

Keeping Your Family Strong



Every family has strengths, and every family faces challenges. When you are under stress—the car breaks down, you or your partner lose a job, your child’s behavior is difficult, or even when the family is experiencing a positive change, such as moving into a new home—sometimes it takes a little extra help to get through the day.

Protective factors are the strengths and resources that families draw on when life gets difficult. Building on these strengths is a proven way to keep the family strong and enhance child well-being. This tip sheet describes six key protective factors and some simple ways you can build these factors in your own family.

Protective Factor and What It Means	What You Can Do
<p>Nurturing and Attachment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our family shows how much we love each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time at the end of each day to connect with your children with a hug, a smile, a song, or a few minutes of listening and talking. • Find ways to engage your children while completing everyday tasks (meals, shopping, driving in the car). Talk about what you are doing, ask them questions, or play simple games (such as “I spy”).
<p>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know parenting is part natural and part learned. • I am always learning new things about raising children and what they can do at different ages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore parenting questions with your family doctor, your child’s teacher, family, or friends. • Subscribe to a magazine, website, or online newsletter about child development. • Take a parenting class at a local community center (these often have sliding fee scales). • Sit and observe what your child can and cannot do. • Share what you learn with anyone who cares for your child.
<p>Parental Resilience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have courage during stress and the ability to bounce back from challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take quiet time to reenergize: take a bath, write, sing, laugh, play, drink a cup of tea. • Do some physical exercise: walk, stretch, do yoga, lift weights, dance. • Share your feelings with someone you trust. • Surround yourself with people who support you and make you feel good about yourself.