

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES KANSAS: STATE PROFILE

Infrastructure

More than 80 stakeholders developed the Kansas Strengthening Families (KSF) Plan in 2007 to serve as a statewide, strategic plan for preventing child abuse and neglect through a collaborative, coordinated system of early childhood and prevention partners. Strengthening Families™ in Kansas has been implemented on multiple levels – in early care and education settings, in Community-Based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CBCAP) programs, in communities and in state partnerships. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund acts as the convener, providing leadership to unify efforts, coordinate resources and strengthen and support families. Staff at the

University of Kansas help manage the KSF Plan. Strengthening Families has been integrated into organizational and community structures. For example, the Governor’s Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and the Statewide Parent Leadership Conference promote the protective factors. More directly, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet & Trust Fund supported establishment of an online, statewide data collection and reporting system for the Protective Factors Survey. Staff at the Children’s Cabinet, the University of Kansas and Kansas Children’s Service League (the state’s Prevent Child Abuse America Chapter) provide support for the implementation and sustainability of Strengthening Families in Kansas.

Parent Partnerships

In 2011, KSF Plan partners piloted the Parent Café model in two communities. Three communities have held Parent Café training workshops for service providers and community partners. In addition, the Protective Factors Framework and a Parent Café have been incorporated into the annual Parent Leadership Conference. In 2012, over 100 parents participated in the Parent Leadership Conference-Parent Café and discussed the five protective factors within their individual families and communities. Since its establishment in 2011, the Statewide Parent Leadership Advisory Council (SPLAC) has provided input and feedback to the KSF Plan. The council has been integral in communicating the importance of the protective factors to peers and in 2012 assisted in the planning and implementation of the Statewide Parent Leadership Conference.

Deepening Knowledge and Understanding

Child Care Aware of Kansas continues to provide training and support on Strengthening Families to home- and center-based child care providers through the state’s resource & referral network. In 2012, over 1,000 child care providers attended Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent Provider Partnerships in Child Care (PCAN) modules & Strengthening Families orientation training sessions.

Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Using the Strengthening Families framework, more than 30 states are shifting policy and practice to help programs working with children and families focus on protective factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems.

Nationally, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) coordinates Strengthening Families and works with more than a dozen national partner organizations to create a new vision in which communities, families, institutions, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on protective and promotive factors
- Recognize and support parents as decision-makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

For more information, visit
www.strengtheningfamilies.net.

Implementation Checklist

Protective Factors used in Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems or other early childhood systems planning	✓
Protective Factors used in Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention RFP Process	✓
Protective Factors integrated into state Quality Rating and Improvement System	✓
Child Care Resource & Referral Network in state supporting program implementation	✓
Strengthening Families included in State Home Visiting Plan	✓
Strengthening Families is being implemented into child welfare system	✓

State Coordinator

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Shifting Practice, Policies and Systems

Kansas uses a multi-faceted approach to building the protective factors into early childhood settings through: alignment of activities through funding requirements, including the Kansas Early Childhood Block Grants; utilization of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey in CBCAP and home visiting programs for evaluation and continuous quality improvement purposes; support for child care providers through resource & referral and community organizing.

Since 2009, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund has worked to integrate the protective factors into requests for proposals, including CBCAP grants, Smart Start and more than \$10 million in funding through the Kansas Early Childhood Block Grants.

Communities, including Sedgwick and Marion counties, have used the Protective Factors Framework to organize local planning and to guide collaboration. The protective factors have allowed local partnerships to expand to include representation from law enforcement, hospitals, faith-based organizations and the business community. The process has led to development of strategic plans, a focus on data-driven decision-making, implementation of new programming – such as the Period of PURPLE Crying – and increased public awareness, including community positive parenting calendars.

Ensuring Accountability

Kansas is utilizing the Protective Factors Survey, a valid and reliable instrument, to measure multiple protective factors in families. More than 2,300 CBCAP participants and families served by CBCAP programs have completed the survey since data collection began in 2009. Home visitation programs, including Early Head Start, Healthy Families and Parents as Teachers began utilizing the Protective Factors Survey in 2011. Kansas researchers have published results of a Protective Factors Survey validation study in Child Abuse & Neglect, a high quality peer-reviewed journal.

Evolving Work

The Kansas Department for Children and Families will integrate Strengthening Families throughout the agency to support and enhance child and family services. KSF partners will continue to work across state agencies to incorporate the protective factors in multiple areas of programming. The KSF Plan will be revised to reflect the current priorities of the leadership team, stakeholders and administration. Partners will utilize Protective Factors Survey data from across the state to evaluate needs and address gaps. Social networking and social media are being explored as tools for connecting with parents.

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