



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES CALIFORNIA: STATE PROFILE

Infrastructure

California began its Strengthening Families efforts in 2007. Partners included the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), Strategies 2.0 (a statewide capacity-building network funded by OCAP), the California Department of Public Health, Maternal Child & Adolescent Health Division, First 5 county commissions, the CA Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division, the Child Welfare Council, Child Welfare Director's Association, Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Network of Family Strengthening Networks, Parents Anonymous, Parent Services Project, Family Resource Network of California and various county representatives. More than 40 of California's 58 counties have been involved in some form of training or technical assistance projects to integrate the Strengthening Families framework into local services.

In September 2010, state leaders formed the California Strengthening Families Roundtable to promote statewide efforts and provide communication and cross-sector learning between the governance levels.

2016 was a year of transition for the Strengthening Families approach in California. The new focus moved away from a single statewide Roundtable to six unique regionally based Learning Communities that include all 58 of California's counties. The Learning Community will serve as a hub for local peer networking, training, technical assistance, convenings, sharing data and evaluation tools and communication. Each Learning Community will include key child abuse prevention and family strengthening partners in each region.

Parent Partnerships

The Learning Communities are committed to demonstrating the impact of meaningful parent engagement. They will support organizational programs and services by providing participants with the tools needed to increase parent involvement in the Strengthening Families framework in each region. The Learning Community facilitators will continue to work with parent advocacy agencies such as Parent Services Project, Parent Voices, Parents Anonymous® Inc. and Parents with Purpose. In State Fiscal Year 2015-16, with OCAP funding, Parent Services Project (PSP) established Parent Academies in six California counties over a 12-month period. PSP integrated the five protective factors of the Strengthening Families Initiative into the Academies. The goal was to strengthen and diversify the leadership capacity to become effective advocates in the systems serving children and families. OCAP also funded Parents Anonymous to continue the State Parent Leadership Team to engage in shared leadership to empower parents and provide a statewide voice to inform policies, programs, procedures, and practices that affect families across multiple systems to prevent child abuse and neglect. While efforts

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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vary from county to county, a number of communities and Child Abuse Prevention Councils across California are using a parent café model to engage parents in the Strengthening Families framework. In 2016, OCAP began funding Lead 4 Tomorrow’s Family Hui Mainland program with the goal of providing training to empower parents so they may become leaders in their communities.

Deepening Knowledge and Understanding

The demand for training on the protective factors has continually grown over the years. Strategies 2.0 continues to provide introductory trainings and workshops as well as advanced modules specifically focused on the Strengthening Families approach. The protective factors play a foundational role in almost all of the trainings presented by Strategies 2.0. The California Network of Family Strengthening Networks developed a standards certification that includes the Strengthening Families approach. First 5 Commissions have provided professional development opportunities. Many California organizations have utilized the online training provided by the National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds. One hundred fifty-one trainers have been certified in California by the Alliance to present in-person trainings using this resource.

Shifting Practice, Policies and Systems

In October 2013 OCAP and Strategies presented a statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Summit focused on the Power of Community. Over three hundred participants from throughout California attended. Parent scholarships were provided to encourage caregiver attendance. The Strengthening Families framework was included in the Summit topics, and participants engaged in a community café. The next statewide Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Summit is scheduled for 2018. In Los Angeles, the Children’s Bureau/Magnolia Place conducts an innovative community collaboration focused on improving outcomes for the 23,000 children living in the area, using the protective factors

as a framework for developing strategies and measuring outcomes.

OCAP has integrated the Protective Factors Framework into its statewide programs and grants. The Department of Education has embedded the Strengthening Families Framework into its Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) core standard for family engagement. CDE funds the CA Strengthening Families Network to provide face to face training to child care providers through the R&Rs. This will infuse the Strengthening Families approach into programs serving almost 1.9 million children under the age of 5.

Ensuring Accountability

Strengthening Families evaluation practices are emerging across California. Agencies across California have embraced the revised Strengthening Families program self-assessments. Family resource centers use the Family Development Matrix, which is aligned with the five protective factors. This allows measurement of improved outcomes for Child Welfare Differential Response referrals and other at-risk families served. Using a collaborative design, each agency network shares outcome indicators between Family Resource Centers, Child Welfare agencies and other community organizations.

Evolving Work

Strategies 2.0 will support the development of regional Learning Communities to advance the goal of integrating the protective factors in child and family serving systems throughout the state of California.

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