

New Hampshire: State Initiative Profile



Overview

New Hampshire became a Strengthening Families™ partner in 2005 in recognition that cross-domain preventive systems must build protective factors in children and families to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) within the Department of Health and Human Services is the lead agency for Strengthening Families work. DCYF works closely with the New Hampshire Children's Trust on this initiative.

Building Strengthening Families Practice on the Ground

Forty early care and education programs are designated as Strengthening Families programs, with access to local and federal information to support their work with families. DCYF and the Children's Trust provide these programs with guidance and technical assistance to implement the Strengthening Families Protective Factors and program strategies. Strengthening Families programs are visited annually and are responsible for providing documentation on the work they do. New Hampshire's emerging Quality Ratings and Improvement System will incorporate Strengthening Families program strategies, self-assessments, action planning, implementation and strategy evaluation as a requirement for Licensed Plus status of early childhood centers.

Key Aspects of the State's work

Policy / Systems Change

DCYF's Practice Model uses Strengthening Families as a framework to outline the beliefs and principles that guide the agency's work and provide a plan for systemic improvements. DCYF is building partnerships with other organizations and coalitions and supporting integrated data collection and reporting by family resource centers and family support programs on the changes the Protective Factors have among the families they serve.

Parent Partnerships

The New Hampshire Children's Trust spearheads several efforts to build and sustain parent engagement and advocacy under the Strengthening Families initiative. For example, *Unsung Heroes* is an annual award that the New Hampshire Governor presents to 28 parents (one for each day of February) from every region in the state who have dedicated themselves to family and community. New Hampshire Children's Trust also organizes Parent Advocacy Days in the state capital and in rural counties during which parents meet with local legislators and learn about the legislative process and the value and importance of parents' voices in budget and policy development. During election cycles, the Children's Trust maintains consistent messaging that "Families are PRIMARY"

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

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SF Investment: \$564,000 (Child
Care Development Fund
Quality Set-Aside)

Programs reached: 40

Children reached: 1,336

Professional Development:
of individuals trained: N/A

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 Representation Increases Mobilization, Advocacy and Resources for the Young).

Professional Development

New Hampshire has more than 40 Zero to Three Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) trainers that work through the New Hampshire Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and in their communities to offer trainings free of charge to programs. New Hampshire developed a curriculum map that aligns the Zero to Three curriculum with current Strengthening Families program strategies and the Protective Factors.

Each Child Care Resource and Referral Agency provides a minimum of one Strengthening Families workshop each year to early childhood professionals across the state. Staff of the New Hampshire Children's Trust and the Child Development Bureau presented workshops on the protective factors at five statewide conferences in the last year, as well as four smaller regional trainings. A recent survey of the trained presenters of the Zero to Three PCAN curriculum indicates that approximately 150 trainings have been offered to child care, preschool and early education personnel and others have been offered to students in higher education who are studying the early childhood field. Cross-sector training on the Strengthening Families concepts and framework has been provided to child welfare, justice system and law enforcement professionals.

Evaluating Strengthening Families

The New Hampshire Children's Trust helps family support programs statewide in the collection, data entry and analysis of Family Support Outcome Surveys. In 2010, both an executive summary and a full report were produced and widely distributed. Both are available online at <http://nhctf.org/partners/Reports.html>. In 2011, the Children's Trust will be transitioning to the use of the Protective Factors survey.

Evolving Work

The New Hampshire Strengthening Families team will seek explicit linkage with the New Hampshire Early Childhood Advisory Council, a federally mandated governance body charged with improving the quality, availability and coordination of programs and services for children birth to age five. The team will also promote infusion of the Strengthening Families approach into the state plan for federal home visiting funding, which will involve cross-domain work with Maternal and Child Health, Early Head Start, Early Supports and Services, Early Intervention and others. A Strengthening Families Summit is planned for December 2011.