

REACH

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis • Intervention • Hope

Aspiranet and State of California Post-Adoption Support



Happy New Year!!

Goodbye 2020, hello 2021! We wish all of our adoptive families a great start to the New Year with health, happiness and connection. As we start a new year, we'd like to send a message of Hope. At Aspiranet, hope is a core value and essential to the work we do. Hope is an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. Hope is the light at the end of the tunnel. Hope helps us hold on when we feel we have nothing left to give; when we are tired and worn out; when we think things will never change. Hope is the belief that things will change, people can change and better things are yet to come!

Sincerely,

The REACH team

REACH Program Updates

Services continue to be provided remotely through phone and video calls due to COVID 19. Support groups are now being held via Zoom per request since most families are familiar with this virtual platform. Do not hesitate to contact us for any needs that arise. Watch for more information about a virtual training in the Spring!

Take Care,

The REACH team

Sandra, Linda and Tara



State
Winter 2021

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Implementing the Five Protective Factors

By Patti Kasper, MA, MTh

The REACH program at Aspiranet, and all our programs, are committed to strengthening families through the five protective factors, as detailed in the next article. As you have all discovered, the struggles our children have experienced by coming to us from hard places do not magically go away when the gavel rings at the close of an adoption hearing. Trauma in all its forms continues to influence the way children respond to stress and the world around them. Trauma can include such things as abuse and neglect, as well as changes in a child's brain from prenatal exposure to toxic substances, and the loss of birth families. Sadly, our love is not enough to "fix" it all. So as professionals and caregivers alike, we learn all we can about these effects and strive to be the healing agent for our children through healthy attachments. Helping them to learn how to self-regulate by modeling self-regulation to them, and using our trauma-informed parenting skills. But, by now you have realized that this is hard work, and at times our entire family is affected.

an introduction to these five protective factors. The next five issues will further explore each of these five protective factors in turn. But! You won't need to wait until all those issues are in your hands (or inbox) before you have a grasp of what these are and how they can help you!



The five protective factors of Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Concrete Support in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Social and Emotional Competence of Children all play a role in keeping our families moving on a path toward healing and strength. This issue of our newsletter is

Aspiranet has trained staff at all of our offices to host and facilitate a specialized support group, called Parent Cafés, to enhance these five protective factors in a very practical way. The REACH Parent Cafés were recently launched, on October 5th, and the feedback we received was fabulous! Comments included: "It was great!" "It was a very pleasant experience connecting with other parents," and "I'm looking forward to attending the next time!" We even had two parents who are now connecting and providing support to one another outside of the group. And that was just our first one! Our Parent Cafés will meet the first Thursday from 3-5 PM, every other month, and we hope you will join us on February 4th!

Each Café will be attended by adoptive families in all of our REACH offices across California. Each Café will provide an opportunity for small group discussions, called Café Conversations, around two of the five factors, enabling everyone to learn from each other and support one another's journey. There is also an opportunity to share with the larger group any insights gained which you may wish to share. As with our traditional adoption support groups, it is our hope that you will form friendships with one another, as it is always so helpful to talk with folks who "get it," who understand the challenges of parenting children from hard places and who are also on a journey of helping our children to heal.

What We Know: Families thrive when protective factors are robust in their lives and communities.

Using the Strengthening Families Approach, more than 30 states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states and counties also use the Protective Factors Framework to align services for children and families, strengthen families in the child welfare system and work in partnership with families and communities to build protective factors. For more information and many tools and options for implementation, visit www.strengtheningfamilies.net.

Nationally, Strengthening Families is coordinated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and supported by national partner organizations including:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- The Finance Project
- FRIENDS National Resource Center
- The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
- Parents As Teachers
- United Way Worldwide
- ZERO TO THREE

The Protective Factors Framework

Five Protective Factors are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach: parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. Research studies support the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these protective factors are also "promotive" factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

Parental Resilience

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

Social Connections

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

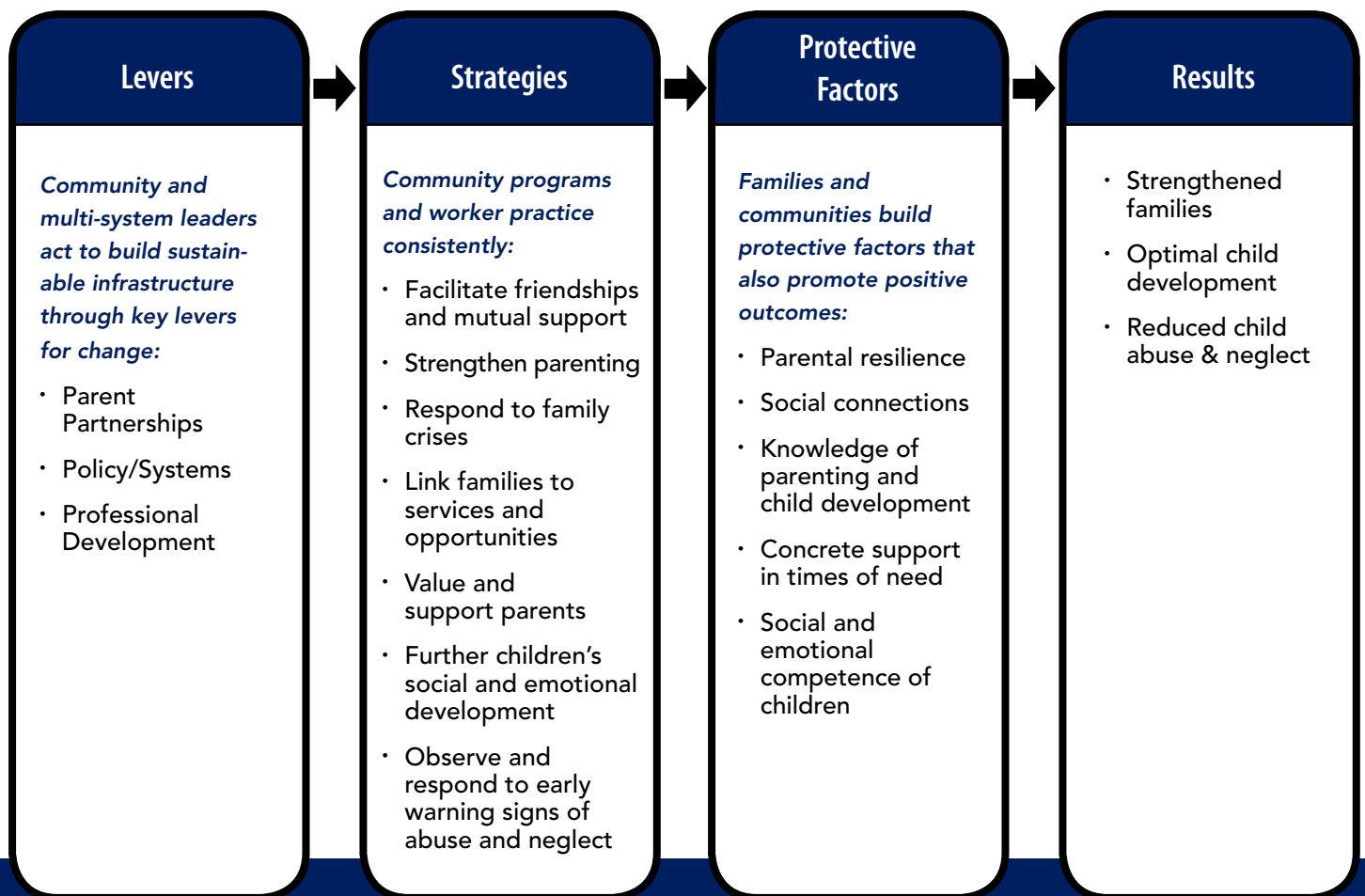
Social and Emotional Competence of Children

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Mobilizing partners, communities and families
to build family strengths, promote optimal
development and reduce child abuse and neglect

The Strengthening Families Approach

- Benefits ALL families
- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions
- Builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities
- Is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge



A New Vision

Families and communities, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on building protective and promotive factors to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for all children, youth and families
- Recognize and support parents as decision-makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

Support and Education Groups & Events

Flyers will be sent in advance of groups/events with further details. Please RSVP for planning purposes and the links to join virtual groups via Zoom. Topics may vary based on interest and special requests.

January – Topic: Parenting Children with Trauma and Loss

25 Virtual Group via Zoom
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

27 Virtual Group via Zoom
3:00pm - 5:00 pm

February – Healthy Play and Bonding

22 Virtual Group via Zoom
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

24 Virtual Group via Zoom
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

March – Topic: Family Time

22 Virtual Group via Zoom
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

24 Virtual Group via Zoom
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Other Events

February 4th Parent Cafe 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm



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REACH Post-Adoption Support Services

REACH offers services in Madera, Mono, Mariposa & San Benito Counties:

Monthly Educational/Support Groups – Monthly meetings where families are able to receive education/training and meet other adoptive families in the community. Please check with each respective site to learn if licensing or certification hours are provided.

Quarterly REACH Newsletter – Quarterly newsletters filled with adoption articles, local trainings, book reviews, on-line resources and more.

Educational Workshops and Trainings – A variety of workshops and trainings are made available in Madera and San Benito Counties.

REACH Library – The REACH library is open and available for book review and check outs during the monthly support groups or by appointment.

Case Management – REACH clients are provided with information, resource referral or other assistance as needed. Although Case Management Services are generally provided via telephone, special arrangements for face to face case management can be arranged.

Crisis Counseling – Crisis intervention is available. Please contact our REACH staff for this support.