



# TOOLS FOR PARTNERING WITH CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES

- **Allied for Better Outcomes**  
Allied for Better Outcomes: Child Welfare and Early Childhood is [a paper](#) that proposes an approach to child welfare practice that responds to the urgent needs of the youngest and most vulnerable group of children.
- **An Agenda for Early Childhood and Child Welfare Partnerships**  
This [PowerPoint](#) provides a brief overview of the new knowledge and priorities driving a focus around the developmental needs of young children in the child welfare system and provides early information on how a Protective Factors Framework is being used in states to support a well-being frame.
- **A Call to Action on Behalf of Maltreated Infants and Toddlers**  
A group of leading child welfare and early childhood development organizations developed a [policy agenda](#) for infants and toddlers in the child welfare system. The policy agenda represents a collective vision on the essential steps that should be taken in policies, programs, and practices to address the needs of these vulnerable infants and toddlers, who are at risk for a host of developmental problems that could follow them throughout their lives.

## Some resources from Strengthening Families Illinois

- **Department of Children and Family Services Administrative Rule 314**  
This is [the document](#) containing the rule change within the department that is ensuring that all wards three to five years old are enrolled in an early care and education program for at least half day.
- **10 Reasons to Partner with Preschool Staff**  
A [resource sheet](#) intended for a child welfare audience identifying some of the benefits of early childhood / child welfare collaboration.
- **Head Start Grantee Agency MOU/Collaborative Agreement**  
A [blank memorandum of understanding](#) between Illinois DCFS and Head Start grantee agencies in the state. The agreement is focused on increasing collaboration among early childhood and child welfare staff and supporting the enrollment of wards in Head Start programs.

## About Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to help everyone connected with young children and their families take action to support families and reduce child abuse and neglect. The approach focuses on five protective factors associated in research literature with lower rates of child abuse and neglect:

- **Parental Resilience:** The ability of parents to form nurturing relationships and respond to stressful situations in productive ways.
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development:** a parent's understanding of how children develop and the role families play in fostering development.
- **Social Connections:** The many positive relationships families need for emotional and concrete support.
- **Concrete Supports in Times of Need:** A family's ability to access help and resources when they need them.
- **Social Emotional Competence of Children:** Children's ability to express and control their emotions in a developmentally appropriate way

Over 30 states have active Strengthening Families initiatives with programs being funded, trained and supported to help build protective factors with families with young children. Your state may have tools, training and other resources you can access. To find out if your state is participating and find materials and tools from the national Strengthening Families work go to:

[www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)

- **Our Kids Deserve a Fair Start brochure**  
Brochure (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) developed to help child welfare audiences recognize the impact that early care and education can have on kids that become involved with the system and some key information to help individuals identify an early care and education provider.
- **Cross-Training/Suite Talks Power Point**  
Two PowerPoints that have been used in Head Start/DCFS cross-trainings resulting from the memorandum of understanding. There are two presentations: [Head Start 101](#) and [DCFS 101](#).
- **Sample Agenda for Collaboration Meeting**  
A [sample IDCFS/Head Start/Early Head Start Collaborative quarterly agenda](#) highlighting the goals of the collaboration and sample activities/discussion items for meetings.
- **Family Fund Information**  
[Application and guidelines](#) for the Strengthening Families Illinois Learning Network Family Fund. The fund was developed in order to provide immediate resources to support families in need of concrete support.

### Some resources from Strengthening Families Connecticut

- **Pilot Final Report, 2002**  
This [document](#) describes the process that brought the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (CT DCF) together with the Head Start community to begin working together. The appendices includes copies of a pre-post survey for staff, an outline of the protocol developed to guide working more closely together and data on activities resulting from Phase 1 (999 to 2002).
- **Project Evaluation, Summer 2010**  
This [external evaluation report](#) describes the CT DCF-Head Start Partnership initiative and results. Documents and data were gathered from the eight communities in Phase 2 (2005 to 2010) and six communities in Phase 3 (2007-2010) and demonstrate closer working relationships and increased referrals to Head Start.
- **Protocol Contents, December 2000**  
This [document](#) provides an outline of the CT DCF-Head Start Partnership Protocol for Working Together. After exploring all of the opportunities during “the life of a case,” guidance was created to suggest ways staff could support families together and strategies to align policies and practices.
- **Sample of Community NEWS, April 2011**  
This [document](#) provides an example of the quarterly dissemination of successful practices among communities and the sharing of their short-term goals. All communities come together quarterly in a statewide, half-day, semi-structured meeting that offers team time as well as opportunities for working on issues together.