



PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

The work of preventing child abuse involves reducing risks that threaten the health and welfare of children by increasing protective factors that keep families and communities strong.

Concrete Support for Parents

Many factors beyond the child-parent relationship affect a family's ability to care for their children.

Parents need basic resources such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and access to essential services that address family-specific needs (such as child care and health care) to ensure the health and well-being of their children. Some families may also need support connecting to social services such as alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. Providing or connecting families to the concrete support that families need is critical. These combined efforts help families cope with stress and prevent situations where maltreatment could occur.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child & Youth Development

Discipline is both more effective and more nurturing when parents know how to set and enforce limits and encourage appropriate behaviors based on the child's age and level of development. Parents who understand how children grow and develop can provide an environment where children can live up to their potential. Child abuse and neglect are often associated with a lack of understanding of basic child development or an inability to put that knowledge into action. Timely mentoring, coaching, advice, and practice may be more useful to parents than information alone.

Children's Social and Emotional Development

A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.

Parental Resilience

Resilience is the ability to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crisis. Parents who are emotionally resilient have a positive attitude, creatively address challenges, effectively solve problems, and are less likely to direct anger and frustration at their children. In addition, these parents are aware of their own challenges (for example, those arising from inappropriate parenting they received as children).

Social Connections

Evidence links social isolation and perceived lack of support to child maltreatment. Trusted and caring family and friends provide emotional support to parents by offering encouragement and assistance in facing the daily challenges of raising a family. Supportive adults in the family and the community can model alternative parenting styles and can serve as resources for parents when they need help.

SOURCE: www.strengtheningfamilies.net

For more information about protective factors that strengthen families, call Prevent Child Abuse Georgia's Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373). You can also send an email to: helpline@preventchildabusega.org. Understanding protective factors that keep families and communities strong is just one way that we are working to prevent child abuse and neglect. ***Preventing child abuse is the work of everyone, every day.*** Join us.

***Join our mission to prevent child abuse
and neglect in all its forms***

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