



Concrete Support in Times of Need

What it looks like :

- Families sustain adequate financial security to meet basic needs.
- Families feel safe in their living environment.
- Families understand what resources their family needs.
- Families advocate for and receive concrete supports when needed.
- Families have information and connections to services in their community.
- Families feel supported and valued when reaching out for help.

Everyday actions:

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports
- Build relationships with families, resulting in comfort in sharing their challenges



Social and Emotional Competence of Children

What it looks like:

- Families encourage and reinforce positive social skills and set limits in a positive way.
- Families foster their child's age appropriate self-regulation.
- Families help their child manage and communicate feelings.
- Families understand the importance of social and emotional development in young children.

Everyday actions:

- Help families understand developmentally appropriate social/emotional skills and behaviors
- Educate adults on how to encourage children to express feelings through words, artwork and expressive play
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support
- Create an environment in which children feel safe to express their emotions



Nurturing and Attachment

What it looks like:

- Families respond to their child with warmth and consistency that fosters a strong and secure attachment.
- Families help their child to trust that their environments are safe.
- Families recognize and embrace their child's strengths and individuality.
- Families teach their child how to form and maintain healthy relationships with others.

Everyday actions:

- Create family education and skill building opportunities that promote attachment
- Model nurturing and consistent care to children and families
- Support children and families by understanding the impact of loss or trauma and how to respond appropriately
- Recognize and promote the strength of the relationship between an adult caregiver and a young child

KENTUCKY STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

A Guide for Service Providers

A Framework for Supporting Kentucky's Families



*Mobilizing partners, communities and families to **build family strengths, promote optimal development, increase school readiness, and reduce child abuse and neglect***

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Six Protective Factors

The protective factors lay the foundation for the Strengthening Families framework. The protective factors identified for Kentucky are:

- **Parental Resilience: Families bounce back.** Managing stress and moving forward when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma
- **Social Connections: Families have friends they can count on.** Having positive relationships that provide emotional, informational and spiritual support
- **Knowledge of Child Development: Families learn how their children grow and develop.** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that advance physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need: Families get assistance to meet basic needs.** Accessing resources that address a family's basic needs, resulting in minimizing stress caused by challenges
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children: Families teach children how to have healthy relationships.** Establishing family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to recognize, communicate, and regulate their emotions
- **Nurturing and Attachment: Families ensure children feel loved and safe.** Fostering a nurturing family environment where young children develop secure bonds with caring adults



Parental Resilience

What it looks like:

- Families exhibit strength and flexibility to general life stress.
- Families recognize and value their unique strengths.
- Families identify themselves as hopeful, optimistic, and confident.
- Families have strong problem solving skills.
- Families practice regular self care to keep stress from interfering with nurturing their child.

Everyday actions:

- Honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Encourage parents to manage stress
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Create welcoming and supportive environments and build relationships with families
- Involve parents in decisions about their children and program
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times



Social Connections

What it looks like:

- Families maintain multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others.
- Families feel respected and appreciated in their role as parent or primary caregiver.
- Families accept help from others and give help to others.
- Families establish connections and a sense of belonging with other families.

Everyday actions:

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
- Facilitate mutual support
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities
- Arrange family field trips and activities
- Work closely with parent advisory groups



Knowledge of Child Development

What it looks like:

- Families identify realistic expectations for their child's development.
- Families possess a commitment to life long learning.
- Families practice positive discipline techniques to effectively manage their child's behavior.
- Families recognize and respond appropriately to their child's specific developmental needs.

Everyday actions:

- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development
- Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies
- Address parenting issues from a strength based perspective
- Share observations with parents about the child's strengths and the parent's strengths
- Make parent information available in family's home language