

# strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

## georgia

strengthening families national network partner

### LEAD AGENCY

Bright from the Start  
Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning  
10 Park Place  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-463-4309

### ASPECTS OF GEORGIA'S APPROACH

Offer regional trainings for child care centers in implementation of Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors framework, including follow-ups and continuing education components

Produce and distributing a child abuse training video specific to early care and education centers using Strengthening Families strategies

Create bookmarks, manuals, and other materials for early care and education providers around Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors

Conduct train-the-trainer trainings for child abuse trainers who are using state-provided child abuse training and would like certification to use Strengthening Families-based training materials

Train Child Care Resource and Referral personnel in Strengthening Families

Certify a trainer to provide mandatory training to Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers to use the Strengthening Families child abuse training video and related materials

### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Increase the number of stakeholders who are providing resources to families and early care and education providers on Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors

Develop a detailed database of early care and education programs using the Strengthening Families Self Assessment

Create a five-year Strengthening Families strategic plan for Georgia

February 2008

### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES NATIONAL NETWORK

With funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the SFNN, brings together states, territories, and tribes implementing Strengthening Families with national organizations embedding the approach into their work.

**Partners** in the SFNN have deep, broad-based Strengthening Families initiatives across multiple systems in the state, and have a leadership role in the network. 9 states are partners in the SFNN.

**Affiliates** in the SFNN are strongly committed to Strengthening Families and are working towards implementation of approach at the state level. 14 states are affiliates in the SFNN.

For more about Strengthening Families visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)

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## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing the importance of parent partners, Georgia's Strengthening Families Steering Committee has always included parent leaders. Many come from the Sheltering Arms Early Childhood and Family Centers, which established a network of parent leaders from their 16 centers in seven metropolitan Atlanta counties. Other parent leaders are involved in the strategic planning for Georgia's Partnership for Strengthening Families.

In 2008, the Sheltering Arms Georgia Training Institute will offer parent leadership training to parents of children in early care and education programs. The goals of the Institute are to promote parent leadership, recognize parent leaders, give parents a voice, improve outcomes for children through parent involvement, and assist parents in building support networks for themselves. The Institute will also provide information to parents about resources and services near the location where their children are located.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Georgia's Strengthening Families seed grant project focuses a great deal on professional development. In its first phase, the project focused on enhancing the knowledge and skills of the approximately 100 Child Care Consultants employed by Bright From the Start, preparing them to support providers in implementation of the Strengthening Families approach. Additionally, at conferences, meetings, symposia, and workshops, other early care and education professionals, family support workers, child care center directors, Child Care Resource and Referral personnel, and others received training on the principles of Strengthening Families.

Members of the Steering Committee of Georgia's Partnership for Strengthening Families, along with Prevent Child Abuse Georgia and Sheltering Arms developed a child abuse training module grounded in Strengthening Families for use with state-certified child abuse trainers of early care and education providers.

These efforts have the potential to impact the everyday interaction between child care providers and families in over 12,000 centers and homes that comprise the early care and education system in Georgia. These early care settings employ over 53,000 caregivers and have the capacity to serve over 300,000 preschool-age children and 255,000 families every year.

At least 335 early care and education centers were using the Strengthening Families Self Assessment in 2007.

In 2008, 600 centers, reaching approximately 48,000 children will complete the Strengthening Families Self Assessment.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

Georgia is one of many states using Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors as a useful framework in coordinating the work of multiple systems helping children and families. In 2008, the National Center for Children in Poverty will assist Georgia in developing a state early childhood policy agenda grounded in Strengthening Families.

Strengthening Families will also be central to the Department of Human Resources' new child abuse prevention program, SafeCare. The Strengthening Families partners will work in collaboration with the United Way to incorporate Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors into early care and education services across systems.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Georgia's primary child abuse prevention agencies and organizations, the Children's Trust Fund Commission, Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, and the Department of Human Resources Division of Family and Children Services are partners in both the seed grant Steering Committee and the Strengthening Families strategic planning process. These partners have all made a commitment to integrate Strengthening Families principles into their ongoing work.

Meanwhile, executive staff from Bright from the Start and the Department of Human Resources are supporting Zero to Three's *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect* (P-CAN) curriculum as an integral part of enhancing the implementation of Strengthening Families into early childhood programs, especially those serving high-risk families.

State-certified trainers will also be using the Strengthening Families-based child abuse training video with child care providers across the state. In addition, Bright from the Start's child care regulatory system is evolving from one of inspection and compliance-monitoring to one of consultation and support. Child Care Consultants will be working with child care centers and family day care homes to implement the Strengthening Families approach.

Funding, staff time, and in-kind resources for Georgia's Partnership for Strengthening Families have been provided by:

- Bright from the Start
- The Children's Trust Fund Commission
- Georgia Department of Human Resources
- Prevent Child Abuse Georgia
- Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers
- Sheltering Arms Georgia Training Institute
- United Way of Metro Atlanta
- Voices for Georgia's Children

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## CHILD WELFARE

Executive staff from Bright From the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning, the coordinating agency for leadership of Georgia's Strengthening Families planning process, is currently engaged in high-level discussions with executive staff from the Department of Human Resources regarding how the two agencies can work together most effectively in implementing Strengthening Families.

The Department of Human Resources has infused Strengthening Families into a new home visitation program based on Project SafeCare, an approach that has been shown to reduce the recurrence of child abuse and neglect. Project SafeCare will be piloted in several counties in the state.

Also, staff working with the home visitation program will be receiving training on the Strengthening Families strategies and the Protective Factors along with an introduction to the P-CAN curriculum. In addition, child care program staff in selected counties will receive similar training so that, after completing the home visitation program, children can be enrolled in local early childhood programs. This will provide continuity for the child and family as they transition from one program to the next and ensure that the family's first early care and learning experience is strengths-based and incorporates the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

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