happened recently that has made life more difficult?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Impact of stress on parenting</li><li>■ Impact of parenting on stress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How are you able to meet your children's needs when you are dealing with stress?</li><li>■ How are your children reacting to [crisis]?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Whether there is marital stress or conflict</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How does your spouse or partner support you in times of stress?</li><li>■ How does your spouse or partner help with parenting?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Needs that might be identified by a different family member (not all family members may identify the same needs)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Are other family members experiencing stress or concern?</li><li>■ How are they dealing with that?</li><li>■ Has anyone in your family expressed concern about drug or alcohol abuse?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Short-term supports (respite care, help with a new baby, help during an illness)</li><li>■ Long-term strategies (job training, marital counseling)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ When you are under stress, what is most helpful to you?</li><li>■ Are there places in the community where you can find help?</li></ul>



# Parental Resilience

## Sharing Strategies and Resources to Promote Parental Resilience

When parents identify and communicate what worries them most, there is an opportunity to offer some coping strategies and resources to begin to deal with the stress. Parents are not always aware how their ability to cope with stress may impact their capacity to parent and their children's development. You can help parents recognize that they can model coping behaviors for their children, since children observe and imitate parents in many ways. Empowering parents to seek help and take steps to combat stress is part of building both resilience and hope.

Some needs are obvious to all family members and to providers. Other needs, such as marital counseling or substance abuse treatment, may become apparent when one family member expresses concern about another. Partnering with the family includes helping all family members translate their concerns into specific needs that can be discussed and resolved. Many community resources and services are available to help families cope. Faith communities, community colleges, self-help groups, and social service agencies can help parents and caregivers develop problem-solving and communication skills that strengthen their ability to deal effectively with crisis, so they can continue to provide for their children.

Resources for building resilience may include information about:

### **Stress—causes and results**

- How stress happens, including the “little things” that add up
- Ways to recognize stress and its triggers
- How stress affects health and coping
- How stress affects parenting, marriage, and family life

### **Finding ways to build resilience**

- Stress management techniques, such as regular exercise, relaxation to music, and meditation or prayer
- How to prevent stress by planning ahead, anticipating difficulties, and having resources in place
- How to anticipate and minimize everyday stress
- How to handle major stressors, including accessing resources and supports from family, friends, faith communities, and other community resources
- Family management techniques, such as effective ways of communicating needs and concerns
- Programs that offer family-to-family help or mentoring for personalized, intensive, sustained services or support, especially in times of crisis
- Community supports such as mental health and counseling services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, and self-help support groups



# 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. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Conversely, research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

Some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills to expand their social networks. Helping parents identify resources and/or providing opportunities for them to make connections within their neighborhood or community may encourage isolated parents to reach out. Often, opportunities exist within faith-based organizations, schools, hospitals, community centers, and other places where support groups or social groups meet.



# Social Connections

## Exploring Strengths and Needs

Identifying and building on parents' current or potential social connections, skills, abilities, and interests can be a great way to partner with them as they expand their social networks. For parents who have difficulty establishing and maintaining social connections, your discussion may help them identify what is holding them back.

In order to explore . . .	Ask the parent . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's social skills, willingness to join a group, and capacity to make and keep friends</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Who can you call for advice or just to talk?</li><li>■ How often do you see them?</li><li>■ Would you be comfortable/willing to attend a parent group (or other group) just to see if you like it?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's current social support system, including family, friends, and membership in any formal groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Do you have family members or friends nearby who help you out once in a while?</li><li>■ Do you belong to a church, temple, mosque, women's group, men's group?</li><li>■ Do you have a child in the local school or Head Start program?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's desire for new friends and social connections</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What kinds of things do you like to do for fun or to relax?</li><li>■ Would you be interested in meeting some other moms and dads who also [have a new baby, have a teenager, like to cook, sing in a choir, etc.]?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's potential strengths and challenges in making social connections (include concerns such as parent's language, comfort level in groups, access to babysitting and transportation, recent arrival in community)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What are some benefits of getting out or joining a group?</li><li>■ What kind of support would you need in order to be able to get out for an evening?</li><li>■ How does your spouse or partner help out so that you have some time with friends?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Needs that might be met with better social connections (for instance, respite care, a sympathetic listener, a role model)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Would it help you to have more friends or acquaintances to call about _____?</li><li>■ Would it help you to know other moms and dads who are dealing with _____?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's interest in starting or facilitating a community group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What would it take to get a group of parents together to _____?</li></ul>



## Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Social Connections

If parents express an interest in making social connections, you may want to offer suggestions, information, or services. Sometimes parents will not identify a lack of social connections or emotional support as an issue. Instead, they may be concerned about a child's behavior problem or their own depression. In addressing the parent's concerns, you can also provide information about how these needs might be met by connecting with others (e.g., a support group for parents with similar issues). You can also provide general information on how expanding social connections can reduce isolation and support parents.

Consider sharing the following:

### Benefits of a broad social network

- Helps ease the burden of parenting
- Models positive social interactions for children and gives children access to other supportive adults
- Provides support in crises
- Offers opportunities to help others

### Ways to broaden a social network

- Overcome transportation, childcare, and other barriers—for instance, taking a bus or carpool to a play group or joining a babysitting co-op to meet other parents and have occasional childcare
- Access community resources, especially those with which the parent has some experience (a church he or she attended, a Head Start program where the child is enrolled, a cultural center that offers services in the parent's native language)
- Join a parent's group or play group in the neighborhood, or start a new group

## And if a group does not already exist . . .

Some neighborhoods and communities provide ample opportunities for neighbors to come together and friendships to develop. In other cases, agencies and organizations may welcome help in starting groups that bring families together for mutual support. These groups might start as an outgrowth of a widely recognized need in the community, such as new families that have just moved to the area or concerned citizens working against community violence. Community involvement is critical for these groups to be sustained over time. As a service provider, your role might be to bring individuals together (including parents), providing a meeting place, or simply encouraging a community leader to establish a group to meet a particular need.



# Concrete Supports for Parents



**Many factors affect a family's ability to care for their children.** Families who can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation—and who know how to access essential services such as childcare, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs—are better able to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack health insurance, or suffer a family crisis such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent, their ability to care for their children may be at risk.

Poverty is associated with greater rates of child abuse and neglect, and families living in poverty often benefit from specific concrete supports, such as help with housing, food, transportation, childcare, clothing, furniture, and utilities. Partnering with parents to identify and access these resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Providing concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.



# Concrete Supports for Parents

## Exploring Strengths and Needs

Working with parents to identify their most critical basic needs and locate concrete supports keeps the focus on family-driven solutions. As a partner with the family, your role may simply be making referrals to the essential services, supports, and resources that parents say they need.

In order to explore...	Ask the parent...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's view of the most immediate need</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What do you need to [stay in your house, keep your job, pay your heating bill]?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Steps the parent has taken to deal with the problem</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ How have you handled this?</li><li>■ What kind of response have you gotten?</li><li>■ Why is this working or not working?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ways the family handles other problems</li><li>■ Current connections that might offer help for the new problem</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What has worked well in the past?</li><li>■ Are there community groups or local services that have been or might be able to offer assistance?</li><li>■ Do you belong to a faith community? Do you have a relationship with a pediatrician? Is your child enrolled at a local school?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Other services and supports that would help the family</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Have you thought about _____ [local program that provides housing, food, etc.]?</li><li>■ Did you know that _____ provides [free homework help, meals on weekends, low-cost childcare]?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The parent's desire and capacity to receive new services, including completing applications, keeping appointments, and committing to the solution process</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ What kind of help do you need to get to these appointments?</li><li>■ When would be a good time for me to give you a call to see how it's going?</li></ul>



# Concrete Supports for Parents

## Sharing Strategies and Resources to Strengthen Concrete Supports

Parents may not always know about community resources that can help meet their basic needs or how to access essential services. Language or cultural barriers may make it difficult for some parents to identify services and make the necessary contacts. Providing information and connections to concrete supports can be a tremendous help to families under stress or in crisis. You might provide contact information (a person's name is most helpful) or help parents make the initial calls or appointments, depending on what parents say they need.

When specific services do not exist in your community, you may be able to work with parents or community leaders to help establish them. Parents can become powerful advocates for a particular cause, such as low-cost, after-school programs or safe transportation for teens, if they know the process for forming groups and creating services.

Your expertise may be most helpful in the following ways:

### Linking families with services

- Parents may not be aware of services that could help. You can let them know about all available resources, so they may select what is most appropriate for their needs.
- Parents are more likely to use culturally appropriate services. If you can link them with a service provider who speaks their language or comes from a similar background, parents may feel more comfortable and experience a greater benefit.
- Parents with many needs may be overwhelmed by the different requirements for accessing various services. A “systems of care” approach may be most useful, in which different helping systems work together to support the family.

### Building community services

- Linking parents with community leaders and others to organize support, advocacy, and consulting groups gives parents the opportunity to use their experience to help others.
- Parents who go public with their need or cause usually find that they are not alone. The fact that a parent is willing to publicize a need or cause may mobilize the community.
- Parents who are new to advocacy may need help connecting with the media, businesses, funding, and other parts of the community to have their needs heard and identify solutions.



## Chapter 3: Tip Sheets for Parents





# Using Tip Sheets for Parents



**This chapter includes five tip sheets to help service providers offer guidance and suggestions to parents on specific issues that support the five protective factors.** These tip sheets, like the other resources in this packet, were created with input from experts from national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. The information is easy to read and focuses on steps that parents and caregivers can take to care for their children and strengthen their family.

The tip sheets provide a starting point for discussion and are most effective when shared with parents in the context of a particular concern or question. Some ideas to share with parents in these discussions include:

- It is normal for families to have this experience (e.g., for toddlers to have temper tantrums or for teens to push limits).
- No parent can be an expert on everything.
- Everyone needs help at some point.
- There are many ways of dealing with this problem; as a parent, you need to choose what will work best for your family.
- Parenting any child is challenging. Parenting a child with a disability can be even more demanding and require extra supports.
- Help can be as close as a neighbor, but there are many other resources in your community.



# Using Tip Sheets for Parents

The five tip sheets that follow address these topics:

- **Bonding With Your Baby**—Written to help new parents understand the importance of early and secure attachment.
- **Dealing With Temper Tantrums**—Includes tips on how to prevent and handle toddler tantrums while modeling calm behavior.
- **Setting Rules With Teens**—Designed to help parents of teenagers work with their teens to set rules and consequences that promote responsible behavior.
- **Finding Help When You Need It**—Provides suggestions for identifying and connecting with informal and formal helping networks.
- **Raising Your Grandchildren**—Written to help caregivers deal with some of the unique challenges of parenting grandchildren and find concrete supports in the community.

This booklet also includes Spanish versions of these five tip sheets. These versions convey similar messages to the English, but they have been adapted slightly for readability and cultural appropriateness. On the Spanish side of “Raising Your Grandchildren,” for example, the focus is on raising any relative’s child rather than specifically on grandchildren.

Additional resources are available through the national organizations listed on page 61.

Tip sheets may be downloaded individually for distribution at:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res\\_packet\\_2007/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/res_packet_2007/)

More parenting tip sheets are available in the Parenting Resources section of the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting)



# Bonding With Your Baby



## What's Happening

Attachment is a deep, lasting bond that develops between a caregiver and child during the baby's first few years of life. Loving attachment between a baby and caregiver is critical to the growth of a baby's body and mind. The brain's ability to regulate emotions and respond to stress can be damaged if a baby does not have a strong bond with a parent. This can result in lifelong problems. Babies who have this bond and feel loved have a better chance to grow up to be adults who trust others and know how to return affection.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal newborns:

- Have brief periods of sleep, crying or fussing, and quiet alertness many times each day
- Often cry for long periods for no apparent reason
- Love to be held and cuddled
- Respond to and imitate facial expressions
- Love soothing voices and will respond with smiles and baby noises
- Grow and develop every day; they learn new skills quickly and can outgrow difficult behaviors in a matter of weeks

## What You Can Do

No one knows your child like you do, so you are in the best position to recognize and fulfill your child's needs. Parents who give lots of loving care and attention to their babies help their babies develop a strong attachment. Affection energizes your child to grow, learn, connect with others, and enjoy life. Here are some ways to promote bonding:

- Respond when your baby cries. Try to understand what he or she is saying to you. You can't "spoil" a newborn with too much attention—babies need and benefit from a parent's loving care even when they seem inconsolable.
- Hold and touch your baby as much as possible. You can keep him close with baby slings, pouches, or backpacks (for older babies).
- Use feeding time to look into your baby's eyes, smile, and talk to your baby.
- Read, sing, and play peek-a-boo. Babies love to hear human voices and will try to imitate your voice and the sounds you make.
- As your baby gets a little older, try simple games and toys. Once your baby can sit up, plan on spending lots of time on the floor with toys, puzzles, and books.

**The best gift you can give your baby is YOU. The love and attention you give your baby now will stay with him or her forever and will help your baby grow into a healthier and happier child and adult.**

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting) or call 800.394.3366.*



# Usted y su bebé: El lazo que los une



Los bebés necesitan más que alimento, calor y protección. También necesitan amor, atención y cariño. Formar lazos ayuda a su bebé a crecer fuerte y sano, tanto física como mentalmente.

## Los recién nacidos:

- Duermen, lloran, se quejan y ven el mundo a su alrededor muchas veces por día
- Les encanta que los mimen y que les hablen
- Lloran sin motivo aparente, a veces por mucho tiempo
- Les encantan las voces tranquilas y responden con sonrisas y gorgoritos de bebé feliz
- Crecen y cambian todos los días

## Formar lazos es bueno para el bebé... ¡y para usted!

Cuando usted forma lazos con su bebé, sabrá mejor lo que el bebé quiere y necesita. Y su bebé se sentirá amado y protegido.

El lazo que usted forma ahora ayuda a que el cuerpo y el cerebro de su bebé crezcan sanos. Esto afectará al bebé toda su vida: su temperamento, sus decisiones y las relaciones futuras que pueda tener. Le ayudará a tener una vida mejor.

## La mejor manera de crear ese lazo es pasar tiempo con su bebé.

Estas son algunas cosas que usted puede hacer:

- Responda cuando lllore el bebé. Los recién nacidos no se vuelven "consentidos" por exceso de atención.
- Tómelo en brazos, mímelo y toque a su bebé a menudo. Use un canguro o una mochila especial para mantener a su bebé cerca.
- Léale, cántele y juegue a que se esconde y aparece. A su bebé le encanta oír su voz y tratará de imitarlo.
- Sonríale y mírelo a los ojos.
- Juegue juegos sencillos a medida que su bebé crezca. Pase tiempo en el piso con juguetes, rompecabezas y libros.

El mejor regalo que le puede hacer a su bebé es ¡USTED MISMO! El amor y la atención que le dé ahora permanecerán con él para siempre. Le ayudarán a tener relaciones sanas y a tomar buenas decisiones más adelante en la vida.

*Esta hoja fue elaborada con la ayuda de expertos que trabajan en organizaciones nacionales para proteger y promover familias sanas. Para más consejos para padres de familia, visite: [www.childwelfare.gov/espanol](http://www.childwelfare.gov/espanol) o llame al 800.394.3366.*



# Dealing With Temper Tantrums



## What's Happening

Two- and three-year-olds have many skills, but controlling their tempers is not one of them. Tantrums are common at this age because toddlers are becoming independent and developing their own wants, needs, and ideas. However, they are not yet able to express their wants and feelings with words. Take comfort in the fact that most children outgrow tantrums by age 4.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal toddlers:

- Love to say “no!” “mine!” and “do it myself!”
- Test rules over and over to see how parents will react
- Are not yet ready to share
- Need lots of fun activities, play times, and opportunities to explore the world
- Respond well to a routine for sleeping and eating (a regular schedule)
- Like to imitate grownups and to “help” mom and dad

## What You Can Do

It is often easier to prevent tantrums than to deal with them once they get going. Try these tips:

- Direct your child’s attention to something else. (“Wow, look at that fire engine!”)
- Give your child a choice in small matters. (“Do you want to eat peas or carrots?”)
- Stick to a daily routine that balances fun activities with enough rest and healthy food.
- Anticipate when your child will be disappointed. (“We are going to buy groceries for dinner. We won’t be buying cookies, but you can help me pick out some fruit for later.”)
- Praise your child when he or she shows self-control and expresses feelings with words.

If you cannot prevent the tantrum, here are some tips for dealing with it:

- Say what you expect from your child and have confidence that your child will behave.
- Remain calm. You are a role model for your child.
- Holding your child during a tantrum may help a younger child feel more secure and calm down more quickly.
- Take your child to a quiet place where he or she can calm down safely. Speak softly or play soft music.
- Some children throw tantrums to seek attention. Try ignoring the tantrum, but pay attention to your child after he or she calms down.
- Resist overreacting to tantrums, and try to keep your sense of humor.

When your child is having a floor-thumping tantrum, the most important thing you can do is remain calm and wait it out. Do not let your child’s behavior cause you to lose control, too.

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting) or call 800.394.3366.*



# Los berrinches



Es común que los niños pequeños hagan berrinches. Entre los 2 y 4 años los niños van desarrollando sus propias ideas, necesidades y deseos. Pero todavía no las pueden expresar en palabras. Esto puede ser frustrante para su hijo... ¡y para usted!

## Los niños pequeños:

- Les encanta decir: ¡No!... ¡Mío!... y ¡Yo solo!
- Ponen a prueba las reglas una y otra vez para ver cómo reacciona usted
- Necesitan mucho tiempo para jugar, hacer cosas divertidas y explorar el mundo
- No saben compartir todavía
- Se comportan mejor cuando tienen horarios fijos para comer y dormir
- Les gusta imitar a los "grandes" y "ayudar" a mami y a papi

## A veces los padres pueden prevenir los berrinches.

Estas son algunas cosas que usted puede hacer:

- Siga una rutina diaria de actividades divertidas, con suficiente descanso y comida sana.
- Anticipe lo que puede desilusionar a su hijo. ("Vamos a comprar comida para la cena. Esta vez no vamos a comprar galletitas pero, ¿me ayudas a elegir la fruta para el postre?")
- Ayude a su hijo a concentrarse en otra cosa. ("¡Mira ese camión de bomberos!")
- Deje que su hijo tome decisiones sobre cosas pequeñas. ("¿Quieres comer chícharos o zanahorias?")
- Felicite a su hijo cuando se controle a sí mismo y exprese sus sentimientos en palabras.

## Pero a veces los berrinches ocurren de todos modos.

Si no puede prevenir un berrinche, pruebe estas sugerencias:

- Aunque un berrinche en un lugar público puede ser penoso, no pierda la calma.
- Algunos niños se calman más rápido si los ayuda a sentirse seguros y protegidos.
- Lleve a su hijo a un lugar tranquilo para que se calme. Háblele en voz baja o ponga música suave.
- Si su hijo está tratando de comunicarse con usted, trate de entender lo que quiere. Si sólo está tratando de llamar la atención, no haga caso a su berrinche. Préstele atención *después* de que se haya calmado.
- Trate de no perder el sentido del humor. ¡No haga berrinche usted!

Lo mejor que puede hacer es guardar la calma, incluso cuando el niño hace un berrinche en pleno piso. No pierda la paciencia, trate de entender lo que el niño le quiere decir. Recuerde que la mayoría de los niños dejan de hacer berrinches alrededor de los 4 años de edad.

Esta boja fue elaborada con la ayuda de expertos que trabajan en organizaciones nacionales para proteger y promover familias sanas. Para más consejos para padres de familia, visite: [www.childwelfare.gov/espanol](http://www.childwelfare.gov/espanol) o llame al 800.394.3366.



# Setting Rules With Teens



## What's Happening

Teens may look (and think that they are) full grown, but their brains are still growing and their hormones are changing. This can affect:

- **Decision-making**—Teens make mature decisions at times, and childish ones at others.
- **Risk-taking**—Brain immaturity can result in impulsive or risky behavior.
- **Relationships**—Teens move a little further away from family and a little closer to friends.

## What You Might Be Seeing

Normal teens:

- Crave independence
- Question rules and authority
- Test limits
- Can be forgetful
- Have good days and bad days
- Drive you crazy and make you proud

## What You Can Do

As a parent, you want to set rules to keep your teenagers safe and healthy and to teach them to get along in the world. While it may be tempting to keep your teen in line by setting strict rules and harsh consequences, your teen is likely to respond by becoming angry and more defiant.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Involve teenagers in setting the rules. They may be more likely to follow them.
- Talk about the reasons behind the rules and what you expect from them.
- Choose your battles, and try to provide choices in the matters that are less important. For instance, you might let your daughter pick her own hairstyle if she comes home on time.
- Make sure your teens understand the consequences ahead of time. What will happen if they break the rules?
- Set consequences that are related to the behavior, and be consistent in following through. Ask teenagers to help decide what the consequences will be if they break the rules.
- Do not make consequences so harsh that you or your teen can't follow through. Consider taking away privileges, limiting time with friends, or assigning extra chores.
- Allow your teens to gradually earn more freedom.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents, and let them know your rules and expectations.

Cheer your teens on when they follow the rules! And make sure they know you love and accept them, even when they're not perfect.

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting) or call 800.394.3366.*



# Los adolescentes y las reglas



Los padres saben bien que las reglas ayudan a mantener a los adolescentes seguros y sanos. Pero a menudo a los adolescentes no les gustan las reglas. Fijar reglas para los adolescentes puede ser difícil, sobretodo estando en un medio cultural diferente. Una persona cercana lo puede ayudar.

## Los adolescentes normales:

- Quieren ser independientes
- Cuestionan las reglas y la autoridad
- Ponen a prueba los límites
- A veces se olvidan de las cosas
- Tienen días buenos y días malos
- Vuelven locos a los padres

## El cerebro del adolescente no está completamente desarrollado.

Los adolescentes pueden parecer adultos. Pueden pensar que son adultos. Pero su cerebro todavía está creciendo y sus hormonas siguen cambiando. Esto afecta la manera en que los adolescentes:

- **Toman decisiones.** A veces los adolescentes toman decisiones inteligentes, pero a veces toman decisiones infantiles.
- **Toman riesgos.** Actúan sin pensar o hacen cosas peligrosas.
- **Se relacionan con los demás.** Los adolescentes se pueden apartar de sus familias y acercarse más a sus amistades, pero es importante que mantengan el contacto con su cultura y sus familiares.

## Las reglas ayudan a los adolescentes a ser responsables de su propia conducta.

Algunas sugerencias para establecer las reglas con su adolescente:

- Dígame porqué son necesarias las reglas y cuáles son sus expectativas.
- Deje que el adolescente le ayude a poner las reglas. Así será más probable que las respete.
- Advírtale que habrá consecuencias si no respeta las reglas: Menos tiempo con sus amigos, más tareas y privilegios perdidos.
- Deje que el adolescente le ayude a decidir lo que pasará si no sigue las reglas.
- Si las consecuencias son demasiado severas, es posible que el adolescente no las pueda cumplir.
- Conozca a los amigos de su adolescente y a los padres.
- Elija sus batallas. Deje que el adolescente tome decisiones sobre algunas cosas.
- A medida que se gane su confianza, permita que su adolescente tenga mas libertad.
- Practique un deporte, escuche música o haga cosas divertidas con su adolescente cuando pueda.

Los adolescentes necesitan reglas y los padres deben ponerlas. Felicite a su adolescente cuando cumpla las reglas, y esté seguro de que sienta amado, incluso cuando no sea "perfecto."

*Esta boja fue elaborada con la ayuda de expertos que trabajan en organizaciones nacionales para proteger y promover familias sanas. Para más consejos para padres de familia, visite: [www.childwelfare.gov/espanol](http://www.childwelfare.gov/espanol) o llame al 800.394.3366.*



# Finding Help When You Need It



## What's Happening

Being a parent is a 24-hour-a-day job, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Extra challenges can add to a parent's stress. For instance:

- Having a new baby
- Having a child with a disability
- Feeling alone, or not having friends or family nearby
- Being a single parent or having a partner who does not support you
- Dealing with money troubles, problems with your job, or housing concerns

## What You Might Be Feeling

When life is stressful, parents sometimes feel:

- Angry—at your spouse, your friends, or even your children
- Lonely—like you are the only person dealing with so many problems
- Depressed—sad and unable to face your problems
- Overwhelmed—you don't know where to begin or you feel like giving up

## What You Can Do

Stay in contact with friends and family who support you and make you feel good about yourself. Other parents can be a good source of support. If you think stress may be affecting the way you treat your children, or if you just want some extra support, try the following:

- **Talk to someone.** Tell a friend, health-care provider, counselor, or a leader in your faith community how you feel. Or, join a support group for parents.
- **Get babysitting help when you need a break.** Some parents trade babysitting with another family, so each parent gets a break.
- **Reach out to other parents.** You may find parents with children the same ages as yours at a local playground, your church, or your child's daycare or school.
- **Call a help line.** Most States have help lines for parents. Childhelp® runs a national 24-hour hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD) for parents who need help or parenting advice.
- **Talk to your child's school.** Teachers and school counselors often can point you to other places that can help.
- **Take a class for parents.** You can always learn new skills to care for your children. Classes for parents on discipline, school success, or child development can help you build on what you already know about raising a happy, healthy child.

It is normal for parents to feel overwhelmed sometimes, but don't let these feelings affect how you treat your children. Help is just a phone call away! Call a friend, family member, church, or social service agency to talk to someone.

*This tip sheet was created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and promote healthy families. To download this tip sheet or for more parenting tips, go to [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting) or call 800.394.3366.*



## Obtenga ayuda cuando la necesite



Cuando los padres se sienten muy presionados esto puede afectar su relación con sus hijos. No deje que el estrés afecte su relación con sus seres más queridos. Es una buena señal que un padre busque ayuda cuando la necesita.

### Ser padre puede ser abrumador,

Y es aun más difícil si está enfrentando otros desafíos al mismo tiempo, como por ejemplo:

- Cuidar a un bebé recién nacido o a un niño enfermo
- Cambiarse de casa y no tener amigos o parientes cerca
- Adaptarse a una cultura diferente o aprender un idioma
- Ser madre soltera o padre soltero que cría a sus hijos sin nadie quien le ayude
- Tener problemas con su trabajo, vivienda o dinero

### Si está muy estresado se puede sentir:

- Enojado con su pareja, sus amigos o hasta con sus hijos
- Solo, como si fuera la única persona que tiene que lidiar con tantos problemas
- Deprimido, triste o incapaz de enfrentar sus problemas
- Con deseos de darse por vencido, porque no sabe qué hacer

### No deje que el estrés afecte la manera en que trata a sus hijos.

Si siente necesidad de más apoyo, trate de:

- **Reunirse con gente** que lo haga sentirse mejor.
- **Hablar con un familiar** o con alguien de su iglesia.
- **Pedir a sus padres o algún familiar que cuide a sus hijos** cuando necesite un descanso.
- **Ponerse en contacto con otros padres.** Puede encontrar padres con hijos de la misma edad que los suyos en el parque local, en la iglesia o en la guardería o escuela de su hijo.
- **Hablar con el personal de la escuela de su hijo.**
- **Llamar a una línea de ayuda, como Childhelp®.** En español o en inglés las 24 horas del día. **1.800.422.4453**

Muchos padres a veces se sienten con muchas cosas encima. Pero no deje que sus sentimientos afecten la manera en que trata a sus hijos. ¡Llame a alguien de confianza para obtener ayuda o asesoramiento!

*Esta boja fue elaborada con la ayuda de expertos que trabajan en organizaciones nacionales para proteger y promover familias sanas. Para más consejos para padres de familia, visite: [www.childwelfare.gov/espanol](http://www.childwelfare.gov/espanol) o llame al 800.394.3366.*



# Raising Your Grandchildren



## What's Happening

No matter why or how they came to live with you, your grandchildren will benefit from being in your home. When children cannot be with their parents, living with a grandparent may provide:

- Fewer moves from place to place
- The comfort of a familiar language and culture
- A chance to stay with siblings
- More contact with their parents, depending on the situation

## What You Might Be Seeing

Despite these benefits, the children will face some unique challenges:

- They may feel insecure and unsure that you will take care of them.
- They may act out or challenge you.
- They will miss their parents.
- They may be anxious or depressed.
- They may seem young or act too old for their ages.

## What You Can Do

It will take time for your grandchildren to feel safe and secure in their new home with you. You can encourage these good feelings in a number of ways:

- Set up a daily routine of mealtimes, bedtime, and other activities.
- Help your grandchildren feel “at home” by creating a space just for them.
- Talk to your grandchildren, and listen when they talk to you.
- Set up a few rules and explain your expectations. Then, enforce the rules consistently.
- Reward positive behavior. When children make mistakes, focus on teaching rather than punishing.
- Be as involved with their school as you can, and encourage your children to participate in school activities.

This is a big job, and you may need help from your community. Here are some suggestions:

- Help with housing or other bills, clothing, or school supplies may be available specifically for grandparents raising grandchildren in your community.
- Join a support group. Often there are local groups for grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Ask for help and referrals from a church leader, the counselor at your child’s school, or a social services agency.
- If necessary, get professional help to address your grandchild’s special needs, such as medical care, mental health care, or special education.

**Parenting the second time around brings special challenges and special joys. Do not hesitate to ask for help or seek services in your community for yourself and your grandchildren.**

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# Cómo criar al hijo de un pariente



Es muy importante que los niños se sientan parte de una familia que los quiere y los respeta.

## Su hogar puede ser el mejor lugar para los hijos de un pariente.

Cuando un niño no puede estar con sus padres, el hogar de un pariente le puede dar:

- El consuelo de estar con una persona que conoce, y que comparte su idioma y cultura
- La oportunidad de quedarse con sus hermanos
- Menos mudanzas de un lugar a otro
- A veces más contacto con sus padres

## Los niños extrañan a sus padres.

Los niños que no viven con sus padres tienen necesidades especiales. Pueden:

- Sentirse inseguros y no saber con certeza si usted los va a cuidar
- Portarse mal o desafiarlo
- Estar preocupados o deprimidos
- No comportarse de acuerdo con su edad

## Usted puede ayudar a que el niño se sienta seguro y protegido en su hogar.

- Tenga un sitio especial sólo para él, para que se sienta en casa.
- Tenga una rutina diaria de comidas, actividades y horas de irse a la cama.
- Háblele y escúchelo cuando le habla.
- Ponga unas pocas reglas y explíquelo lo que espera de él. Haga que se cumplan las reglas sin falta.
- Si el niño hace algo bueno, ¡dígaselo! Si comete un error, explíquelo lo que debe hacer la próxima vez.
- Participe en su escuela y en sus actividades escolares.

## Criar al hijo de un pariente no es fácil. Es posible que usted necesite ayuda.

Su comunidad puede tener recursos para ayudarle con:

- Comida, vivienda y algunas de sus cuentas
- Ropa, útiles escolares y enseñanza individual
- Apoyo y asesoramiento
- Visitas al médico, atención de la salud mental o educación especial

Tenga paciencia. Tomará tiempo para que el niño se sienta protegido y seguro con usted. Si usted necesita apoyo, hable con el consejero de la escuela o con un trabajador social. Si usted necesita apoyo adicional solicítelo en su iglesia o en una agencia comunitaria.

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## Chapter 4: Engaging Your Community





# Tools for Engaging Your Community

**When families are supported, children are less likely to be at risk for child maltreatment and more likely to grow up happy and healthy.** This chapter offers suggestions for engaging your community in supporting, strengthening, and promoting healthy families through the five protective factors. Working with others provides greater opportunities to identify strategies for ensuring that all parents in your community have the skills, supports, and resources they need to care for their children.

Service providers and others committed to improving the well-being of children and youth can take part in informing and motivating other concerned individuals, community groups, religious institutions, schools and universities, and the local media to help.

In this chapter, you will find tools to help you share your message about the importance of positive parenting and ways to support families in your community through:

- Talking points
- Community strategies
- Pitching story ideas to the media

More information about engaging your community is available at Public Awareness & Creating Supportive Communities on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/communities](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/communities)



# Talking Points

**Supporting families by ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need is an effective way to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect.** The following talking points provide ideas for how to share this important message in your community.

These talking points can be used with community groups or the media. Each audience will have its own interests, questions, and needs, so tailor your presentation to fit the unique circumstances. Engage your audience by inviting them to contribute their own ideas about how to support families, and close your presentation by involving them in a call to action.

## What do we know about protecting children?

- When a parent treats a child with respect, love, and understanding, it affects the child for a lifetime—making it easier to develop and keep friendships, succeed in school and work, sustain a happy marriage, and parent effectively.
- Unfortunately, many factors can limit parents' ability to protect and nurture their children. These can put families at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Certain factors have been shown to serve as buffers against these risks, enhancing parents' coping skills and helping them to raise happy, healthy children, even under stress.
- On average, children raised in households headed by two parents in a healthy marriage fare better than children who grow up in other family structures.

## What are the protective factors that promote healthy families?

The best thing our community can do to protect children is to support healthy families by promoting the following five protective factors:

### Nurturing and attachment

Parents and caregivers who bond with and respond to the basic needs of their babies and young children lay the foundation for a positive and loving relationship. They also stimulate the growth of their child's brain and help their child learn how to interact in positive ways with others.

Ways we can promote parental nurturing and attachment:

- Sponsor a workshop on playing with infants and young children.
- Provide quiet, private places for mothers to breastfeed and tend to their babies' needs.
- Organize a weekend play group for dads.
- Recognize local businesses with family-friendly policies, such as flexible work schedules and maternity/paternity leave, that give parents time to bond with their children.



## Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development

Helping parents learn about normal infant, childhood, and teen development will help them understand what to anticipate as their children grow and develop, and what types of support and discipline may work best at each stage.

Ways we can enhance knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development:

- Suggest parents speak to their children's doctor about any concerns, frustrations, or questions regarding behavior or development.
- Ask your local school district or faith community to sponsor classes and support programs for new parents.
- Organize a parenting club to discuss parenting books, websites, and other resources.
- Educate childcare providers and teachers about key aspects of child development and the relationship between effective parenting and brain development.

## Parental resilience

Parenting can be stressful, especially when parents are also managing work demands or unemployment, financial worries, illness, or difficulties with a spouse or others. Parents who have support and skills for managing stress will be better able to cope with day-to-day challenges.

Ways we can strengthen parental resilience:

- Organize a neighborhood group that will rotate cooking a meal or performing light housework for new parents and other families under stress.
- Start a neighborhood “work out” group, where families can exercise and have fun together.
- Teach a communication class for couples.
- Provide brochures and other resources for teachers and childcare providers to share with parents who are under significant stress.

## Social connections

For most of us, family, friends, and neighbors form a network that provides social interaction, recreation, advice, and help. When parents have the opportunity to interact with, learn from, and seek the support of other adults, their children benefit.

Ways we can build social connections in our community:

- Sponsor multigenerational activities like picnics and street fairs that reflect the community's culture through music, food, and games. Involve parents in organizing these events.
- Help recruit volunteers for mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Befriend-a-Child, or Family to Family.
- Provide venues for young families to meet and socialize, such as libraries, parks, and preschools.



# Talking Points

## Concrete supports for parents

When parents are not employed or face other challenges, they may need assistance in order to provide adequate food, clothing, housing, and medical care for their children. These supports may reduce the stress parents feel in difficult circumstances, giving them more energy to nurture and support their children.

Ways we can promote concrete supports:

- Provide information on how to access housing, health care, or employment assistance.
- Educate candidates and elected officials about issues in your community and the need for services and programs that support healthy and safe children and families.
- Encourage service providers to collaborate, leverage funding, and share resources to address specific needs.

## Call to action: How can we work together to strengthen our community?

Anything you do to support kids and parents in your family and community helps reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. This month and throughout the year, let's focus our attention on prevention efforts that support parents and create healthier communities for children.

- Which of the ideas we have talked about make sense for you?
- What can our community do? How can you help make that happen?



# Community Strategies

**Organizations, groups, and tribal communities all can help raise awareness, strengthen families, and protect children.** The following ideas offer some starting points for planning local community awareness activities. While some of these are specific to Child Abuse Prevention Month, most can be used at any time of year.

## Involve local faith communities

Faith communities are an important source of social support and can often connect members in need with concrete supports in the community. For example, houses of worship in Indiana sponsor a variety of events, including the Champions for Children Fun Fest featuring children's games, entertainment, and prizes. Visit the Prevent Child Abuse Indiana website:

[www.pcain.org/aprilcouncils2.asp](http://www.pcain.org/aprilcouncils2.asp)

Other ideas for faith communities include:

- Organize a parenting fair to educate parents about support services in the community.
- Hold a Family Fun Day or Parent's Night Out.
- Host a parent education or self-help group.
- Provide a series of workshops on each of the protective factors and how they promote healthy families.
- Establish a resource library focusing on parenting issues.
- Create bulletin or newsletter inserts to highlight the five protective factors and suggest how members can promote them.

## Involve men and fathers

Encourage fathers to be involved in their children's care right from the start. Here are some ideas:

- Encourage veteran dads to teach expectant fathers about newborns and how to nurture and care for their babies. For information about this type of program, visit Boot Camps for New Dads: [www.bcnd.org](http://www.bcnd.org)
- Produce public service television and radio ads featuring fathers. The Alaska Children's Trust produced public service announcements with the tag line, "Listen, talk, play, and be a brain builder." Watch or listen to the ads: [www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/ChildrensTrust](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/ChildrensTrust)

## Involve local schools

When parents become involved with their child's school, they develop social connections and learn more about their child's growth and development. Join schools in partnering with parents to foster protective factors that keep children safe and help them learn. For example:

- Hold a poster and essay contest for children in local schools. Find this and many other great ideas on the Prevent Child Abuse Illinois calendar of statewide events: [www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/prevent/prevmon.htm](http://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org/prevent/prevmon.htm)
- Sponsor an event with your school's parent-teacher group to introduce the protective factors and promote strengthening families.



# Community Strategies

## Honor your community's culture

Parenting norms vary from culture to culture, so be sure your techniques for supporting families are relevant. For example:

- Offer classes that introduce traditional Native American child rearing practices as a means to help young Native American parents raise their children in a positive and culturally knowledgeable manner. For information about the South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency's Positive Indian Parenting Program, visit: [www.spipa.org](http://www.spipa.org)
- Coordinate ethnic street fairs to offer families a way to enjoy their cultural heritage in the company of others. Community organizations can provide prevention information and educational materials at booths and through family-friendly activities like parent-child art workshops and puppet shows.

## Involve community agencies

Many agencies have missions that are aligned with preventing child abuse and neglect, and even address some of the same family-strengthening protective factors. For example:

- Provide parenting workshops and one-on-one mentoring to parents with disabilities. Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services in Seattle, Washington, offers a parenting program designed to increase deaf parents' responsive social support network: [www.adwas.org](http://www.adwas.org)

## Celebrate parent leaders in your community

National Parent Leadership Month provides the opportunity for parents, agencies, and communities to come together to celebrate and honor the work of exemplary parent leaders in November. A National Parent Leadership Month toolkit is available from Parents Anonymous® to help communities develop activities and events to celebrate parents who provide leadership in promoting healthy families:

[www.parentsanonymous.org/pahtml/NPLMonth.html](http://www.parentsanonymous.org/pahtml/NPLMonth.html)

## Additional Ideas

Many communities use variations of the following popular activities to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month and focus attention on supporting families to prevent the risk of abuse. Make one of these ideas your own:

- Historically, the blue ribbon has been an important symbol in the effort to prevent child abuse and neglect. Many communities host blue ribbon campaigns during Child Abuse Prevention Month, encouraging community members to wear the ribbon and recognizing "blue ribbon neighborhoods," "blue ribbon kids," or "blue ribbon families" for extraordinary efforts.
- Host an awards breakfast or luncheon to recognize key individuals and organizations working to strengthen families and prevent the risk of child abuse. Give awards in five categories, one for each protective factor.
- Disseminate calendars of daily family strengthening activities. Use local children's artwork to illustrate them. For an example, see: [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting/calendar.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/parenting/calendar.cfm)
- Sponsor a Kids' Day at the Zoo. Make posters or hand out brochures that show how animal families nurture and protect their babies and how human families do the same or similar things.
- Advertise the opportunity to make a contribution to the State trust fund to honor a father, mother, or someone else special to the donor.
- Offer a conference on positive parenting and strengthening families. Have five workshop "tracks," one for each protective factor.
- Develop a community campaign to promote positive parenting. Consider a "Promises for Parents" campaign, like the one promoted by Prevent Child Abuse New York: [preventchildabuseny.org/pdf/capmonth06.pdf](http://preventchildabuseny.org/pdf/capmonth06.pdf)



# Pitching Story Ideas to the Media

Media professionals want to know that their stories will have an impact on the entire community. When the topic of child abuse and neglect arises, their first question is often, “How many children have been abused in this State?” or “How many children have died this year from abuse?”

While these tragic numbers may garner momentary attention, they provide limited insight into the multiple dimensions of child maltreatment. They reveal little about the interactions among individuals, families, communities, and society that lead to such incidents. This complexity confounds our search for a simple answer to the question, “Why does child maltreatment occur?”

You can help the media understand that this same complexity offers great hope, because a problem with so many contributing factors offers multiple opportunities for intervention and change. The power of the story is in the healing that occurs when a community joins together, not only to identify and reduce known risk factors, but also to enhance protective factors that strengthen families, reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, and protect children from its negative effects. The following are some tips for successful media pitches.

## Anchor your story to a timely, local event

When you talk to the media about supporting parents and families to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, think about angles that make the story current and interesting to a local audience. This does not have to be a recent child tragedy; it could be a back-to-school story about how one elementary school supports neighborhood families, for example.

## Have a clear message

Communicate the idea that the five protective factors have been shown through research to promote healthy families and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Other sample “bottom line” messages:

- Supporting families and ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need are effective ways to protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect.
- Children do well when their parents do well. And parents do best when they live in communities that actively support families. We can all play a positive part.

## Focus on the five protective factors

Focus on successful ways your community is:

- Promoting nurturing and parent-child attachment
- Enhancing knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development
- Strengthening parental resilience to stress
- Building social connections
- Identifying concrete supports for parents



# Pitching Story Ideas to the Media

Keep your message simple and direct. You might even pick just one protective factor and describe how it helps keep children safe and communities healthy by making families strong. For example:

- Suggest a story on parental resilience, focusing on a young family that had to relocate after Hurricane Katrina. Have the parents meet the reporter at a healthy marriage class that helped them support one another as they coped with their move. Prepare them to talk about how improving their marriage helped them provide a less stressful environment for their children during a difficult time.
- Connect a reporter with an urban tribal organization that promotes social connections by giving lessons in Native American art and dance to children, while giving their parents a chance to meet members of their own and other tribes in an informal social setting.

## Celebrate community heroes

Suggest interviewees who can demonstrate the success of family strengthening programs and protective factors through their own lives. Some suggestions:

- A young immigrant mother who participated in a visiting nurse program and learned new ways to nurture, connect with, and care for her baby from a provider who spoke her native language.
- An instructor who promotes resilience by combining a couples yoga class with tips on maintaining a healthy marriage.
- A doctor who created a package of parenting tips appropriate for different developmental stages.
- A church that offers Wednesday night social activities for families.
- A community organization that provides concrete supports by helping residents find safe, affordable housing to prevent homelessness and keep families together.

Always conclude media pitches with suggestions for where to go for more information or tips for how community members can participate in similar efforts.

## Resources

For more on shaping a media message about strengthening families, see “Reframing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Practical Tool Kit,” produced by Prevent Child Abuse America for the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention:  
[www.friendsnrc.org/reframing/Index1.htm](http://www.friendsnrc.org/reframing/Index1.htm)

For more on shaping messages to the media about parent leaders and strengthening families, see *The Parent Networker*<sup>®</sup>, produced by Parents Anonymous<sup>®</sup> Inc. This publication includes parents’ stories and issues of importance to families:  
[www.parentsanonymous.org/paTEST/publications1/PA\\_Networker0706Web.pdf](http://www.parentsanonymous.org/paTEST/publications1/PA_Networker0706Web.pdf)



## Chapter 5: When Children Are at Risk





# Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

**When children are nurtured, they can grow up to be happy and healthy adults.**

But when they lack an attachment to a caring adult, receive inconsistent nurturing, or experience harsh discipline, the long-lasting consequences can affect their health, well-being, and relationships with others.

This section provides information to help service providers and others concerned about the health and well-being of children to understand child abuse and neglect, its effects, and what each of us can do to address it when it occurs.

## What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Child abuse and neglect often take place in the home and come from a person the child knows well—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family. There are four major types of child maltreatment. Although any of the forms may be found separately, they often occur together.

Each State is responsible for establishing its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that meet Federal minimum standards. Most include the following:

- **Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.
- **Physical abuse** is physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.
- **Sexual abuse** is any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.
- **Emotional abuse** is any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats, and rejection.

Find more information on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/defining/) and [www.childwelfare.gov/can/types/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/types/)



# Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

## Why Does Child Abuse Occur?

Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race, and income level. However, research has identified many factors relating to the child, family, community, and society that are associated with an increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Studies have also shown that when multiple risk factors are present, the risk is greater.

Young mothers and fathers unprepared for the responsibilities of raising a child; overwhelmed single parents with little support; and families placed under stress by poverty, divorce, or a child's disability are all at greater risk. Some families are stressed by worries about employment, health, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, or other problems, or are simply unaware of how to care for their children's basic needs.

These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs.

## How Many Children Are Abused and Neglected in the United States?

In 2004, about 3 million reports were made to child protective services about the safety and well-being of more than 5.5 million children. As a result of these reports, about 872,000 children were found to be victims of child abuse or neglect. Of these, more than 60 percent were neglected, about 18 percent were physically abused, 10 percent were sexually abused, and 7 percent were emotionally maltreated.

Child deaths are the most tragic results of maltreatment. In 2004, an estimated 1,490 children died due to abuse or neglect. More than one-third of these deaths were caused by neglect.

## What Are the Consequences?

The impact of child maltreatment can be profound. Research shows that child maltreatment is associated with adverse health and mental health outcomes in children and families, and those negative effects can last a lifetime. The long-term effects can be physical, psychological, or behavioral.

A history of child abuse or neglect has been associated with increased risk of:

- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Developmental disabilities and learning problems
- Social problems with other children and with adults
- Teen pregnancy
- Lack of success in school
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Domestic violence



# Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

In addition to the impact on the child and family, child abuse and neglect affect various systems—including medical and mental health, law enforcement, judicial, public social services, and nonprofit agencies—as they respond to the incident and support the victim. One analysis of the immediate and long-term economic impact of child abuse and neglect suggests that child maltreatment costs the nation as much as \$258 million each day, or approximately \$94 billion each year.

## What Are the Warning Signs?

The first step in helping or getting help for an abused or neglected child is to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse.

The table below lists some symptoms of the four major types of child maltreatment. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should consider the possibility of maltreatment.

Maltreatment Type	Symptoms
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Signs of malnutrition</li> <li>■ Poor hygiene</li> <li>■ Unattended physical or medical problems</li> </ul>
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unexplained bruises, burns, or welts</li> <li>■ Child appears frightened of a parent or caregiver</li> </ul>
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in anal or genital area</li> <li>■ Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, or others</li> <li>■ Age-inappropriate knowledge of sex</li> </ul>
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extremes in behavior, ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive</li> <li>■ Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development</li> </ul>

## On the Child Welfare Information Gateway Website

For more information about:

- Why child abuse occurs: [www.childwelfare.gov/can/factors](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/factors)
- How many children are abused: [www.childwelfare.gov/can/prevalence/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/prevalence/)
- Consequences of child abuse and neglect: [www.childwelfare.gov/can/impact/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/impact/)
- Warning signs: [www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/identifying/)



# Reporting Child Maltreatment

**Anyone can and should report suspected child abuse or neglect.** If you think a child is being mistreated, take immediate action.

Most States have a toll-free number for reporting. You can also call the Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453). When you call to make a report, you will be asked for specific information, such as:

- The child's name and location
- The name and relationship (if known) of the person you believe is abusing the child
- What you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect
- The names of any other people who might know about the abuse
- Your name and phone number (voluntary)

We can all help prevent child abuse by recognizing the risk factors, protecting children who are at risk, and supporting families who are experiencing stressors. Reporting the situation may protect the child and get additional help for the family. Some States provide training for professionals who are required by law to report child abuse and neglect (e.g., childcare providers, teachers, doctors, clergy) and workshops on responding to signs of stress in families.

Many nonprofit, public, education, social service, and childcare organizations in your community play a role in providing supports and services to children, youth, and families. Parenting education, crisis/respice care, transitional housing, and literacy programs, as well as family resource centers, teen parent support groups, fatherhood groups, and marriage education classes, support families in important ways.

Find more information about reporting child abuse and neglect on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website: [www.childwelfare.gov/responding/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/)



# National Organizations That Protect Children and Promote Healthy Families

Many organizations across the country work to improve the quality of life for children, youth, and families. The following is an alphabetical list of those that supported the creation of this packet by offering their resources and input. They are varied in the services they offer and the professionals they support, but all are committed to protecting children and promoting healthy families. Many of these organizations have member agencies and can link you to local affiliates in your State or community. All offer additional information on preventing child abuse and neglect and supporting families.

## American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

AAP is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The Section on Child Abuse and Neglect provides an educational forum for the discussion of problems and treatments relating to child abuse and neglect and its prevention.

847.434.4000  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

## American Humane Association (AHA)

AHA's mission is preventing cruelty, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and animals. AHA information assists professionals and citizens in making informed decisions about how to help children and families in crisis. The association also develops resources and programs that help child welfare systems deliver quality services, and communities and citizens prevent child abuse.

800.227.4645

[www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)



## American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)

APSAC seeks to improve the quality of practice provided by professionals who work in child abuse and neglect by providing professional education and promoting research and practice guidelines in child maltreatment.

843.764.2905

[www.apsac.org](http://www.apsac.org)



## Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The

Foundation's mission is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

410.547.6600

[www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

## Center for the Study of Social Policy

The mission of the Center for the Study of Social Policy is to develop public policies and practices that strengthen families and communities to produce equal opportunities and a better future for all children.

202.371.1565

[www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)



## Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

Chapin Hall is a policy research center dedicated to bringing rigorous

research and innovative ideas to policymakers, service providers, and funders working to improve the well-being of children. Its work provides a source of knowledge about the needs of children and the service systems designed to meet those needs.

773.256.5900

[www.chapinhall.org](http://www.chapinhall.org)



CHAPIN HALL  
CENTER FOR CHILDREN  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



# National Organizations That Protect Children and Promote Healthy Families

## Childhelp®

In addition to a 24-hour National Child



Abuse Hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD), Childhelp directly serves abused children through residential treatment facilities, child advocacy centers, group homes, foster care, preschool programs, child abuse prevention programs, and community outreach.

480.922.8212  
[www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

## Child Welfare Information Gateway

Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau,



promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals, as well as concerned citizens, to timely, essential information.

800.394.3366  
[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

## Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

CWLA is an association of more than 800 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services.



202.638.2952  
[www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

## Circle of Parents®

Circle of Parents, a national network of parents and statewide and regional organizations, works to prevent child abuse and neglect, strengthen families, and promote parent leadership through mutual self-help parent support groups and children's programs.



312.334.6828  
[www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)

## Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The Foundation's child abuse prevention program supports a small number of national organizations and research initiatives that advance efforts to prevent the maltreatment of young children by providing services, supports, and information to families.

212.974.7000  
[www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)

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

FRIENDS (Family Resource, Information, Education and Network Development Services) is a service of the Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. FRIENDS provides technical assistance to Federal grantee agencies implementing the Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, authorized by Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act under the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. The purpose of FRIENDS' work is to build the capacity of States and communities to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen and support families.



919.490.5577 x222  
[www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)

## National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds



The mission of the Alliance is to build and maintain a system of services, laws, practices, and attitudes that strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect, achieved by assisting Children's Trust and Prevention Funds at State and national levels.

517.432.5096 or 206.526.1221  
[www.ctfalliance.org](http://www.ctfalliance.org)



# National Organizations That Protect Children and Promote Healthy Families

## National Association of Children's Hospitals & Related Institutions (NACHRI)

NACHRI promotes the health and well-being of all children and their families through support of children's hospitals and health systems that are committed to excellence in providing health care to children.

703.684.1355

[www.childrenshospitals.net](http://www.childrenshospitals.net)



## National Exchange Club (NEC) Child Abuse Prevention Services

The NEC Foundation is committed to making a difference in the lives of children, families, and communities through its national project, the prevention of child abuse. The NEC Foundation coordinates a nationwide network of nearly 100 Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Centers that utilize the parent aide program and provide support to families at risk for abuse.

800.924.2643 or 419.535.3232

[www.preventchildabuse.com](http://www.preventchildabuse.com)

## National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NAEYC exists for the purpose of leading and consolidating the efforts of individuals and groups working to achieve healthy development and constructive education for all young children.

800.424.2460

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)



## National Family Preservation Network (NFPN)

NFPN provides training, tools, and resources to assist policymakers and practitioners to build on a family's strengths and to preserve family bonds so children can be protected and nurtured at home.

888.498.9047

[www.nfpn.org](http://www.nfpn.org)



## National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome (NCSBS)

NCSBS prevents Shaken Baby Syndrome through the development and implementation of education, programs, public policy, and research to establish networks for, support, and train families, caregivers, and professionals.

888.273.0071 or 801.627.3399

[www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)



## National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI)

NFI's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives.

301.948.0599

[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)



## National Children's Alliance (NCA)

NCA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to communities seeking to plan, establish, and improve Children's Advocacy Centers.

800.239.9950 or 202.548.0090

[www.nca-online.org](http://www.nca-online.org)



## National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC)

NHMRC's mission is to help individuals and couples who choose marriage for themselves gain the knowledge and skills necessary to build and sustain a healthy marriage.

866.450.3400

[www.healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org)



# National Organizations That Protect Children and Promote Healthy Families

## National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

NICWA is a membership organization of tribes, individuals, and private organizations that work to promote Indian child welfare and address child abuse and neglect through training, research, public policy, and grassroots community development.  
503.222.4044  
[www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org)



## National Respite Coalition

The mission of the National Respite Coalition is to secure quality, accessible, planned, and crisis respite services for all families and caregivers in need of such services in order to strengthen and stabilize families and enhance child and adult safety.  
703.256.9578  
[www.archrespite.org/NRC.htm](http://www.archrespite.org/NRC.htm)



## Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family Partnership National Office supports communities in implementing a cost-effective, evidence-based nurse home visitation program to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and self sufficiency for eligible, first-time parents—benefiting multiple generations.  
866.864.5226  
[www.nursefamilypartnership.org](http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org)



## Parents Anonymous® Inc.

Parents Anonymous is a community of parents, organizations, and volunteers committed to strengthening families and building strong communities, achieving meaningful parent leadership and shared leadership, and leading the field of child abuse and neglect prevention.  
909.621.6184  
[www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org)



## Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America)

PCA America provides leadership to promote and implement national and local prevention efforts.  
312.663.3520  
[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)



## Search Institute

Search Institute conducts research to identify what children and adolescents need to become caring, healthy, and responsible adults and provides resources to apply this knowledge and to motivate and equip others in ensuring young people are valued and thrive.  
800.888.7828  
[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

## ZERO TO THREE

ZERO TO THREE disseminates key developmental information, trains providers, promotes model approaches and standards of practice, and works to increase public awareness about the significance of the first three years of life.  
202.638.1144  
[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

More information on national organizations that protect children and promote healthy families is available on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/overview/relatedorgs.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/overview/relatedorgs.cfm)





FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention  
800 Eastowne Drive, Suite 105 Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
919.490.5577

[www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)



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[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb)