

1. Knowledge of Parenting

We know that parents who understand child developmental stages are more likely to be consistent with rules and expectations and will communicate more effectively with their children.

Parents who understand their child's changing needs over time and how to adjust their parenting style based on the child's needs and temperament will experience less stress in parenting and reduce their risk for child abuse and neglect.

I am curious and responsive to what my child needs to be healthy and happy.

What does Knowledge of Parenting mean?

Parents and caregivers understand and use effective and positive parenting strategies and have age-appropriate expectations for children's abilities.

Program Strategies that work here:

- Offer informal interactions with staff and coaching on specific challenges (e.g., inconsolable crying, biting, eating problems)
- Offer opportunities for parent education to be responsive to issues presented by parents in the moment
- Give parents the opportunity to network with each other

Parents can:

- Seek parent education that matches your child's age
- Seek support from other parents to know you are not alone
- Find people you trust for information on what is normal for your child

2. Concrete Supports

We know that when families can provide the basics - food, clothing, shelter - they are better able to focus on other essential aspects of their family life.

Parents who do not have access to reliable sources of income or other resources often experience difficulties in many areas. They may be unable to access safe and stable housing, reliable health care, food, and other tangibles that contribute to health and well-being. These challenges make it hard to focus on other areas of stability and security and often consume valuable time and energy for parents.

Gaining access to concrete supports can help to shift the focus from crisis or emergency needs and allow parents to have the ability to make a more stable environment for their family.

My family can access services and supports to meet our basic needs.

What does concrete support mean?

Families have access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.

Program Strategies that work here:

- Connect parents with economic resources such as job training and placement referrals
- Provide referrals for immediate crisis needs of food, clothing, and shelter
- Recognize challenges in this area and provide support (e.g., language barriers, domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse)

Parents can:

- Seek out and access services in your community
- Share resources with parents in your circle of friends and family
- Build your networks

3. Resiliency

We know that families with the ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems are more successful in daily life.

Helping parents to identify their strengths and resources can help to build resilience in times of need. Areas of strength may include problem-solving skills, faith, communication skills, flexibility, humor, and many others. Parents who can learn to identify and access outside supports when needed will experience less stress over time and have the ability to be more nurturing caregivers.

I will continue to have courage after a crisis and during stressful times.

What does resiliency mean?

Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis. Resilience is the ability to effectively manage all types of challenges that come up in life.

Program Strategies that work here:

- Make mental health support an integral service that is seen as usual not stigmatizing
- Provide resources to parents around causes of stress and how it may affect health, relationships, and family
- Coach parents in skills such as planning, goal setting, problem-solving, and self-care

Parents can:

- Seek support from other parents in times of need
- Take time to take care of themselves
- Seek out assistance in decision-making if needed

4. Nurturing and Attachment

We know that children who feel loved and supported by their parents tend to be more competent, happy, and healthy as they progress into adulthood. Parents who can help their children feel loved, safe, and supported throughout their life increase their child's ability to cope with stress. Parents often feel tugged in many directions. The demands of work, school, home, finances, and other responsibilities can often feel overwhelming- sometimes, it can feel impossible to devote enough time to your children. The reality is that just a moment, a hug, a kiss, or a story at bedtime can make a big difference in the eyes of a child. Parents who can learn to focus on quality interactions with their children will be less stressed over time.

I have a strong bond with my child and spend time making sure they know they are loved every day.

What does nurturing and attachment mean?

The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.

Program Strategies that work here:

- Offer parent education that shares information on how a strong parent-child bond enhances brain development and supports positive behavior later in life
- Emphasize the importance of connectedness with all significant adults for the child
- Recognize warning signs and ensure effective referrals for parents struggling in this area

Parents can:

- Connect with other families for support
- Learn skills to provide nurturing care
- Connect with treatment programs if you are struggling with depression

5. Social Support

We know that being connected - to family, friends, and community- has shown to reduce the risk of harm to children. Parents who feel they have emotional support in times of need are better equipped to handle times of high stress or crisis. Parents who have someone to talk with about a bad day, to strategize with over a difficult parenting issue, or to have a fun evening out to take a break will feel more successful as a caregiver over time. These connections can be crucial components in many areas and should be fostered and encouraged.

I have people who know me well, friends I connect with, and at least one person who supports my parenting

What does social support mean?

Informal support (friends, family, and neighbors) that help provide for emotional needs or connection

Program Strategies that work here:

- Establish a welcoming space for parents to socialize
- Offer opportunities for parents to get together in “normalizing” situations (e.g., picnics, potlucks, block parties)
- Connect parents with other organizations that offer opportunities for parents to connect

Parents can:

- Plan or attend social events that help parents and children connect

- Work to make trusted connections in your community
- Surround yourselves with people who are positive supports

6. Children's Social and Emotional Competence

We know that children who can effectively and positively express their feelings and needs are more likely to develop strong, trusting, and cooperative relationships with others.

This asset begins to form in infancy—possibly in utero—and is fostered through nurturing interactions between child and caregiver. The environment around them impacts child and infant behaviors. When children interact with others in positive ways, and their actions result in reinforcement, they become better equipped to form bonds and self-regulate their emotions and behavior as well as communicate their feelings and solve problems effectively.

In addition, parents and caregivers are less likely to feel stressed or frustrated and better able to meet their child's needs—as children learn to tell parents what they need and how parental actions make them feel, rather than “acting out” complicated feelings.

My children use words or behaviors to effectively express their feelings and needs.

What does social and emotional competence of children mean?

The ability of a child to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors in appropriate ways.

Program Strategies that work here:

- Discuss the importance of feelings and how they impact children
- Provide opportunities for children to practice self-regulation skills in informal settings
- Create programming that allows children to express themselves in creative ways (e.g., play, art)

Parents can:

- Encourage your child to use words to communicate when angry or frustrated
- Seek support with challenging behaviors to reduce stress for the family
- Identify a trusted resource for information and support about normal behavior for your child