

THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES NETWORK GROWS: NEW STATES TAKE ON STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACTIVITIES

In January of 2005, CSSP chose seven states, Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Wisconsin, as partners to pilot state policy changes to support the capacity of early care and education programs in implementing the Strengthening Families approach. These states were selected from a field of 29 states that applied. Overall, 43 states expressed interest in participating in the initiative. As the initial state pilot period draws to a close at the end of 2006, a key question is how to sustain the learning of the seven states who have been engaged in the initiative over the past two years—and how to engage a much broader array of states who have expressed interest in the initiative. CSSP, in partnership with the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, is developing a national learning network of Strengthening Families states. This network will include not only the original seven CSSP pilot states and the 21 states that are part of the Alliance's Early Childhood Initiative but also other state implementors and national partners who are integrating Strengthening Families into training or initiatives. The approaches and the scope of these efforts vary, but they are united by a commitment to:

- Address and pursue the [Hallmarks of a Successful Strengthening Families agenda](#)
- Embrace the [Protective Factors](#) as a model for child abuse and neglect prevention

This learning network will serve as a conduit for information, materials and tools. Participating states will have access to a network of peers who can support them and their work. In addition, all SFI network states have an opportunity to receive support from CSSP, including:

- An opportunity to customize key Strengthening Families dissemination materials and tools for their state
- Invitations to national meetings around topical areas such as: evaluating the Strengthening Families approach and Strengthening Families professional development strategies for early childhood teaching staff.

Additionally, on a contractual basis, CSSP is providing more targeted technical assistance within some network states including:

- Training and education on the Strengthening Families Initiative through conference presentations and training of trainer sessions
- Technical assistance with state leadership teams
- Support on adopting or adapting the Strengthening Families model

CSSP will also be working with the Alliance staff to help support their technical assistance to the 21 Early Childhood Initiative states.