The Kentucky Strengthening Families (KYSF) approach can be used in any setting serving children and families, typically without making huge changes in daily practice. Programs and communities seeking to align their practice with KYSF will find concrete action steps within this guide. This guide was co-authored by Kentucky families through one-on-one focus groups however, we highly recommend you directly seek additional ideas from the parents you serve. Have parents get creative with ideas that will help them incorporate the Six Protective Factors and lead the process.

The Protective Factors Action Guide is divided into six color-coded pages, one for each protective factor. On each page you will find a brief description of the protective factor, What it Looks like For Families, Everyday Actions for Providers, Questions to Ask Families, and Activities to do with Families. On the reverse side of this cover page is a simple template you may find helpful in implementing one or several of these ideas into an existing family interaction.

For more information and resources for Kentucky Strengthening Families visit http://bit.ly/kentuckystrengtheningfamilies

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.

**Six Protective Factors**

- **Parental Resilience:** *Families bounce back.* Managing stress and getting through it when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma
- **Social Connections:** *Families have friends they can count on.* Having positive relationships that provide emotional, informational and spiritual support
- **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
- **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
- **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
- **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
Parental Resilience

What it looks like for families:

- Families exhibit strength and flexibility to general life stress.
- Families recognize and value their unique strengths.
- Families identify themselves as hopeful, optimistic, and confident.
- Families have strong problem solving skills.
- Families practice regular self care to keep stress from interfering with nurturing their child.

Everyday actions for service providers:

- Honor each family’s race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills
- Be welcoming and supportive
- Build relationships with families
- Involve families in decisions about their children and program
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times

Questions to Ask Families about Resilience:

- Where does your strength come from?
- Describe how this helps you parent?
- What are your aspirations for yourself and family?
- What do you find most stressful to you on a daily basis? How do you work through those life stressors?
- What kind of supports do you have? Where do you find most of your help when stressed?
- In what ways does your partner, spouse, or closest friend support you? Who and what helps you reduce stress?
- How can you challenge negative thoughts using the four critical thinking questions?
  1. Where’s evidence that this belief is true?
  2. Where’s the evidence that this belief is false?
  3. What’s the worst that could happen to them if things didn’t go the way they wanted them to go?
  4. What good could come of this?

What do we mean by Parental Resilience?

Families bounce back.

All parents experience stress from time-to-time. Thus, parental resilience is a process that all parents need in order to effectively manage stressful situations and help ensure they and their families are on a trajectory of healthy, positive outcomes.

For example, depressive symptoms in either mothers or fathers are found to disrupt healthy parenting practices so that the child of a depressed parent is at increased risk of poor attachments, maltreatment and poor physical, neurological, social-emotional, behavioral and cognitive outcomes. However, numerous research studies show parents can be helped to manage clinical symptoms and reactions to their own histories of poor attachments and trauma. This provides more nurturing care that promotes secure emotional attachment and healthy development in their children.

Source: CSSP Protective Factor Action Sheets
www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies
Activities to do with parents:

Some parents may not understand the meaning of resilience and your interactions with them will include finding and exploring new ways to discuss parenting skills and validate their skills in order to build their resilience and confidence in themselves. You can:

A. Seek partners in the community who offer programs to help families manage stress and deal with crises. Ask if these programs can offer discounts and/or free counsel to some of your families.

B. Highlight simple and fun “stress-busters” each month such as relaxation techniques while driving, exercises you can do before bed to unwind, particular scents associated with relaxation such as lavender, etc.

C. Create a large mural using sticky notes where parents and staff can share their own self-care strategies with each other. Once complete, compile the list and distribute to staff and parents.

D. Have parents create a list of stressors and identify ways to reduce stress and stay calm in each of these scenarios.

E. Help parents recognize that they engage in self-talk (positive/negative) and how self-talk influences our emotions and behavior. Give examples of your own self talk or negative talk.

F. In a group setting use a ball to talk about stressors, have stressors on the ball and bounce it from person- to- person to answer how they might be able to bounce back from that situation. Facilitator would start and model.

G. Ask families to give ideas on activities they would find most helpful to do around resilience and how the program/community could help facilitate those activities.

H. Provide concrete tools for reducing stress such as goal setting worksheets, budget forms, journals, daily planners, and other organization tools.

I. Host a Parent Café on the topic of “Taking Care of Yourself” where parents can share challenges and successes related to juggling self-care and parenting.

J. Help parents identify their unique character strengths and how they can use them when managing stress.

K. Validate strengths and good decisions to build the parents confidence and help motivate them to learn new skills when needed.

L. Provide opportunities for parents to explore new interests and hobbies in ways that support the program or community.

M. Work with and view parents as partners and solicit their knowledge/expertise in how they have dealt with daily stressors in their lives to help other parents in similar situations.

N. Help parents recognize that parenting is stressful and brainstorm ways they can be proactive by planning for future stressful events.

O. Train staff to observe and assess children for early signs of child or family distress and respond to children and their families with encouragement and support.

Strategies and Ideas Adapted from:
Parental Resilience

What it looks like for families:
- Families maintain multiple friendships and supportive relationships with others.
- Families feel respected and appreciated in their role as parent or primary caregiver.
- Families accept help from others and give help to others.
- Families establish connections and a sense of belonging with other families.

Everyday actions for service providers:
- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued.
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills.
- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections.
- Facilitate mutual support.
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities.
- Arrange family field trips and activities.

Social Connections

What do we mean by Social Connections?

Families have friends they can count on.

When parents have a sense of connectedness they have people who care about them as individuals and as parents. They feel secure and confident that they have others with whom they can share the joy, pain and uncertainties that come with the parenting role.

They seek timely assistance from people they have learned to count on and they feel empowered to “give back” through satisfying, mutually beneficial relationships. Several research studies have demonstrated that high levels of emotional, informational, instrumental or spiritual support is associated with positive parental mood; positive perceptions of and responsiveness to one’s children; parental satisfaction, well-being and sense of competence; and lower levels of anger, anxiety and depression. Constructive and supportive social connections help buffer parents from stressors and support nurturing parenting behaviors that promote secure attachments in young children.

Source: CSSP Protective Factor Action Sheets
www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies

Questions to Ask Families about Social Connections:
- Do you have friends or family members you are close to?
- Who do you specifically call on to help you every once in a while?
- Who can you count on to advise you on issues related to the kids, finances or transportation?
- Is it hard or easy for you to make friends? What makes it difficult for you?
- What has helped you feel close to some people?
- Can you turn to your social network for help in times of need (for instance, when you need help with transportation, childcare or other resources)?
- 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?
- What kind of support would you need to get out for an evening?
- Would it help you to know more parents dealing with _____?
### Social Connections in Action Continued

**Activities to do with parents:**

Identifying and building on a parents’ current or potential social connections, skills, abilities, and interests can be a great way to **partner with them as they expand their social networks.**

You can:

A. 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.

B. Set aside a welcome place for parents to mingle and talk. Provide coffee, snacks and other “perks”. Offer a motivational quote and/or prompt of the week to guide conversation.

C. Create opportunities for parents to plan social events that reflect their interests or culture. Offer resources to eliminate barriers such as childcare and transportation.

D. Host a monthly potluck dinner with parents and children and be intentional on helping parents connect to one another. For example, group parents based on the elementary school they plan to attend or have parents complete a short survey beforehand to learn about favorite TV shows, favorite sports teams, etc.

E. Provide classes and workshops that are of interest to families such as healthy cooking on the go, reducing challenging behaviors or financial planning with young children.

F. Host a Parent Café with a theme related to juggling friendships while raising small children. Utilize Parent Café questions related to building positive support networks.

G. Work with and view parents as partners and solicit their knowledge/expertise in how they have built a strong social network to help other parents in similar situations. Lessons learned could be shared anonymously or develop a confidential process for partnering parents with like challenges.

H. Create an ambassador program within your program/community where parent leaders reach out to new families. Ambassadors could have various roles such as leading certain orientation steps, delivering welcome baskets, and/or inviting the new family out for coffee or dinner during their first few weeks. Be creative and seek parents input on ideas for how they would have appreciated being welcomed into the program/community.

I. Learn parents’ names and greet them by name every time you see them. This shows that the parent as a person is valued.

J. Conduct initial visits with families at their convenience, choice of location, and with family members of their choosing.

K. When bringing families together always use name tags and when possible add fun facts to help parents break the ice. Ask parent leaders to host ice breaker activities or suggest creative ways to help parents interact.

L. Provide training to staff on how to identify and respond to families living in social isolation.

M. Offer opportunity for parents to share resources and supports with each other. For example designate a bulletin as a "Give & Get board" where parents can ask questions or ask for a need (example child’s coat) and other parents can respond.

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Strategies and Ideas Adapted from:
Parental Resilience

What it looks like for families:

- Families identify realistic expectations for their child’s development.
- Families possess a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Families practice positive discipline techniques to effectively manage their child’s behavior.
- Families recognize and respond appropriately to their child’s specific developmental needs.

Everyday actions for service providers:

- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development.
- Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies.
- Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective.
- Share observations with parents about the child’s strengths and the parent’s strengths.
- Make parent information available in families’ home language.

Knowledge of Child Development

What do we mean by Knowledge of Child Development?

Families learn how their children grow and develop.

No parent knows everything about children or is a “perfect parent.” An understanding of parenting strategies and child development helps parents understand what to expect and how to provide what children need during each developmental phase.

All parents can benefit from increasing their knowledge and understanding of child development. Developing brains need proper nutrition, regularly scheduled periods of sleep, physical activity and a variety of stimulating experiences. What parents do and how they treat children is often a reflection of the way they were parented. Acquiring new knowledge about parenting and child development enables parents to critically evaluate the impact of their current parenting practices, and to consider that there may be more effective ways of guiding and responding to their children.

Source: CSSP Protective Factor Action Sheets
www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies

Questions to Ask Families about Knowledge of Child Development:

- What is your child’s favorite thing to do? What do you like most about it?
- What do you like about being a parent?
- How and where did you learn about parenting?
- What has been most helpful to you as a parent?
- 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?
- Are there things that worry you about your child’s development or behavior?
- When do you think a child should be _____? (Potty training, making friends, etc.)
- What are some things you find challenging as a parent?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
Knowledge of Child Development in Action Continued

Activities to do with parents:
Every contact you make with the family is an opportunity to share child development information; model effective parenting skills in a caregiving role; validate their strengths and connect them to parenting resources in their community. You can:

A. Seek partners in the community who offer parenting programs or parent coaching. Ask if these programs can offer discounts and/or free counsel to some of your families.

B. 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.

C. Train staff in how to approach parents when the parent’s expectations of the child do not line up with the child’s developmental phase. Training should engage parents in a strength-based discussion about the developmental milestones and age-appropriate expectations.

D. Display materials the organization/program uses when working with their child so families can replicate the activity at home. For example, if a clinician or teacher uses old hats, aprons and purses for a dramatic play station create an example with a description for families. Explain why dramatic play is important for child development and how the same center can be created at home.

E. Ask the parent what their hopes and dreams are for their child. Discuss any worries the parent has about ensuring those hopes and dreams are met. Then discuss what the parent is doing today (or wants to do) to help achieve those hopes and dreams. Provide families a way to track these goals and where possible align program/organizational benchmarks to these family goals.

F. Encourage parent’s 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.

G. During parent events play games to learn what children can typically do at different ages. Family-friendly information about developmental milestones from 2 months to 5 years can be found on the CDC website at http://www.cdc.gov/ncbdd/actearly/milestones/index.html.

H. Contact places of worship, schools and community groups to identify local parenting groups or classes where parent’s can share and learn new parenting strategies.

I. Have parents identify a certain parenting topic they are interested in learning more about and host a Parent Café or parent training around this interest area.

J. Order Kentucky “Parent Guides” for your families and teachers. The guides use parent-friendly language to share tips and activities that families can use on a daily basis to encourage learning for birth through 5 years. and focus on the five developmental areas of the school readiness definition.

K. Develop relationships with United Way, Help Me Grow Kentucky, and other resources providing no cost ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 child development screeners.

Strategies and Ideas Adapted from:
**Concrete Supports in Times of Need**

**What it looks like for families:**
- Families have the resources to meet their basic needs.
- Families feel safe in their community.
- Families know how to have information and connections to services in their community.
- Families feel supported and valued when reaching out for help.

**Everyday actions for service providers:**
- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports
- Build relationships with families so they feel comfortable sharing challenges

**What do we mean by Concrete Support in Times of Need?**

*Families get their basic needs met.*

When parents are faced with very trying conditions such as losing a job, substance abuse, not being able to feed their family or trauma, they need access to concrete support to address their needs and help to minimize the stress.

Assisting parents to identify, find and receive concrete support in times of need helps to ensure the basic necessities are met. A strengths-based approach helps parents feel valued because they are acknowledged as knowledgeable and competent. They develop a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy because they have opportunities to build their skills, experience success and provide help to others. Thus, access to concrete support in times of need must be accompanied by a quality of service coordination and delivery that is designed to preserve parents’ dignity and to promote their and their family’s healthy development, resilience and ability to advocate for needed services and resources.

Source: CSSP Protective Factor Action Sheets www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies

**Questions to Ask Families about Concrete Supports in Times of Need:**
- What is your greatest need right now? How have you dealt with the problem in the past? Did you have a successful outcome?
- What local resources or groups have you worked with in the past? How easy/difficult is it to access those resources/groups?
- What has held you back from having access to services in the past?
- Who can you count on to help you with the kids, finances or transportation?
- How are you dealing with the stress resulting from these concrete needs? Do you need support and ideas for how to protect your children from the stress of this situation?
- Do you feel safe and supported in your living environment? What makes you feel unsafe/safe?
- What is an immediate need and what is an immediate want?
Activities to do with parents:

Demonstrate and find ways to help the family learn how to access community resources to help meet their family’s basic needs in order to reduce their overall stress. You can:

A. Assess the family’s past experiences with community resources and services that may have been positive or negative.

B. Learn about new providers before you refer or transition families to new services. Be sure to “talk-up” referrals so the transition is more personal. For example, “She was born and raised in this county and is very active in the foster care community. Other families have found her extremely easy to work with” rather than “This is who they have listed as the contact.”

C. Explore whether there is any stigma associated with some services.

D. Find opportunities to advocate for the family and help them navigate complex social systems which may be overwhelming to the family.

E. Encourage the parent 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.

F. Offer opportunity for parents to share resources and supports with each other. For example, designate a bulletin board as a “Give & Get board” where parents can ask questions or ask for a need (example child’s coat) and other parents can respond.

G. Create a confidential and easy process for requesting help or concrete supports. For example, have the payment drop-box double as the request for concrete support drop-box.

H. Upon enrollment, ask each parent to identify one concrete need that would lighten their load and list three 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.

I. Produce materials that reflect appropriate literacy levels. Avoid having the "lone" family voice—one family representative. Create a balance considering mother or father, race or ethnicity, primary language, and age of child represented.

J. Listen to families. Link to services based on the family’s wishes—the support they desire in the manner they desire (referral from the family advocate or provide the family with a website, phone number, or address).

K. Maintain and distribute current information related to organizations serving the community—Peer Support Specialists, CCSHCN Family-to-Family, Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children, KY-SPIN, ARC of KY, Foster Parent Mentor Program, etc.

L. Key personnel in each program participate in Community Early Childhood Councils or other local community groups to network and learn about current resources in their communities.

M. Train staff on how to practice strength-based, non-critical listening with families when they share struggles. Staff learn how to listen to families and let families take the lead in planning services.

N. Set goals with families to address wellness and advocate for concrete supports as part of service plan (ex. IFSP or goal sheet).

O. Schedule one community resource a month to set-up a booth in a high traffic area. Offer refreshments and an appealing child activity such as ring-toss with a teacher so parents feel free to talk with representative in a welcoming and non-stigmatizing manner.

Strategies and Ideas Adapted from:
Parental Resilience

What it looks like for families:

- 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.
- Families teach and encourage your child to solve problems in age-appropriate ways.
- Families provide regular routines for young children.

Everyday actions for service providers:

- Help families understand developmentally appropriate social/emotional skills & behaviors
- Educate parents on how to encourage children to express feelings through words, artwork and expressive play
- Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support
- Create an environment in which children feel safe to express their emotions

Social and Emotional Competence

What do we mean by Social and Emotional Competence?

Families teach children how to have healthy relationships.

Family and child interactions help children develop the ability to recognize, communicate, and regulate their emotions.

Early childhood is a period of both great opportunity and vulnerability. Early childhood experiences set the stage for later health, well-being and learning. In the past, most of the focus was on building young children’s academic skills in an effort to ensure they were prepared for school. However, in recent years a growing body of research has demonstrated the strong link between young children’s social-emotional competence and their cognitive development, language skills, mental health and school success. These dimensions of social-emotional competence do not evolve naturally. Numerous research studies show that a relationship with a consistent, caring and attuned adult who actively promotes the development of these dimensions is essential for healthy social-emotional outcomes in young children.

Source: CSSP Protective Factor Action Sheets www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies

Questions to Ask Families about Social and Emotional Competence:

- How would you describe the emotional relationship between you and your child?
- How does your child know that you are expressing love and affection?
- How would you describe the situations when it is hard to deal with your child’s emotions?
- Is home a safe environment for your child to express his/her emotions?
- How do you know when your child or teen is happy, sad or hurt?
- How do you talk to your child about feelings? How do you comfort your child?
- Do you have clear expectations and limits (e.g., “People in our family don’t hurt each other”)?
- How many people provide care for your child? How well do you know them and how often do these people change?
- How does your child’s ability to manage emotions and get along with peers compare to other children his or her age?
A. Develop relationships with United Way, Help Me Grow Kentucky, and other resources providing no cost ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 child development screeners.

B. Model appropriate ways to deal with stress and respond to stressful situations such as tantrums and back-talking. For example, if you are teaching the parents and children about respectful conversations model respect when speaking to the family and children.

C. Share ideas with families on social and emotional learning tools such as books, songs, and articles. National and Kentucky state resources for social and emotional development are listed on [http://www.kentuckycchc.org/posters-handouts](http://www.kentuckycchc.org/posters-handouts).

D. Help parents recognize that effects of trauma can have a lifelong impact on their child’s social-emotional and behavioral development. Explain how some behaviors may seem extreme because the child feels overwhelmed and lacks the capacity to cope with the situation.

E. 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.

F. Help parents set clear expectations and limits using behavior modification tools such as behavior charts that also includes tokens for rewarding good behavior.

G. Teach families how to create an environment in which children can express their emotions by setting up a regular time for family meetings. Show how providers within your agency use visuals, social stories and other tools to help children understand and express emotion safely.

H. Have the parent sketch (or write out) an interaction with their child. Begin with an experience that typically makes the child happy, sad, frustrated or angry. Then have the parent illustrate or describe what the child does when he or she feels those emotions, how the parent responds and how the child responds. Identify and talk through positive or negative patterns in the interaction.

I. Use character strengths, feelings/emotions, and social skills vocabulary as central themes for lesson plans, monthly newsletter and parent events. For example, instead of summer theme of “Camping”, try “Curious and Caring Campers” and build in ways to educate families and kids about what it means to be curious and caring.

J. Provide families with age appropriate social and emotional expectations and Kindergarten Readiness Social and Emotional Standards. Help parents set 1-2 developmentally appropriate social and emotional goal(s) for their child. Support parents with tools and resources related to the goal(s).

K. Offer 1 - 2 hour parent classes that focus on the difficulties of challenging behaviors and the importance of nurturing social and emotional development through positive, and nurturing discipline techniques.

L. Host a Parent Café related to the theme of challenging behaviors.

M. Ask 2 - 3 parents and their children to be greeters once a month or during group events. Have them hold the door open and welcome families as they enter. Add cute hats, treats, etc. to make the experience more fun.

Strategies and Ideas Adapted from:
What do we mean by Nurturing and Attachment?

Families ensure children feel loved and safe.

Juggling the demands of work, home and other responsibilities leaves many parents feeling like they do not have nearly enough time for their children. But even small acts of kindness, protection, and caring – a hug, a smile, or loving words make a huge difference to children.

Infant brains develop best when a few stable caregivers work to understand and meet the infant’s need for love, affection, and stimulation. A lack of contact or interaction with a caregiver can change the infant’s body chemistry, resulting in a reduction in the growth hormones essential for brain and heart development. Furthermore, children who lack early emotional attachments will have a difficult time relating to peers. Parents nurture their older children by making time to listen to them, being involved and interested in the child’s school and other activities, staying aware of the child or teen’s interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for the child when necessary.


Nurturing and Attachment Activities

What it looks like for families:

- Families respond to their child with warmth and consistently build a strong and secure attachment.
- Families help their child to trust that their environments are safe.
- Families recognize and embrace their child’s strengths and individuality.
- Families teach their child how to form and keep healthy relationships with others.

Everyday actions for service providers:

- Create family education and skill building opportunities that promote attachment
- Model nurturing and consistent care to children and families
- Support children and families by understanding the impact of loss or trauma and how to respond appropriately

Questions to Ask Families about Nurturing and Attachment:

- How do you engage your child or teen during everyday activities?
- How do you let children know you love them? What do you when your child does something great?
- How does your child do when he/she is__________ (insert emotion)?
- What do you do when your child cries for long periods of time, has a tantrum or wets the bed?
- How do you deal with your child’s emotional difficulties?
- What do you do when the child’s emotions become too difficult to deal with?
- How would you describe your emotional relationship with your child?
- When you spend time with your child, what do you like to do together?
- What 5 adjectives would you use to describe your child?
- What unique personality traits do you and your child have in common?
Activities to do with parents:

Helping parents realize the importance of forming **secure bonds early in their relationship with their children** and their role in nurturing the family environment. You can:

A. Have the parent make a list of everyday acts that lets the child know they are loved.

B. Demonstrate positive reinforcement using specific behavioral descriptions rather than just saying “good job.”

C. Identify activities the parents and child can do together to build and strengthen emotional bond/attachment.

D. Provide resources for free family events, family meal programs through extension, etc.

E. Create mini-activities during drop-off and pick-up that give parents the time and space for one-on-one bonding with their child. For example, once a month create a wall mural prompt where parents and kids can interact such as "Our Family’s Favorite Dinner is..." or "A favorite bedtime story in our house is..."

F. Encourage family time by offering parents materials for simple crafts and creating a board game library. Loan games for parents to play with children. Remind them that even young children can play board games on an adult’s team.

G. 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 dad to walk to the park, watch a movie, or play toys.

H. Help parents create a “no phone and no TV” policy for 1 - 2 hours each night. During this block of time encourage parents to talk with their children, cook dinner together, or help do nightly chores as a family.

I. Ask parents to create family murals with family pictures, and other magazine pictures that tell the story of their family. Allow children to share these murals and display in the classroom/program where the children can see them often.

J. Add questions related to nurturing and attachment to new parent orientation questionnaires. Include goals related to spending time together as part of the program workplan/goals.

K. Train staff on how to celebrate individual family experiences, cultures, linguistic backgrounds and views of child-rearing. Be sure goals and program services embrace these unique family traits.

L. Have parents complete a free strengths-survey at viacharacter.org to learn more about their own personal character strengths and begin identifying strengths of their children.

M. Model nurturing behavior by acknowledging frustrations with child-rearing and recognizing the parents’ efforts.

N. Teach new parents basic infant massage. Encourage parents to make eye contact and name each body part as they rub lotion on their baby.

O. Help the parent identify their child’s “nurturing network” which includes all important adults in a child’s life, including fathers, grandparents, and extended family. Refer to this nurturing network when applicable and in ways that can support building other protective factors.

Strategies and Ideas Adapted from: