

strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

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EXTENDING THE REACH OF THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES INITIATIVE: A New Partnership with the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds is taking the Strengthening Families Initiative national. In January 2006 the National Alliance launched its three-year Early Childhood Initiative, which makes Strengthening Families an important child abuse and neglect prevention priority for Trust and Prevention Funds. Trust and prevention fund leaders convened in Atlanta, GA and Seattle, WA, to explore how Strengthening Families can integrate into expanded Trust and Prevention Funds' activities and funding. In addition to broader education with all Trust and Prevention Funds across the country, the Alliance, with the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, awarded nine seed grants of up to \$50,000 each over two years. Finally, the Alliance established a Learning Community, with the goal of supporting Children's Trust and Prevention Funds interested in preventing child abuse through the effective use of family strengthening strategies in early childhood settings. State trust funds receiving grants include: Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Washington.

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Contribute! Weigh in on New Strengthening Families Parent Engagement Tools

At its heart, Strengthening Families is about deepening the supportive relationships between early childhood providers and parents. Parent engagement and parent leadership are central to the Strengthening Families model. Over the past few months we have been working on a set of tools designed to:

- Help parents understand what they can expect from a Strengthening Families Program, and
- Help Strengthening Families programs build a model for parent engagement and leadership.

Do you want a sneak peak at what we're working on? Then help us out! We're looking for input and feedback from the field on a number of parent engagement tools. If you're interested you can follow the link at the end of this article to find out more about what we're working on and how you can help. The commitment is small, simply to provide feedback to us on the tools you review.

[Find out more...](#)

The Strengthening Families Network Grows: New States Take on Strengthening Families Activities

In January of 2005, CSSP chose seven states out of a field of 29 applicant states as partners to pilot policy-level changes to support the capacity of early care and education programs in implementing the Strengthening Families approach. While CSSP is working most closely with the seven pilot states (Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire and Rhode Island), others chose to move forward with implementing statewide, regional or even nationwide approaches to Strengthening Families. Currently, 20 states and national organizations, such as Parents as Teachers, are looking at adopting or adapting Strengthening Families. Because these states are implementing Strengthening Families outside of the national pilot their approaches vary significantly. Some are proposing more targeted or limited implementation while others more closely mirror the national pilot.

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us on the tools you review.

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Highlights of Year 1 of the Strengthening Families State Pilot

In January, we entered the second year of the Strengthening Families State Pilot. There has been much learned in the first year of SFI implementation.

- All of the SFI pilot states have engaged multiple partners in their work at the state and local levels. As we see how leadership teams evolve, we are learning about the many diverse partners who can contribute to the success of strengthening families.
- The enthusiastic engagement of early childhood education programs in all the states is leading the way to great implementation and much further scope for SF ideas. Some states are using a pilot program approach, others are using mini-grants as an incentive for ECE programs to complete the self-assessment, while others have established learning networks of ECE programs to provide peer support. A number of states are using a combination of these strategies.
- Each state has some reach into the professional development systems, licensing and other regulatory systems, and is beginning to make connections between child welfare and early childhood. One state is analyzing how the existing SFI protective factors correspond to existing ECE course work at the college level; another is seeking to create a common core capacities framework for all those working with children and families; a number of states are developing new training for ECE and CW workers that incorporate the protective factors.

In addition to what was learned across core strategies, each pilot is developing its “signature” area of focus. This bonus for the initiative, and potentially for the field as a whole, means greater depth of experience in a number of areas.

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