

# KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION BRIEF

## Protective Factors Help Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect



### Parental Resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma

### Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support

### Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development

### Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

Healthy families are the bedrock of strong, vibrant communities. However, for many families and caretakers the impact of social inequality, daily challenges, and community and childhood trauma call for the support of skilled professionals and responsive organizations to help them thrive. Caregiver risk factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, living in poverty, prior abuse, and mental health are known factors that increase the likelihood of child maltreatment.

The Protective Factors Framework is considered a research-based approach to building parental resilience, social connections, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and child development as well as social and emotional competence of children, so the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes (CSSP, 2018). However, families served by Family Strengthening Organizations often have vastly different needs and professionals are better able to ensure an appropriate service response when they recognize and respond to those differences.

Families and communities are further strengthened when professionals can view the protective factors from distinct lenses. Trauma-informed care, cultural proficiency, and strengths-based perspective all offer unique insights for family strengthening professionals to consider when applying best practices.

### ***Trauma-Informed Care***

Trauma-informed care is the adoption of principles and practices that promote safety, empowerment, and healing. Trauma-informed care recognizes that trauma must be addressed in a safe and sensitive way. Trauma-informed care may be practiced in any setting (e.g. health care, law enforcement, education, mental health).

### ***Cultural Proficiency***

Cultural proficiency requires individuals to not only “see our differences” but to know how to respond effectively and affirm those differences in order to provide person and family-centered care (Lindsey et al., 2003).

### ***Strengths-Based***

“A strengths-based approach focuses on what is working well to support the growth of individuals and communities. It is based on the assumption that people have existing competencies and resources for their own empowerment. It assumes that people are capable of solving problems and learning new skills; they are a part of the process rather than just being guided by a professional” (Centre for Child Well-Being, 2011, p. 2).

(Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d., p. 1)

## Take Action:

1. Encourage workers to build protective factors based on a family's unique needs when viewed from various practice lenses.
2. Practice seeing how these various lenses can inform program design and worker's everyday actions with families.
3. Sign up for the Strategies 2.0 [Introduction to Protective Factors](#) or [Facilitating Change Talk](#) in-person trainings to further your knowledge or practice skills.
4. Sign up for the Strategies 2.0 [Family Strengthening Certificate](#). A combination of online and instructor-led courses centered upon a deep understanding and application of the protective factors.
5. Join your local Strategies 2.0 [Learning Community](#) and continue the conversation by connecting and learning with colleagues.

### Resources

Nuri-Robins, K., & Bundy, L. (2016). *Fish Out of Water*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Simon, J.D. & Brooks, D. (2017). Identifying families with complex needs after an initial child abuse investigation: A comparison of demographics and needs related to domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 67, 294-304.

### References

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2018). Protective factors framework. Retrieved from <http://cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/about#protective-factors-framework>

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (n.d.). About strengthening families and the protective factors framework. <http://cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/body/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>

Centre for Child Well-Being. (2011, Fall). Strengths-based versus deficit-based approaches. Retrieved <http://mtroyal.ca/wcm/groups/public/documents/pdf/strengthsvsdeficitrb.pdf>

Lindsey, R.B., Robins, K.N., & Terrell, R.D. (2009). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

## Strategies 2.0

Strategies 2.0 is a collaborative partnership whose mission is to support the professionalization of California's family strengthening field. The Family Strengthening Field is expansive and includes, but is not limited to: OCAP network, family resource centers and family serving organizations, child abuse prevention councils, county agencies, mental/public health, probation, and law enforcement; First 5 Commissions, housing agencies, and education.

Strategies 2.0 offers training, consultation, peer learning, and other professional development opportunities both in-person and online at no cost to you. Services are designed to help organizations and individuals develop the skills, organizational structure, and collaborative relationships necessary to mitigate the risk factors of child abuse and neglect.

