Parental Resilience: Families bounce back. Managing stress and getting through it when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

- Families recognize and value their unique strengths.
- Families identify themselves as hopeful, optimistic, and confident.

- Help parents identify their unique character strengths and how they can use them when managing stress.
- Validate strengths and good decisions to build the parents’ confidence and help motivate them to learn new skills when needed.
- Provide concrete tools for reducing stress such as goal setting worksheets, budget forms, journals, daily planners, and other organization tools.

What do you find most stressful to you on a daily basis? How do you work through those life stressors?

Social Connections: Families have friends they can count on. Having positive relationships that provide emotional, informational and spiritual support

- Families maintain multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others.
- Families feel respected and appreciated in their role as parent or primary caregiver.

- Conduct initial visits with families at their convenience, choice of location, and with family members of their choosing.
- Show families an example of a completed “Eco Map” that identifies formal and informal supports. Be sure to note supports that are most helpful to them and which ones are not helpful. Next, allow families to create their own design and explore what supports exist for them.

Who do you specifically call on to help you every once in a while?

What kinds of things do you like to do for fun or just to relax? Would you be interested in meeting some other parents who have similar interests?

Knowledge of Child Development: Families learn how their children grow and develop. Understanding child development and parenting strategies that advance physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development

- Families identify realistic expectations for their child’s development.
- Families recognize and respond appropriately to their child’s specific developmental needs.

- Highlight simple and fun parenting tips each month such as positive discipline techniques for the grocery store and going out to dinner. Connect why children exhibit these behaviors and the importance of teachable moments.
- Encourage parents to see the world from their child’s point of view. For example, you might explore a room together on hands and knees, to help the parent understand how to childproof for their toddler.

How do you continue to learn about parenting skills and your child’s development?

How do you like to receive new information? For example, reading an internet article on your phone, having printed materials, attending a training, and/or watching a video?
**Concrete Support in Times of Need:** *Families get assistance to meet basic needs.* Access to resources that address a family’s basic needs and minimize stress caused by challenges

- Families have the resources to meet their basic needs.
- Families feel supported and valued when reaching out for help.

- Encourage parents to share any positive contacts they have had with community services to help build their confidence in being their own advocate for meeting family’s basic needs.
- Listen to families. Link to services based on the family’s wishes—the support they desire in the manner they desire. Follow-up to make sure they were linked with this service.
- Upon enrollment, ask each parent to identify one concrete need that would lighten their load and list 3 ways they could begin to meet that need (reduce expenses, reach out to local resources for financial help, contact an employment agency). Support the parent on immediate next steps and check-in on progress and barriers.

  ⇒ *What is your greatest need right now? How have you dealt with the problem in the past? Did you have a successful outcome?*
  ⇒ *Do you feel safe and supported in your living environment? What makes you feel safe/unsafe?*

**Social and Emotional Competence of Children:** *Families teach children how to have healthy relationships.* Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to recognize, communicate, and regulate their emotions

- Families encourage and reinforce their child’s positive social skills and set limits in a positive way.
- Families help their child manage and communicate their feelings.

- Encourage and reinforce social skills such as saying thank you, taking turns and greeting others. Use role play with the child and parent to practice these skills.
- Share ideas with families on social and emotional learning tools such as books, songs, and articles. Kentucky social and emotional development resources are available at http://www.kentuckycchc.org/posters-handouts-1/

  ⇒ *How would you describe the emotional relationship between you and your child?*
  ⇒ *How does your child know that you are expressing love and affection?*
  ⇒ *Is home a safe environment for your child to express his/her emotions?*

**Nurturing and Attachment:** *Families ensure children feel loved and safe.* A child’s early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult

- Families respond to their child with warmth & consistently build a strong & secure attachment.
- Families teach their child how to form and keep healthy relationships with others.

- Have the parent make a list of everyday acts that lets the child know they are loved.
- Identify activities the parents and child can do together to build and strengthen emotional bond/attachment.
- Encourage a reward system that earns one-on-one time with family members instead of money or items. For example, instead of allowance for chores, the child can earn a special date with mom or with dad a walk to the park, watch a movie, or play toys.

  ⇒ *How do you engage your child or teen during everyday activities?*
  ⇒ *How do you let your child know you love him or her? What do you do when your child does something great?*

Kentucky’s Strengthening Families is a statewide initiative to improve outcomes for young children and families. Research suggests that families in all walks of life improve their chance for success and their ability to cope with stress when protective factors are present.
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are serious childhood traumas that can result in toxic stress. Prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress, which can damage the developing brain and body of children and affect overall health. Toxic stress may prevent a child from learning or playing in a healthy way with other children, and can cause long-term health problems.

- Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships.
- Increases stress hormones which affect the body’s ability to fight infection.
- May cause lasting health problems.
- Reduces the ability to respond, learn, or figure things out, which can result in problems in school.
- Increases problems with learning and memory.
- Lowers tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out or defiance.

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Asthma
- Depression
- Heart disease
- Intimate partner violence
- Liver disease
- Sexually-transmitted disease
- Smoking
- Suicide

ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) can include:

- Abuse: Emotional/physical/sexual
- Bullying/violence of/by another child, sibling, or adult
- Homelessness
- Household: Substance abuse/mental illness/domestic violence/incarceration/parental abandonment, divorce, loss
- Involvement in child welfare system
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters and war
- Neglect: Emotional/physical
- Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
- Violence in community

Survival Mode Response

Toxic stress increases a child’s heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self-protection is their priority.

Parents and caregivers can help. Turn over to learn about resilience.

I can't hear you!
I can't respond to you!
I am just trying to be safe!
What is resilience?
Research shows that if caregivers provide a safe environment for children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

What does resilience look like?
Having resilient parents and caregivers who know how to solve problems, have healthy relationships with other adults, and build healthy relationships with children.

Building attachment and nurturing relationships:
Adults who listen and respond patiently to a child in a supportive way, and pay attention to a child's physical and emotional needs.

Building social connections.
Having family, friends, neighbors, community members who support, help and listen to children.

Meeting basic needs:
Provide children with safe housing, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and access to health care and good education, when possible. Make sure children get enough sleep, rest, and play.

Learning about parenting, caregiving and how children grow:
Understand how caregivers can help children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow.

Building social and emotional skills:
Help children interact in a healthy way with others, manage emotions, communicate their feelings and needs, and rebound after loss and pain.

Resources:
- ACEs Too High
- ACEs Connection
  - Resource Center
- Parenting with ACEs

“Children with ACEs find ‘resilience’ because an adult provides a safe environment — in which they feel known, validated.”
Donna Jackson Nakazawa
Author of Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology & How You Can Heal

Special thanks to the Community & Family Services Division at the Spokane (WA) Regional Health District for developing and sharing the original parent hand-out.
Family Wellness Project
Parent/Caregiver Level of Resilience Framework

Detached, Hopeless
- Pervasive hopelessness.
- Little empathy for children.
- Few insights regarding impact of ACEs.

Aware, Open to Change
- Low resilience.
- Empathy for children.
- Some insight regarding impact of ACEs.
- Wants to change but doesn’t know how.

Engaged, Hopeful
- High resilience.
- Making changes for their children.
- Insightful regarding impact of ACEs on their upbringing or parenting.

Social Connections:
use intentional engagement strategies to increase relationship with parent and increase their hopefulness.

Concrete Support in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development and Children’s Social and Emotional Competence:
offer services to build protective factors, services to include:
- parent cafés
- resource connection
- parent education
- CARE training.

Parental Resilience:
monitor resilience, encourage and support what they are already doing.

During interviews with families, ask open questions that help you gauge the parents’ current level of resilience:
- What helps you handle stress?
- What has made a difference?
- How do you know when you are not managing things well?
- How can you tell when your child is not handling things well?
- How would you describe your relationship with your child?
- How do you parent similar to the ways you were raised?
- How do you parent differently then how your parents raised you?

During interviews with families, provide reflections that provide an opportunity to determine the parents’ level of resilience:
- Reflect back what supports are in place:
  It sounded like you can count on your mom and your sister.
- Reflect back how they manage stress:
  What I heard was that taking a walk can really help you manage stress.
- Reflect back their current level of resilience:
  It seems that you are feeling pretty hopeless right now.