

Strengthening Families Leadership Summit

Plenary Session II – Relationships: Linking Our Thinking, Learning, and Doing

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Child & Family Policy Center and the
State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network



Research Supports Common Sense: The Evidence for Centrality of Relationships

Research-Based Practices

- Build on strengths
- Establish strong worker-family relationships
- Create social ties
- Foster reciprocity

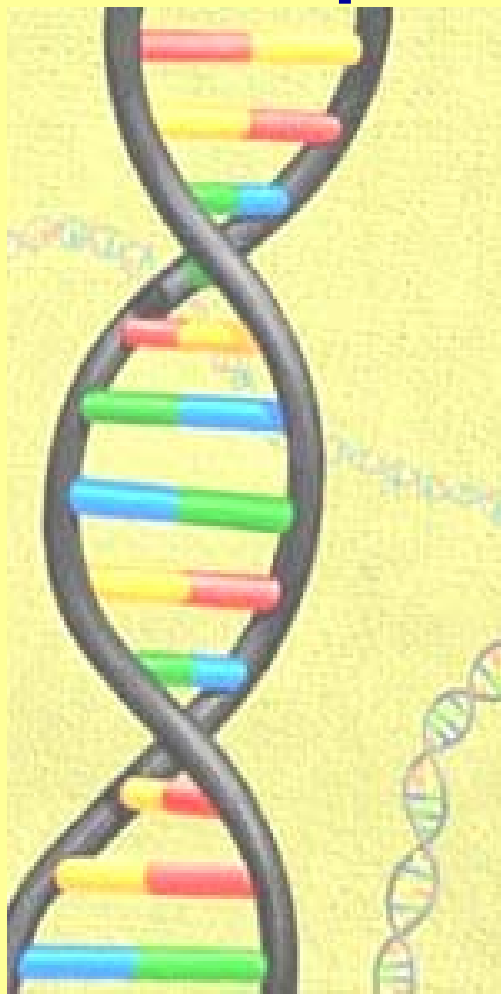
Relationships and Desired Social Outcomes

- Child and family resiliency and growth
- Safer and more supportive community
- Newly-activated leadership and community-wide well-being

The DNA of Effective Programs and Practices

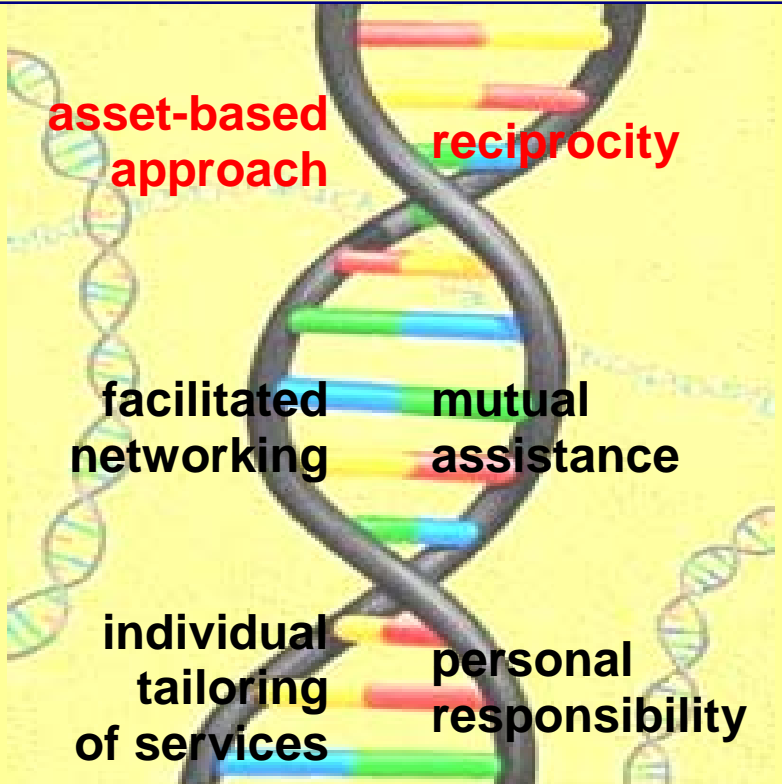
There is a growing body of research on effective programs that have various structures, curricula, and foci. What makes these programs effective, however, are the relationships that develop within them and the underlying ways that staff and participants interact. While different effective programs may serve different populations and provide different supports, services, and activities, they share the same DNA. Understanding this DNA and building new programs from this DNA is essential to achieving results.

DNA as a Metaphor/ Depiction of Essential Elements



- Building block/underlying essence
- Basis for developing complex, organic system
- Starting small – growing and differentiating
- Double helix – intertwined relationship between staff and participants essential to character
- Based on proven, evidence-based practices/attributes

DNA — Roles and Responsibilities

Staff	Participant	Description
 <p>asset-based approach</p>	<p>reciprocity</p>	<p>Staff recognize and work to build upon family strengths. Participants reciprocate by using their assets to help others and the community.</p>
<p>facilitated networking</p>	<p>mutual assistance</p>	<p>Staff facilitate participant groups and support development of affinity-based networks. Networks and groups provide support to one another and community.</p>
<p>individual tailoring of services</p>	<p>personal responsibility</p>	<p>Staff work with participants and respond to individual needs in providing services. Participants take personal responsibility for addressing family needs.</p>

DNA — Leadership and Accountability

Staff	Participant	Description
passionate, skilled staff	activated parent leadership	Staff are passionate and skilled in what they do, with expertise in program areas. Participants assume leadership roles and build skills, often with pathways to new roles and careers.
mutual accountability for success		Both staff and participants hold themselves accountable for their roles in personal and community growth and success.
partnership	ownership	Staff partner with families, including planning activities and services. Participants take ownership and make commitment for sustaining the program.

DNA — Ownership and Community Building

Staff	Participant	Description
cultural congruence	embrace diversity	Staff reflect the culture of the community they serve and value diversity and inclusion (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age). Participants advocate for inclusion and model that behavior with family and community.
commitment to equity		Achieving equity and eliminating “isms” is embedded in the work
family focus	whole family involvement	Staff maintain a family focus and an environment that is welcoming to all family members. Families strengthen their involvement with their (and others’) children.
community embeddedness	focus on building community	Staff are connected to the community as more than a place to work. Participants act to strengthen and build their community.



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