



Guide to Family Engagement



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“Families are the compass that guide us. They are the inspiration to reach great heights, and our comfort when we occasionally falter.” ~Brad Henry

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Meet Child Care Aware of New Hampshire powered by Southern New Hampshire Services

Child Care Aware of NH (CCAoNH) is a Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral program powered by Southern New Hampshire Services. The mission of CCAoNH, the most trusted resource for referrals, technical assistance and professional development for the diverse needs of families, early childhood providers and community partners, is to improve the quality and accessibility of child care.

Child Care Aware of New Hampshire provides the following services:

For Families, CCAoNH provides FREE and confidential referrals that are tailored to fit the needs of each individual family seeking child care. Additionally, we provide families with consumer education to assist them in choosing a quality child care program. Our Child Care Resource and Referral Outreach Specialists strive to ensure that families are receiving consistent, high quality consumer education and referral services.

For Child Care Providers, CCAoNH provides quality professional developmental opportunities through our training and technical assistance services to improve program quality and increase teacher competency. Our Training and Technical Assistance Specialists strive to ensure that providers and programs are receiving consistent, high quality professional development services either through training, phone calls, email consultation or via onsite visits.

For Community Partners, CCAoNH provides important data, resources and other information including avenues for advocacy, community events, and links to other family and early childhood-related sites. We collaborate with various community partners and early childhood stakeholders throughout the state to ensure that children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving now and in the future.



“Being a good dad is all about moments—moments to teach, moments to treasure. It's about the hard moments when we think we haven't gotten through to our kids, and the wonderful moments when we realize we have.” ~Jim Daly

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About the Guide to Family Engagement

As part of an ongoing effort to improve quality in the state of NH, Child Care Aware of New Hampshire started the Progressive Training and Technical Assistance Program with one of the initiatives focusing on Strengthening Families. Since 2015, CCAoNH Training and Technical Assistance Specialists have worked hand in hand with programs as they work to expand their knowledge and experience around the Strengthening Families Framework. Through a year long relationship, a Training and TA Specialist collaborated with programs to help them to shift their focus to a “whole family” approach within learning environments.



The Progressive Training and TA Program paved the way to the creation of the first Exploring Strengthening Families (ESF) Cohort. This unique opportunity had a Statewide focus and came together in Concord. The group was tasked to create the “Guide to Family Engagement”. The ESF Cohort is responsible for the creation of this guide. The intent was to create a starting point for centers wishing to adopt the Strengthening Families Framework.

The Strengthening Families Framework

The Strengthening Families Framework is a research-informed approach to increase family supports, enhance child development and reduce risks pertaining to child abuse and neglect. The approach includes five universal protective factors which support family engagement and increase knowledge in order to achieve positive outcomes for children. At its heart, Strengthening Families is about how families are supported to build key protective factors that enable children to thrive.



“When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves of courage and resilience we did not know we had. And it is only when we are faced with failure do we realize that these resources were always there within us. We only need to find them and move on with our lives.” ~A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

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The Five Protective Factors “are the foundation of the Strengthening Families approach. Families thrive when protective factors are robust in their lives and communities. By providing parents, child care professionals and others who work with children more information about these protective factors, we can help build protective factors in families with young children, building on family strengths and promoting optimal child and youth development.” [NH Children’s Trust](#)

Parental Resilience: “Caregivers show inner strength, flexibility & courage to manage stress during challenges, adversity and trauma” (Children's Trust Fund Alliance, n.d.).

Ideas to promote Parental Resilience:

- **Knowledge of Support Groups:** by understanding the unique needs of families within the program, knowing local support groups or hosting support groups onsite may help families to develop resiliency.
- **Parent Check-Ins:** greeting and maintaining relationships with the families is just as important as working with the children. Through family check-ins, providers may identify any trainings, resources and tools they may be able to provide to promote resiliency.
- **Partnerships with Families:** the partnership with families is an important piece in allowing the parent to understand their role. We want to empower families to be active decision makers on behalf of their child and give them the tools to advocate for them.
- **Promotion of Family Culture:** making families feel valued and represented within the program. Community plays a large part in the way they view themselves and their family. If they are welcomed, accepted and respected in theory, they should feel secure and safe within the community.

Concrete Support in Times of Need: “Everyone needs help sometimes; it’s ok to ask. Resilience is gained when parents know to whom & where to go for help and basic needs” (Children's Trust Fund Alliance, n.d.).

Ideas to promote Concrete Support in Times of Need:

- **Onsite Resource Center:** the provider may place local resource brochures in this space for families to take and utilize at their own convenience.
- **Resource Tab on Website:** online resources may protect the privacy of families, as they will be able to find the resources on their own.
- **Local Support Groups:** by researching and knowing about local support groups and tools, families may find a network of likeminded individuals.
- **Statewide Supports:** by posting information for 2-1-1 and NH Easy, families may find the ability to unlock resources right away in terms of State benefits.

“Sometimes... Just spending some quality time with good friends is the only therapy you need.” ~Facebook/ DI Quotes

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Social Connections: “People need people. Parents need and value friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and others in the community who care about them and their children” (Children's Trust Fund Alliance, n.d.).

Ideas to promote Social Connections:

- **Non-Educational Events:** by providing events where families can network together they can begin to form a support system. We want families to feel supported in their role, and find others with similar situations. By providing open events, families can work to improve their own social skills within the program community. Examples: family fun nights, grandparent teas, holiday celebrations with families, stay and plays, potluck dinners, etc.
- **Inclusive Environment:** by creating the warm and welcoming environment, we are allowing families to find support within the program. Open door communication is key to ensuring families feel secure enough to connect with others.
- **Family Directories:** the use of directories can help families to connect with others during times of need. They may have access to skilled professionals and be able to connect with the family of their child's best friend.
- **Open Groups for Communication:** by creating a bulletin board or online community where families can plan times to get together outside of program hours. Programs might be able to foster more social connections within the community. For example, a closed Facebook group might be a great place for families to plan to meet at a local park or museum.



Things to Consider

Communication Tips and Tools:

- Use more than one method of communication (paper, online, in person, memos, newsletters, etc).
- Promote resource areas/board during tours and orientations.
- Use surveys to understand needs to families.
- Use closed social media groups to connect families.
- Remember to use program demographics to influence communication.

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in very society, in every family.”

~ Kofi Annan

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Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: “Parenting is part natural & part learned. Kids thrive when caregivers understand child growth and are responsive to children’s needs, which foster secure attachments and brain development” (Children's Trust Fund Alliance, n.d.).

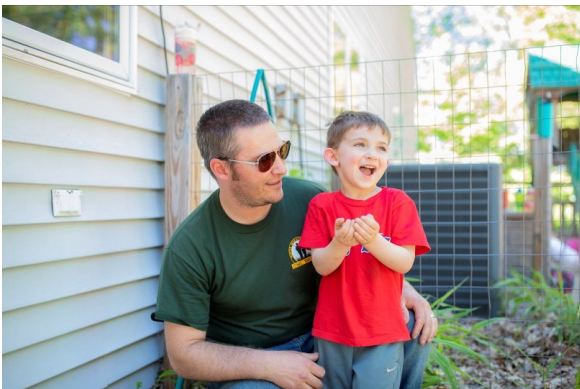
Ideas to promote Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:

- **Promoting the VROOM App:** free app which helps families engage in activities with their child and then provides them with an explanation of how this affects the child’s brain development. Families find out how to turn every day moments into brain building moments. For more information check out the vroom.org website.
- **Family Events/Chats:** the idea behind families coming together is similar to that of a parenting class. It may cover various topics defined by the families or promoted for families based on observations.
- **Onsite Resource Center:** by providing this space the provider can display information pertaining to local parenting events in the community and child development materials to help families find new sources of information.
- **Parent and Teacher Conferences:** by offering conferences programs are providing families the opportunity to utilize them as a resource. This helps them to better understand child development.

Social and Emotional Competence of Children: “Through relationships with consistent, caring and attuned adults, children feel loved, have the ability to get along with others and have a sense of belonging” (Children's Trust Fund Alliance, n.d.).

Ideas to promote the Social and Emotional Competence of Children:

- **Using the ASQ-SE:** this will help to assess the child’s social and emotional skills, while connecting with the family. By filling out the ASQ-SE, families will develop their understanding of child development and help to communicate the needs of the child.
- **Onsite Resource Center:** this area should be accessible by families and may include articles to help families promote social emotional competence in children.
- **Zero to Three Website:** This website is a wonderful resource which may provide articles and resources to help families and educators understand the value and importance of social emotional competence.
- **Language Which Highlights Feelings:** this approach helps children develop the language that helps them associate what they feel with the identified feeling.



“The more you know yourself, the more patience you have for what you see in others.” ~Erik Erikson

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Family Engagement Resources

Available Family Engagement Training Opportunities:

- Strengthening Families Online Training Modules through [ProSolutions](#)
For more registration information, visit the NH Children's Trust's webpage dedicated to "[Strengthening Families Online Training](#)"
- For in person trainings check the [New Hampshire Children's Trust](#) website
- [Progressive Training and Technical Assistance Program](#) through CCAoNH
- [Early Childhood Focused Collaborative](#): Family Engagement and Communication

Strengthening Families Self Assessment Tools:

- [For Center-Based Early Care and Education Programs](#)
- [For Family Child Care Programs](#)
- [For Community-Based Programs](#)

Organizations that Provide Resources and/or Technical Assistance for Family Engagement:

- **Center for the Study of Social Policy**
<https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>
- **Child Care Aware of New Hampshire**
88 Temple Street
Nashua NH 03060
<http://nh.connections.org/>
Phone: 603-578-1386
- **State Early Learning Alliance**
2 Delta Drive
Concord NH, 03301
<https://earlylearningnh.org/>
Phone: 603-226-7900
- **NHAEYC**
PO Box 242
Concord, NH 03302
<http://nhaeyc.org/>
Phone: 603-832-8044
- **New Hampshire Children's Trust**
10 Ferry Street Suite 315
Concord, NH 03301
<https://www.nhchildrenstrust.org/>
Phone: 603-224-1279

An interaction Map of the NH Family Resource Centers:

- <https://www.fsnh.org/>

Resources cited in this document:

Children's Trust Fund Alliance. (n.d.). *Strong Families: Safe Kids* [Strengthening Families Poster]. Retrieved from <https://ctf4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/SF-poster2-14.pdf>

New Hampshire Children's Trust. (n.d.). Strengthening Families. Retrieved from <https://www.nhchildrenstrust.org/>

"To us, family means putting your arms around each other and being there."

~Barbara Bush

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Acknowledgments

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“Having children—the responsibility of rearing good, kind, ethical, responsible human beings—is the biggest job anyone can embark on. You have to take a leap of faith and ask lots of people for their help and guidance.” ~Maria Shriver