

OUR PROTECTIVE FACTOR FRAMEWORK

The Council for Children & Families (CCF) has adopted a new Protective Factor framework to guide our grant making and system change efforts. The changes reflect advances in research and the availability of new accountability tools.

New CCF Protective Factor Framework

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Support for Families
- Children's Social Emotional Competence

The Research

CCF routinely reviews the research literature on best practices in child abuse prevention. In 1995, this practice led us to establish a Protective Factor framework based what research showed made a significant difference in determining a child's chances for growing up in a protective environment: programs that supported these Protective Factors have the greatest chance of preventing child abuse and supporting families. CCF funded programs had to focus on and demonstrate positive outcomes in at least one of the following eight Protective Factors:

- Nurturing & Attachment
- Responsive Social Support Network
- Knowledge of Child Development
- Effective Problem-solving
- Effective Communication
- Non-punitive Discipline and Guidance
- Effective Life Management & Self Sufficiency Skills
- Stress Management

In 08-09, two developments turned our attention back to the topic of Protective Factors. One was our work with the [Center for Study of Social Policy's \(CSSP\) Strengthening Families through Early Care & Education national initiative](#), which through its literature review made the case for a five-factor framework:

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Children's Social Emotional Competence

The other was our work with the [FRIENDS National Resource Center](#) to help develop a tool to use in measuring the impact of programs on Protective Factors.

The FRIENDS Protective Factors include:

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Support in Times of Need

As we cross walked between the various frameworks, we found considerable alignment, with the one exception being the CSSP's addition of Children's Social Emotional Competence, a child-specific factor which we had associated with the parental factor related to nurture and bonding.

Accountability

Besides wanting to ensure our work reflects current research and that we can clearly articulate the Protective Factor framework we are using as we work across systems and initiatives, we were also motivated by our need for measurement tools. Though there are numerous instruments designed to measure individual Protective Factors, there is currently no single instrument that assesses *multiple protective factors* against child abuse and neglect.

The FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS) assesses changes in *family protective factors*, a major focus of prevention work. The PFS is designed for use with parents and caregivers receiving child maltreatment prevention services. The primary purpose of the Protective Factors Survey is to provide feedback for continuous quality improvement and evaluation purposes. The survey results are designed to provide agencies with the following information: a snapshot of the families they serve; changes in protective factors; and areas where workers can focus on increasing individual family protective factors.

Using the Framework

In SFY 2010, CCF initiated use of the Protective Factor Survey with all of our newly funded first year Innovative/Capacity Building programs in order to assess the impact our funding has on protective factors that have been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect.

To support our work with this tool and to make sure we are aligned with emerging work in the early learning field, CCF is now operating under our new Protective Factor framework (see above) that aligns with both the federal and CSSP Strengthening Families Protective Factor frameworks and strengthens our bridging work with the early childhood field. Each CCF-funded program will be required to address at least one of the following in our Protective Factors with the exception of Children's Social Emotional Competence. CCF currently has no plans to fund programs that choose only this factor.

- For more information about the CCF Protective Factors, contact Nancy Gagliano, LICSW Director of Programs & Evaluation at nancy@ccf.wa.gov or 206-389-3297.
- More information about the Protective Factors advanced by FRIENDS and the Protective Factor Survey tool, see <http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcome/index.htm>
- Additional information about the CSSP Protective Factors is available at http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net/index.php/main_pages/protective_factors. See also "Protective Factors Literature Review: Early Care and Education Programs and the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, CSSP, Sept. 2003" http://strengtheningfamilies.net/images/uploads/pdf_uploads/LiteratureReview.pdf
- To learn more about CCF and the work of Strengthening Families in Washington, visit www.ccf.wa.gov or www.strengtheningfamilies.wa.gov.