

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

A publication of

 CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



Families and Social Connections

Everyone needs positive social connections. Family members, co-workers, other parents, home visitors, clergy, and child care providers are a few examples of social connections. Social connections are one of the five protective factors that can help people thrive, be resilient, and support others.

Positive social connections promote a stronger parent-child relationship, reduce stress, and more. Family support professionals can work together with parents to build positive social connections.

There are many benefits for parents and caregivers that have supportive social connections. For example, parents may experience a sense of belonging and are more willing to seek and accept help from others. Caregivers may have reduced stress levels and can build their self-confidence and social skills. Parents are less likely to have negative interactions with their children, and are more likely to have nurturing parenting behaviors.

Having positive social connections can improve physical health and boost resilience. In addition, when parents have

positive social connections, it may be an opportunity for them to share their strengths, resources, and leadership skills with other parents, caregivers, and others.

A lack of positive social connections may cause negative outcomes for the entire family. For example, parents may experience isolation, depression, and anxiety. There is an increased likelihood of child maltreatment, and parents may be less likely to meet their child's emotional and social needs.

Caregivers may indulge in unhealthy habits and relationships when there is a lack of positive social connections. The parent is the child's primary teacher. If the parent does not have meaningful social connections, the child may not observe the parent engage in positive social relationships, build social skills, and provide support to others, and may repeat the same behavior traits.

It may be difficult to build social connections while raising young children, but family support professionals can help parents form high quality, meaningful, strong social connections. Family support professionals help parents

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identify the challenges of building social connections and can encourage families to succeed. For example, family support professionals may ask the family to list their current social connections, and ask how well each of the social connections support them as a parent.

Professionals can also help the parent identify any challenges in being an active member of the social connections and help families solve problems and overcome those challenges.

As family support professionals learn more about the family, they can share untapped resources in their communities. Be sure to start small and share one or two resources so that you do not overwhelm the family.

If the family support professional refers the parent to a resource and already has a relationship with someone at the organization, the family support staff can do a warm transfer between the parent and the organizational staff for a smooth transition.

From home visitors, clergy, other parents and caregivers, and more, the people that are a part of positive social connections provide resources and experiences that support child development, family well-being, and school readiness.

When parents and caregivers have supportive social connections, they are better able to cope with the many challenges of life and be useful contributions to society.

Sources

Institute for Family Violence Studies College of Social Work Florida State University. The Protective Factors an e-book series for Supervised Visitation Programs: Supportive Social Connections. Retrieved from: <https://itrs.csw.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1886/files/documents/2014Protective-Factor-4-forDCFFINAL.pdf>

Center for the Study of Social Policy. Social connections Protective & Promotive Factors. Retrieved from: https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SF_Social-Connections.pdf

Upcoming Events

Hosting Meaningful Café Conversations,
April 16, 8:00 AM

Family Support Webinars

Best Practices for Engaging Male Caregivers
May 7, 10:00AM

Engaged: Building Intentional Partnerships
with Families
May 14, 1:00 PM

Children's Trust Fund (CTF) Corner

APRIL IS

National Child Abuse
Prevention Month



We observe Child Abuse Prevention Month by encouraging each of us to support parents and their children to thrive! Promote family-friendly affordable programs in our communities, give a dad a smile at the grocery store when his two-year old is having a meltdown, encourage a mom to take a moment to play with her children. The little gestures of support add up to reducing stress in families' lives.



Parents as Teachers Place

The Parents as Teachers Engage is available.

If the PAT affiliate has not been granted access to PAT Engage yet, the [supervisor can fill out this form](#). Only one form should be completed per affiliate.

National Home Visiting Week

The inaugural National Home Visiting Week (NHVW) takes place April 21-25, an opportunity to celebrate and recognize home visitors and the positive impact they make on maternal and child health outcomes. The Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals, an organization focused on strengthening home visiting and human service programs across the country, is collaborating with nonprofit partners and elected officials to organize the event. NHVW garnered bipartisan support as U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (R – Iowa) and Mark Warner (D – Virginia) issued a proclamation to highlight the importance of home visiting. The last full week of April (Monday – Friday) is reserved for National Home Visiting Week for years to come.

Please [review the toolkit](#) for ideas on how your affiliate can celebrate.

Parents as Teachers Core Courses

[Foundational 2 Course](#)

April 28-May 2, 9:00 AM

Instructors: Terry Wertman, Bethany Smith

[Foundational and Model Implementation](#)

May 12-May 23, 9:00 AM

Instructors: Terry Wertman, Bethany Smith



Family Support Team

Family Support at Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children's Trust Fund grantees, and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

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CenterForSchoolsAndCommunities.org



Safe Kids Corner — Playground

With active supervision and some basic safety tips, every day at the playground can be a walk in the park.

The Hard Facts

Falls are the most common type of playground injury, accounting for more than 75 percent of all playground-related injuries. Lack of or improper supervision is associated with approximately 45 percent of playground-related injuries.

Top Tips

1. Actively supervise children on playgrounds. It won't be hard – they'll probably be calling for you to watch them climb, jump, and swing.
2. Take your kids to playgrounds with shock-absorbing surfaces such as rubber, synthetic turf, sand, pea gravel, wood chips, or mulch. If your child falls, the landing will be more cushioned than on asphalt, concrete, grass, or dirt.
3. Dress appropriately for the playground. Remove necklaces, purses, scarves, or clothing with drawstrings that can get caught on equipment and pose a strangulation hazard. Even helmets can be dangerous on a playground, so save those for bikes.
4. Teach children that pushing, shoving, or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.

Learn More

Play more and worry less by learning more about [how to keep kids safe at the playground](#).

Source: Safekids.org