

strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

new hampshire

strengthening families national network partner

LEAD AGENCY

New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth, and Families
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ASPECTS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE'S APPROACH

Select and support Strengthening Families Exemplar Programs

Infuse the Protective Factors into college courses in early childhood education

Partner with the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund to enrich Strengthening Families through grant-making, evaluation, and organizational development

Provide training and through the Child Care Resource and Referral Network's contract with the Child Development Bureau support to child care programs in Strengthening Families and the Self Assessment; include completion of the Self Assessment as an elective component of the Quality Rating System

Add Strengthening Families concepts to the Child Development Bureau's Professional Development System

Participate in Zero to Three's State Partnerships for Prevention

Include Strengthening Families in Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems planning

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Train 40 early childhood and child protection trainers in the Zero to Three Strengthening Families curriculum

Publish a child care provider guide to preventing, recognizing, and reporting child abuse and neglect

Develop sustainable parent leadership on the Strengthening Families Leadership Team and in other Strengthening Families activities

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 comprehensive implementation of the approach at the state level. 14 states are affiliates in the SFNN.

For more about Strengthening Families visit www.strengtheningfamilies.net

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PARENT ENGAGEMENT

New Hampshire's Parent Engagement Plan will utilize three existing statewide early childhood groups to support parents becoming leadership partners in the state's Strengthening Families efforts. The Head Start State Parent Advisory Council consists of 12 parents and Head Start staff trained to support parent leadership development. This group will continue in its ongoing advisory capacity for the Strengthening Families Initiative. Additionally, the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund and the Child Care Advisory Council will work with the Strengthening Families team to build sustainable parent leadership and partnership across the initiative.

In 2008, the Child Development Bureau's contract with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR&R) requires that trainers support child care programs in completing the Self Assessment. Participating in Zero to Three's State Partnerships for Prevention will give CCR&R trainers further resources for involving parents in Strengthening Families work.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening Families is well represented in higher education in New Hampshire. Two institutions of higher education have incorporated the Protective Factors into early childhood curricula, while two additional institutions are participating in Zero to Three's State Partnerships for Prevention to infuse Strengthening Families into their early childhood courses.

Professional development for early care and education providers also includes training in the Protective Factors and completion of the Self Assessment, along with other Strengthening Families concepts. Additionally, the Division of Children, Youth, and Families Training Unit, through Zero to Three's State Partnerships for Prevention, is exploring integrating Strengthening Families into professional development for child protective services workers.

At least 65 early care and education programs in New Hampshire are currently using the Strengthening Families Self Assessment

In 2008, and additional 30 centers serving approximately 1,000 children will complete the Strengthening Families Self Assessment

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EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

In addition to many of the activities already outlined New Hampshire is exploring the use of Strengthening Families to coordinate work across systems by participating in the second-year cohort of Zero to Three's State Partnerships for Prevention, The Maternal and Child Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant also includes Strengthening Families as a unifying concept.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Strengthening Families is integrated into child abuse and neglect prevention at the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund (NHCTF) through several mechanisms. First, for five years, the NHCTF has focused on strengthening families by building Protective Factors. Second, Strengthening Families is used as a way to reframe prevention of abuse and neglect. April is designated as "Strengthening Families Month," and other prevention programs use the Strengthening Families language.

Since 2005, following participation in the national field test on the family support outcomes survey, which measures changes in Protective Factors, NHCTF requires all agencies offering family support services that receive their funding to administer a survey that solicits demographic information, changes in Protective Factors, and customer satisfaction information. These data are reported as statewide outcomes and are used to inform public policy, to help program managers adjust and improve practice, to garner more funds, and to assist parents in acquiring skills that will strengthen families.

Funding, staff time, and in-kind resources for Strengthening Families Wisconsin have been provided by:

- Child Development Bureau
- New Hampshire Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Zero to Three
- New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund

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CHILD WELFARE

Currently, all children in New Hampshire's foster care system have access to quality early care and education.

New Hampshire's Strengthening Families team hopes to make further inroads into child welfare in the coming year. The leadership for the Child Development Bureau, child Protective services, family support, child abuse and neglect prevention, and Head Start systems meet regularly and share the same Training Bureau. This coordination and sharing of resources will facilitate work to build linkages between early care and education and child welfare.

All children entering the foster care system for the first time have a comprehensive mental health assessment. The leadership will work to build linkages between mental health providers, foster care nurses and early care and education programs caring for children in foster care.

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