

strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

washington

strengthening families national network partner

LEAD AGENCY

Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
Children's Trust of Washington
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ASPECTS OF WASHINGTON'S APPROACH

Ground planning in the state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems plan

Participate in the National Association of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds' Early Childhood Initiative

Build a Learning Community comprised of 10 pilot early care and education sites across the state and support peer-to-peer learning through ongoing training and network opportunities

Develop action plan and convene cross-disciplinary Steering Committee charged with its implementation

Create and deploy communication tools, including a website and newsletter

Participate in Quality Rating & Improvement System planning to ensure that Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors framework are incorporated

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Increase parent engagement and leadership by facilitating Parent Cafés

Work towards integration of Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors framework into the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration policies and practice

Report on lessons learned from implementation of the approach in Learning Community pilot sites

Build sustainability by engaging additional stakeholders and securing further funding

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

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PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Strengthening Families Washington has helped to develop a Community Café Cooperative to train parents to implement Parent Cafés focused on exploring the five Protective Factors. Specific outreach to parents is made through early care and education centers, and participants who receive this training will commit to providing these cafés in their neighborhoods. These trainings and cafés will be evaluated as part of a continuous quality improvement process.

In 2008, Washington's Strengthening Families team will continue its support of provider-parent teams in the Learning Community as well as training and support for Community Cafés. In addition, a new partnership with Washington PAVE (Parents are Vital in Education), a parent-directed organization that works with the disabilities community and systems, will expand efforts to engage parents and support parent leadership development. Likewise, as the Department of Early Learning moves forward with development of a Parent Advisory Council, Strengthening Families Washington plans to join its efforts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Basic training in "Strengthening Families 101" has been presented at the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children conference for two years, as well as at the Healthy Child Care Washington Conference in 2007.

Meanwhile, Washington's Department of Early Learning has issued a request for proposals for mental health consultation to early learning centers that specifically requires the utilization of the Strengthening Families framework and connection with the pilot sites. Also at the state level, some 700 members of the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration staff have been oriented to the Protective Factor framework as part of an agency-wide effort to increase knowledge and connections to early learning for children and care.

Finally, the framework has also been integrated into materials and trainings available from the Washington State Child Care Resources and Referral Network.

At least 10 early care and education centers in Washington were using the Strengthening Families Self Assessment in 2007.

In 2008, many more centers will complete the Strengthening Families Self Assessment.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

In addition to the Department of Early Learning's request for proposals for mental health consultations and coordination with the Department's Parent Advisory council, Strengthening Families Washington has continually worked to infuse the approach into early childhood initiatives. Strengthening Families is a vital part of Washington's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems plan, and information about the Protective Factors framework is frequently shared with early learning policymakers and advocates.

Other work in early childhood initiatives includes exploration of policies and activities relating to Family, Friend, and Neighbor child care providers and infusion of Strengthening Families concepts into the Thrive by Five partnership between the Department of Early Learning and private entities around early learning.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Because the lead agency for Strengthening Families Washington is the state's child abuse and neglect prevention agency, the Strengthening Families framework and strategies have been presented to all programs receiving the agency's funding.

Meanwhile, the multiple partners represented on the Strengthening Families Steering Committee have committed to moving Strengthening Families forward as a common platform for addressing child abuse and neglect prevention in Washington.

In addition, the "Resource Update" electronic newsletter, which is sent to approximately 1,000 prevention stakeholders statewide regularly references Strengthening Families. The approach is also included as part of the state's Mental Health Transformation Grant processes relevant to prevention and early childhood.

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

- National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds: Early Childhood Initiative
- Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect/Children's Trust
- Department of Health
- Foundation for Early Learning
- Department of Early Learning

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CHILD WELFARE

Training efforts are underway in Washington to increase awareness among child welfare caseworkers of the importance of promoting healthy child development and family support by linking families involved with the child welfare system to quality early learning programs. 700 child welfare workers have received this training.

Currently, the single early childhood specialist for the state's child welfare agency is a member of the Strengthening Families Washington Steering Committee. Efforts to develop child welfare policies that incorporate the Protective Factors framework are underway.

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