

# Delaware: State Initiative Profile



## Overview

Prevent Child Abuse Delaware (PCAD) is the lead agency for Delaware's Strengthening Families™ efforts. Additional partners include United Way of Delaware, the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies at the University of Delaware, Nemours Health and Prevention Services, and the State Departments of Education, Early Education, Health and Child Protective Services. Delaware's focus is on assisting early care educators to obtain the tools, strategies and support they need to build caring, trusting, and helping relationships with parents.

## Building Strengthening Families Practice on the Ground

The goals of Delaware's Strengthening Families initiative are to:

- Reach large numbers of children and families with a primary prevention initiative.
- Help the staff at pilot child care centers establish trusting relationships with families.
- Train the child care center staff to provide parents with encouragement and education.
- Empower the child care center staff to act as an early warning system and to intervene with families before abuse and neglect occurs.

PCAD provides on-site staff mentors at seven pilot early care and education centers who support skill building and provide workshops on ways to build relationships with parents. Incorporating the Strengthening Families Protective Factors, the mentoring and training help staff recognize and respond to the signs of stress that might precede child abuse and neglect.

Additionally, United Way of Delaware, the Nemours Health and Prevention Services, and the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood support Strengthening Families work within child care centers that are involved in the Delaware Stars quality assurance program.

## Key Aspects of the State's work

### Policy / Systems Change

PCAD is working with the Delaware Early Childhood Council to assure that the Strengthening Families model and the Zero to Three Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) curriculum become part of the professional development model for early care education.

Strengthening Families is a research-based, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It builds five protective factors:

Parental resilience

Social connections

Knowledge of parenting and child development

Concrete support in times of need

Social and emotional competence of children

Through the Strengthening Families Initiative, more than thirty states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states are also using the Strengthening Families approach to integrate state prevention strategies, strengthen families in the child welfare system and engage parents and communities in building protective factors. For more information, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)

Nationally, Strengthening Families is coordinated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and supported by a number of national partner organizations including:

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

The BUILD Initiative

United Way Worldwide

Zero to Three

The FRIENDS National Resource Center

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## 2009 QUICK FACTS

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SF Investment: N/A

Programs reached: 7

Children reached: N/A

Professional Development:  
# of individuals trained: N/A

Protective Factors used in  
ECCS Planning: N/A

Protective Factors used in  
CBCAP RFP Process: N/A

Protective Factors integrated  
into state QRIS: N/A

CCR&R Network in state  
supporting program  
implementation in EC sector:  
No

## Parent Partnerships

Parents are members of the leadership teams at each of the Strengthening Families program sites and a parent letter of support is required to be considered for funding. Additional parents are involved in completing the self-assessment tool and in creating and implementing the site specific plans of action. Each site has a Parent Committee that helps to implement the Annual Action Plan.

## Professional Development

The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) is partnering with PCAD to develop and deliver professional development sessions that incorporate the Strengthening Families approach for developing family partnerships.

PCAD also delivers training throughout the state on child abuse and neglect indicators and prevention (including sessions on the Protective Factors) to school personal, parents/ foster parents, child care, law enforcement, court appointed advocates, family counselors and pediatricians.

## **Evaluating Strengthening Families**

Pilot sites are required to create program logic models based on Strengthening Families project goals, and to use parent surveys to set a baseline for monitoring changes and trends over time. Data on activities and parent and staff feedback are used to inform quality improvement efforts.

## **Evolving Work**

Work will continue with the United Way of Delaware to enroll as many Delaware Starts child care center sites as possible in the Strengthening Families program.

PCAD will continue to provide financial support, training and technical assistance to the Strengthening Families pilot child care centers. PCAD is also partnering with DIEEC to expand the availability of training, including the Zero to Three curriculum, to more child care providers across the state.