



Minnesota: State Initiative Profile

Overview

In 2007, the Children's Trust Fund of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Children's and Family Services (CFS) began incorporating a Strengthening Families approach across multiple agencies, including: the Child Safety and Permanency Division, Community Partnerships Division, Child Support Enforcement Division, Transition to Economic Security Division and Transition Support Systems. External partners include: Minnesota Early Comprehensive Coordinating Systems, Evidence-Based Home Visiting, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Minnesota Fathers and Families Network and the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

Building Strengthening Families Practice on the Ground

In Minnesota, the Children's Trust Fund provides grants to every county interested in maintaining a local Child Abuse Prevention Council. Currently, there are 60 councils within 87 counties, each of which organizes prevention work around the Protective Factors. In addition, DHS has designated \$4.5M in Strengthening Families grants to 16 community-based agencies providing child abuse and neglect prevention supports and services using the Protective Factors knowledge in their work with children and their families. Along with funding, the grantees are provided:

- Technical assistance and training on prevention topics such as Protective Factors, the promotion of parent engagement and parent leadership.
- Evaluation activities aligned with the Protective Factors.
- Access to a networking website to provide parents and professionals access to technical assistance, education and resource information.

Key Aspects of the State's work

Policy / Systems Change

CFS Administration adapted and set as a priority the use of a Strengthening Families approach and the Protective Factors framework to orient and align work across the agency. A key goal is to reduce disparities in service access and outcomes for racial and ethnic populations through outreach to special populations and the exploration of the integration of culture within the Protective Factors. All CTF efforts must identify a strategic plan to reach out to underserved populations. Efforts need to be racially and ethnically reflective of the targeted populations and incorporate knowledge of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the populations to be served. The CTF is facilitating a public-private partnership, "Embracing the Protective Capacities of Culture" workgroup, to identify and integrate ways in which working through the lens of cultures strengthens families and communities and informs the Protective Factors.

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

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

State Coordinator:

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Children's Trust Fund /
Strengthening Families
Coordinator
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SF Investment:

Total: \$2,093,329

Programs reached: 16

Families reached: 3,853

Professional Development:

4,491

Protective Factors used in

ECCS Planning: Yes

Protective Factors used in

CBCAP RFP Process: Yes

Protective Factors integrated

into state QRIS: Yes

CCR&R Network in state

supporting program

implementation in EC sector:

Yes

Parent Partnerships

The Department of Human Services, Child Safety and Permanency Division has partnered with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota to recruit, train and support parent volunteers to participate in efforts to reform the public child welfare system. Parent leaders have first-hand knowledge of family support programs and/or the public child welfare system. Parent Leadership for Child Safety and Permanency is a formal team established to bring the parent voice to enhance policy, programs and practice. Minnesota has created a statewide network to promote and develop parent leadership, which includes training and provision of the Minnesota Café Model.

Professional Development

Minnesota's commitment to strengthening families through the Protective Factors includes a focus on essential partnerships to assure accessible and meaningful statewide professional development opportunities. This includes conference support and cross disciplinary training.

Evaluating Strengthening Families

The Minnesota CTF utilized Wilder Research to provide evaluation services. The evaluation matrix is aligned around the Strengthening Families approach and the Protective Factors framework. These instruments include: grantee and Child Abuse Prevention Council progress reports and participant and staff surveys.

Evolving Work

In an effort to build the Protective Factors that benefit parents, children, their families and communities throughout Minnesota the CTF is leading the development of a Minnesota Café Model. The Minnesota Children's Trust Fund, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral and Child Development Services have committed to developing the infrastructure to support statewide training of parents, professionals and communities in 2011.