

strengthening families

G E O R G I A

MESSAGING TOOLKIT



**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND BUILDING RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES THROUGH PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

www.StrengtheningFamiliesGA.net

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Connect With Us!

Website

StrengtheningFamiliesGA.net

Email

SFG@gsu.edu



Within this toolkit, you will find many SFG resources and links to websites containing relevant and useful documents/materials that will help your organization build your own key messages. Many are specific to reaching audiences such as parents, caregivers, community, religious and business leaders, and key decision-makers such as legislators and funders.

Quick Grab Tools

This collection of concrete resources are ready for use in programs and communities. They are intended to help communicate what we all can do to help families thrive. When we all work together we can strengthen families and build well-being in communities.

Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG)

Partners are encouraged to **co-brand** SFG-produced materials with their logos/agency branding. Contact SFG with your request and we will assist with the development of the co-branded materials.

- SFG [Fact Sheet](#)
- SFG [Case for Support](#)
- SFG's [response to COVID-19](#)
- SFG [collateral materials](#) including rack cards, posters, and postcards
- SFG [Newsletters](#)
- SFG Slides: [Conversations for a New Normal](#)
- SFG Slides: [Everyday Actions for SFG Partners](#)
- SFG Primers for [Professionals](#) and [Parents](#)



National Resources

Professionals/Providers

Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) [Crosswalks](#)

- [Connecting Strengthening Families and Home Visiting](#)
 - [Help Me Grow](#)
 - [Parents as Teachers](#)
- Strengthening Families™ and Quality Rated and Improvement Systems (QRIS) – [State Approaches](#)
- How Strengthening Families Helps Programs [Meet Head Start Performance Standards](#)
- [Essentials for Childhood and Strengthening Families](#)
- [Practice Tools for Child Welfare](#)
- [Health Partners Promoting Children's Health & Resiliency: A Strengthening Families Approach](#)
- [Father Involvement Programs and Resources from National Fatherhood Initiative®](#)

Collaboration and Implementation

- [Strengthening Families as a Platform for Collaboration - CSSP](#)
- [Tools to Support Strengthening Families Implementation - CSSP](#)
- [Protective Factor Action Sheets - CSSP](#)
- [Children's Trust Fund Alliance National Parent Partnership Council](#)



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ AND BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

- 
- ✓ Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
 - ✓ Create an inclusive environment
 - ✓ Facilitate mutual support around parenting and other issues
 - ✓ Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICIES
strengthening families
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

How Can Partners Support Strengthening Families GA? Messaging Counts!

As a Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) Partner and Supporter, we encourage you to share information about SFG and the Protective Factor framework within your networks. The value of solid communications around Protective Factors can build and strengthen your relationship with the families you serve, potential funders, within your work places and in your neighborhoods and communities.

This is especially important as the well-being of families, children, work places and communities is immensely affected by the novel virus COVID-19. Additionally, Strengthening Families has begun applying an anti-racist lens to the Protective Factor framework which centralizes a holistic appreciation of the human experience, recognizing the importance of individuals' and communities' social, cultural, political, ecological, and spiritual identities.

Effective Messaging

Messaging is most effective when it is shared with the right audience at the right time. Here, you will find messaging examples and materials to support your efforts to include Strengthening Families Georgia's asset-based approach in your outreach and communications efforts.

Today, organizations have multiple platforms for sharing information. In addition to print, video, and in-person presentations, social media is an outstanding way to engage your constituency and share your story in a cost-effective manner.

KEY IDEAS to Promote Strengthening Families Georgia

We encourage you to be creative and use the most effective strategies for your organization and community.

- Include SFG promotional slides or talking points that highlight Protective Factors within your presentations to spread the word to work-related coalitions, professional networks and associations.
- Mention your partnership with Strengthening Families Georgia to family and friends.
- Write a short call to action on your own organization's website or newsletter and include a link to the SFG website.
- Utilize your organization's website, social media channels, and newsletters to promote your partnership with SFG. Share success stories!
- Your organization's point of view counts! Write an Op Ed on a current issue you feel strongly about.
- Display and distribute SFG posters and rack cards in key locations around your office and community (e.g. libraries, coffee shops, schools, and local festivals)

KEY MESSAGES



How Does Strengthening Families™ Help Families Thrive?

What do you think of when you hear the word “family?” You may consider your parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Some of you might mention cousins, yet others would say a close friend or neighbor. The definition of family is individual, and each is important.

No matter whom you include, we all share one thing. Family includes people we love and those who love us; those we are connected to through a shared history and experience. When we include people who are not related to us, such as neighbors and community acquaintances, we can still think of them as family, as each of these people play an important role in your life and the lives of your children.

All families have challenges, strengths and areas where they can grow. Family is *not* about who is in your family or whom you consider family as much as it *is* about how your family functions. Families can include single parents, two parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren, foster parents and others. Strong families appear in different ways, shapes and forms.

Protective Factors are a powerful shield, or buffer, that can mitigate risk. Everyone has some risk in their lives, some more than others, but risk does not mean poor outcomes are inevitable.

If we build on strengths within our families, communities, our societies, and ourselves in general, we can realize positive outcomes for children and families. The Strengthening Families Protective Factors are attributes and conditions that help keep all families strong and on a pathway of healthy development and well-being.

Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors Approach

A BRIEF HISTORY

Strengthening Families is a research-based framework developed by CSSP to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. This approach helps child welfare systems, early education, organizations/programs work with parents to build five Protective Factors that, increase the overall well-being of children and families. Protective Factors are attributes that serve as buffers, helping parents who might otherwise have difficulty finding resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

KEY MESSAGES

Five Protective Factors are the Foundation of the Strengthening Families™ Approach

Protective Factors (PF) are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to buffer risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development.

We see them as attributes that help families to successfully navigate difficult situations. The PF framework is an organized set of strengths-based ideas that guide families, supportive programs, and services to prevent child maltreatment and promote healthy outcomes.

Talking Points

For Parents and Caregivers

1. SFG supports families with young children to:
 - Take care of themselves so they can take care of their children
 - Reach out to social connections
 - Learn about child development and parenting techniques
 - Find concrete support for times of need
 - Assist their children to develop socially and emotionally
2. SFG supports parent networking and leadership development.

For Strengthening Families Georgia Partnership

1. SFG focuses on supporting those working with families with children birth to five to use an asset-based framework to embed protective factors in all their activities serving families with young children
2. Implementing the Protective Factor framework reduces the likelihood of child abuse and neglect
3. Implementing the Protective Factor framework builds family strengths and environments that promote optimal development
4. The five Strengthening Families Protective Factors help parents to:
 - Be resilient
 - Have social connections
 - Support their children's development
 - Connect with their community
 - Support the social-emotional competence of their children



Parental Resilience

Parents can bounce back.

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma



Social Connections

Parents have friends.

Positive relationships that give emotional, informational, and spiritual support



Concrete Supports in Times of Need

Parents know where to turn for help.

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress



Knowledge of Child Development

Parents know how children grow and learn.

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development



Social & Emotional Competence in Children

Children learn to talk about and handle feelings.

Family and child interactions that help kids communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

KEY MESSAGES

Five Protective Factors are the Foundation of the Strengthening Families™ Approach

Elevator Speech for Parents and Caregivers:

We help families connect with other families. Families also learn about available resources and understand how children grow and learn. As a result, families develop healthier relationships and reduce stress.

Elevator Speech for Strengthening Families Georgia Partnership:

We are organizations and individuals who work to strengthen families and children in Georgia. We believe the five protective factors can help families buffer their stress to reduce abuse and neglect. Implementing the protective factors is simple and can occur in the family, neighborhood, and community.



The Protective Factors are:

1. Parental Resilience (Parents can bounce back)
2. Social Connections (Parents have friends)
3. Knowledge of Child Development (Parents know how children grow and learn)
4. Concrete Support in Times of Need (Parents know where to turn for help)
5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children (Children learn to talk about and handle feelings)

How Protective Factors Help Families Thrive

- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes.
- Builds on improving quality by being integrated into existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities.
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions by individuals, organizations, systems and communities.
- Supports communities and families, service systems and organizations that focus on building and promoting protective factors to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for children, youth and families.
- Takes mutual responsibility for better outcomes for children, youth and families.
- Recognizes and support parents as decision makers and leaders.
- Is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge.
- Values the culture and unique assets of each family.



KEY MESSAGES



How Employers Can Use Protective Factors to Help Their Employees Thrive

Parents and caregivers, including foster and adoptive parents, need to be supported with smart business policies that help strengthen families, aid caregivers struggling with adversity, and promote positive parenting so kids can achieve their full potential. Child-friendly policies in the workplace can make a big difference in parents' ability to raise their kids to succeed and participate in Georgia's future.

Ways employers can embed the Protective Factors in their policies:

- Support maternity/paternity leave for new parents (adoptive and foster parents).
- Check in with mothers and fathers.
- Participate in an employee assistance program or provide lists of available resources to support families.
- Promote a culture where it is okay for employees to reach out and ask for help.
- Allow for flexibility where possible; encourage and facilitate participation in school events.
- Invite local organizations to lead discussions during "lunch and learns" for employees wanting to find out about the Protective Factors. These can include information on child development, parental resilience or topical items such as tax preparation.
- Sponsor a day of service for all employees to volunteer with programs that support families.
- Ensure racial equity by including staff in development of your organization's policies.

How Protective Factors are Embedded in Child and Family Services

Families thrive when Protective Factors are robust in their lives and communities. By providing child and family-serving professionals with information about Protective Factors, we can help build Protective Factors in families with young children, building on family strengths and promoting optimal child and youth development.

Parents are important partners in supporting the well-being of children, but sometimes they need help building their own capacity to effectively support their children. The Strengthening Families Protective Factor framework provides a set of resources and tools for supporting parents, particularly those who seem to be overwhelmed, are isolated, or struggling to understand and respond to their children's needs. In Georgia, child care professionals, child welfare staff, home visitors, family resource centers and medical providers are using the Protective Factors framework to guide their work.

Programs Can Help Strengthen Families By:

- Facilitating friendships and mutual support in parents
- Strengthening parenting skills
- Responding to family crises
- Linking families to services and opportunities in the community
- Valuing and supporting parents
- Facilitating children's social and emotional development
- Observing and responding to early warning signs of abuse and neglect

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Strengthening Families Georgia's Impact Through Partnership

The deep commitment to the Protective Factors framework is evident in the SFG network. Outlined below are examples of how this diverse and active mix of organizations have embedded the Protective Factors into their key initiatives.

Training on Protective Factors and Strengthening Families Georgia

One of the earliest accomplishments of the SFG Partnership was to develop a training continuum for those who work closely with families. This ever-growing and sustainable network of trainings consist of:

Face to Face Training: SFG developed and facilitates a Training of Trainers (TOT) which prepares trainers to conduct a 2-hour overview of Strengthening Families and modules on each of the 5 Protective Factors for professionals. In 2019 a SFG Master Training of Trainers was provided to significantly increase agency knowledge and use of the Protective Factors in four major settings – child welfare, public health, Head Start and the community at-large.



Online Training: Two SFG training modules – the SFG Overview and Connections: The Foundation of Family Engagement were developed for GA's Department of Early Care and Learning, Bright from the Start, Quality Rated (QR) participants.

Parent Cafés are an effective tool used to facilitate parent conversation and engagement and develop parent leadership skills within programs and communities. In June 2020, SFG piloted a successful virtual parent café series as a way for parents and caregivers to connect during COVID-19 social distancing.

Parent Cafés: Learn with and from Other Parents

Parent Cafés offer a place for caregivers to find support and connect with others. Just like anyone, caregivers need people who understand and will listen, discuss problems, give meaningful advice, or simply to care.

“You have a sense of camaraderie.”

“It's very important to feel understood.”

“I will reach out for help more.”

- Parent Café Participants



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Strengthening Families Georgia's Impact Through Partnership

Systems and Policy Change

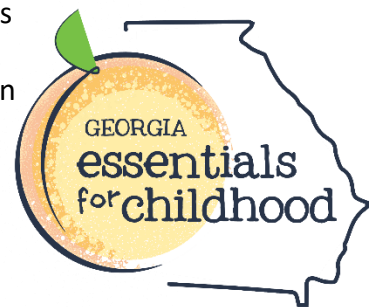
There are numerous examples of organizations embedding the Protective Factors Framework:

Since 2012, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has incorporated a Strengthening Families™ self-assessment, SFG Overview training, and family engagement action plan/portfolio development into their Quality Rated Program. As of 2019, nearly 40% of early learning centers in Georgia were considered Quality Rated, which requires them to utilize the Strengthening Families framework. The framework has been a guiding principle in the agency's Family Engagement Community Grants and the family engagement standards in Quality Rated.

The Protective Factors were the cornerstone of the resources provided to Georgia pediatric practices and pediatric residents in a collaboration between the GA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and public health when conducting physician outreach on community based programs.

Participation in Key Georgia Initiatives

Essentials for Georgia's Children: a multidisciplinary partnership that proposes strategies to promote the types of relationships and environments that help children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens so that they, in turn, can build stronger and safer families and communities for their children. Georgia Essentials does this by examining data; proposing strategies and programs; advocating for policies; and building partnerships and general awareness. SFG is part of the steering committee and the Programs work group.



Georgia Family Support Network: across the country, Family Support and Strengthening organizations work with families in a multigenerational, family-centered approach to enhance parenting skills, foster the healthy development and well-being of children, youth, and families, prevent child abuse, increase school readiness, connect families to resources, develop parent and community leadership, engage males and fathers, support healthy marital and couples relationships, and promote family economic success. In 2018, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services' Prevention and Community Support Section launched the Georgia Family Support Network (GFSN) becoming one of the newest states in the network. The Standards used to train family support staff fully embraces the Protective Factor framework to improve program quality.



NEXT STEPS



Applying an Anti-Racist Intersectional Frame to Strengthening Families Georgia's Work

Many organizations, including the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), are on a racial equity journey—a journey that requires ongoing development, reflection, and action. During the course of this journey, CSSP has declared that its work is directed to being an anti-racist organization. That is, CSSP affirmatively and publicly strives to recognize, reveal, and dismantle structural and institutional racism within their organization and in the work that they do in the field. Staff have joined CSSP and this collective journey at different stages and bring different life and professional experiences, which continue to inform and advance their efforts. This short narrative captures CSSP's racial equity journey for those wanting to understand and learn from where they have come, how they have moved forward, what they have accomplished, and where they have yet to go. Like their journey, Strengthening Families Georgia is also charged with change; and grow and learn from our collective experiences.

In 2020-2021 Strengthening Families Georgia will begin to review all its' training modules and collateral materials to implement an anti-racist frame. This work will be done through a workgroup/committee comprised of SFG Partnership members.

Check Out CSSP's Resources



CSSP's Anti-Racist
[Intersectional Frame](#)



CSSP's journey to center
[equity, inclusion, and justice](#).



[Youtube video](#) of CSSP explaining their role in advancing strategies to dismantle institutional racism.



Content on Protective Factors

It's easier than you think to make a big difference in a child's life with simple actions. Just by changing the words we use, we can help build social and emotional competence in children.

Kids and caregivers in your community need support—but they don't always know how to ask for it! 🙋❤️😊. Be the help they need, so #GreatChildhoods can happen! Find supportive resources for caregivers at www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org

Protective Factors prevent child abuse & neglect by building strong families. Learn more about protective factors at www.strengtheningfamiliesga.net

We can prevent child abuse BEFORE it ever starts through #PROTECTIVEFACTORS that create supportive communities and strong families to nurture a child's development.
<https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/protective-factors/>

Need more information about Parental Resilience? It is an important Protective Factor for professionals and parents to know about. Check out [this infographic](#) to learn about what parental resilience looks like!

It can feel difficult for parents to invest in a supportive social network of friends, family, coworkers or other community members. But these connections are so important for strong parents, families and communities! If you know a parent who needs help fostering close connections, share [this resource](#) with them for concrete actions they can take!

Parenting knowledge is an important Protective Factor! Parents need to know how to handle family situations and what to expect from their children as they grow and develop. [This](#) is a great resource to share about parenting knowledge, its value, and how parents can learn more!

Bouncing back after a tough time (being resilient) buffer family or community from stress and chaos. Being resilient means having a sense of inner strength, but can also come from asking for help, leaning on your social connections, and understanding your children's needs. Learn how it can strengthen your relationship with your child with these resources!

<https://ctfalliance.sharefile.com/share/view/s1c1b2d237084d2da>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KK5t_ajPmw

Content on Resources

Being a parent is hard work and sometimes we can all use a little help to get through the tough parts. The 1-800-CHILDREN (1800-244-5373) Helpline is a free, parent-friendly number, where caregivers can talk to bilingual professionals who can help connect callers to supportive programs and organizations in their neighborhood 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline! www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org

When parents understand what is age-appropriate child development, not only can delays be identified, but the risk for abuse and neglect is reduced for that family! You can help parents learn about ages, stages, and milestones! Share some resources like the CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker App so parents can check in on their children's development. www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

Family Connection Collaboratives are located in all 159 counties in Georgia. They strive to improve the quality of life for children and families through collaboration and community partnership, and they can be a great network for parents to engage in their communities and build powerful personal relationships! <https://gafcp.org/>

Content on Implementation

Need more resources for integrating and educating people about the Strengthening Families Protective Factors? The Children's Trust Fund has so many available! You'll find resources like the Conversation Guide, specific information on singular Protective Factors and so many others! [Check it out!](#)

Do you want to align your services with the Strengthening Families Protective Factors? Or do you want to measure that existing alignment? Your organization can utilize the [Protective Factors Survey](#) to do just that!



SFG Website Blurb



For the SFG Partnership

Supporting parents, caregivers and service providers is important to us, which is why we want to highlight our partnership with Strengthening Families Georgia! The Strengthening Families™ framework outlines the five Protective Factors for building strong families and communities. As an organization we <insert work with protective factors within your organization>. For more information on how you can bring Strengthening Families Protective Factors into your work, check out their website at www.StrengtheningFamiliesGA.net.

SFG Newsletter Blurbs

Blurb for Professional Audience

Professionals like you play a major role in strengthening families. There are so many different ways you can make small but significant changes using the Strengthening Families Framework and the five Protective Factors in your everyday work.

- [Attend or request](#) a SFG Protective Factor training for your organization.
- Collaborate with SFG and their network of organizations by becoming a [Partner](#).
- [Sign-up for SFG Newsletter](#) to stay up-to-date on events around the state and upcoming SFG Training of the Trainers to share protective factors with your communities.

Blurb for Parent Audience:

Being a parent is one of the most challenging and rewarding tasks we will ever undertake in our lives. Strengthening Families Georgia wants to help families build on their strengths such as resilience, connecting with others, and being able to find support when needed.

- Stay connected with strategies and resources for your family by viewing SFG's [Parent Newsletter](#).
- Visit SFG's website for ways to [connect with other parents](#) and [other resources](#) to help your child grow.

Who Are We?

Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) represents a multi-disciplinary partnership of nearly 50 national, state and local, and public and private organizations dedicated to embedding five research-based Protective Factors into services and supports for children and their families. SFG is funded by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DHS-DFCS) through the Federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program.

SFG is housed at Prevent Child Abuse Georgia.

OUR MISSION To utilize the Strengthening Families assets-based framework of Protective Factors in all systems, programs, services and activities supporting families with young children as the approach to achieving the vision.

OUR VISION All families with children birth through age five in Georgia have the resources and support necessary for a meaningful and successful life.

strengthening families G E O R G I A



For more information on Strengthening Families Georgia visit us online at www.StrengtheningFamiliesGA.net.



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