

## TOOLS FOR WORKING WITH EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

States involved in the Strengthening Families™ Initiative have developed a number of tools that you may find useful in working with early care and education. You can review a selection of them by clicking on the links below. These tools were developed by states and are not a product of the national Strengthening Families Initiative.

### How to Start a Learning Network (IL)

This [document](#), developed by Strengthening Families Illinois, is meant to serve as guidance for new sites starting learning networks of early care and education programs. The document answers frequently asked questions, outlines steps for starting a learning network, and includes the data forms used to track learning network activities.

### Pilot Site Selection: Lessons Learned (NH)

This short [document](#) describes the challenges and successes that New Hampshire experienced in its pilot site selection process and provides good guidance for sites embarking on a similar process.

### RFP Model: Pilot Sites (AK)

This [document](#) is the scoring sheet used by the Strengthening Families Alaska when choosing its pilot sites for the initiative.

### RFP Model: Promising Practice Programs (AR)

These application materials were used with Arkansas' promising practice programs (PPPs). Included are:

- [Instructions for programs, request for proposal form and memorandum of agreement](#) between promising practice programs and the state
- [Gradient scale](#) used to evaluate proposals

### RFP Model: Exemplar Programs (NH)

These files comprise a model request for proposals from New Hampshire. Programs were asked to submit a cover letter making the case for the program's inclusion, a completed self-assessment, and letters of support from parents, staff and community partners. A number of the tools that New Hampshire created for this process are available, including:

- [Application cover letter](#) sent by the state
- [Application instructions and templates](#) for letters of support from parents, staff and community partners
- [Application rating form](#)

## strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

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
- Children's healthy social and emotional development

Through the Strengthening Families Initiative, more than thirty states are shifting policy, funding and training to help early childhood providers 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 [cssp.org/doris\\_duke](http://cssp.org/doris_duke)

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### RFP Process for Mini-Grants (WI)

This [document](#) provides a short description of the mini-grant process used in Wisconsin and some of the lessons learned along the way. Also included is a copy of the state's mini-grant application form.

### RFP Model: Two-Tiered Approach (RI)

These files comprise a model request for proposals from Strengthening Families Rhode Island. The state adopted a two-tiered approach: Tier I is intensive facilitated work with programs within two targeted geographic areas, and Tier II is available to any program and consists of basic training on the Strengthening Families approach and opportunities to participate in peer sharing through the network. Available materials include:

- [Flow chart](#) of the two-tiered approach
- [Program application packet](#) that delineates expectations and support available to sites in each tier