

Strengthening Families

By Strengthening Measurement



Washington is nationally recognized as a leader in supporting children and families. Strong early learning, health, and other systems support families in nurturing optimal development and school readiness in their young children. Many Washington State communities and providers use the **Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework** to promote safe, stable nurturing relationships and environments for children. Protective factors enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

Understanding how our state advances safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for children and families is critical. Protective factors offer a way to assess our baseline and measure the impact of investments. Such data



will help understand and respond to the strengths and needs of families and communities. The data are critical to assessing the impacts of system building approaches.

Washington State needs better data to measure how systems are impacting protective factors across our state and communities.

“Parents are always doing this, but knowing about protective factors makes you more intentional, focused, and know why you do it, why you’re working on it, and what will happen as a result. You do it more consciously, and it feels more important.” — Washington Parent of Two

What are the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors?



Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to concrete support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.



Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support.



Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development.



Parental Resilience

Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.



Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Definitions provided by:

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY'S
strengthening families
A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Graphics provided by:



Tools for Tracking and Measuring the Protective Factors

Existing Tools and Datasets

No one data set supplies robust data on the presence of protective factors across Washington. Here are a few that tell parts of the story.

National Survey of Child Health

This survey provides rich data on multiple, intersecting aspects of children's lives – including physical and mental health, access to quality health care, and the child's family, neighborhood, school, and social context. Although not originally designed with the protective factors in mind, the survey data allow for grouping existing data elements using Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Health Survey

King County's BSK developed and administered a survey that supports evaluation of protective factors for families with young children. It is

comprised of questions based on existing best practice surveys throughout the nation. This population-level survey aims to close the knowledge gap on child health, child well-being, and family protective factors.

Protective Factor Survey

This 20-item evidence-based survey assesses programs that work to strengthen families by increasing their protective factors. It was developed by FRIENDS Network and the University of Kansas Institute for Educational research and Public Service.

Help Me Grow (HMG) Database

This database captures indicators for HMG state-level "affiliates". Affiliates collect and report data to HMG National about how families are engaged, served, and linked with concrete supports in times of need.

Comparing the Tools

| TOOL | STRENGTHS | CHALLENGES |
|--|--|--|
| National Survey of Child Health | Statewide; National scale; population-based | Small sample size limits ability to use for action |
| BSK Health Survey | Population-based; ability to use for action | King County data; not all counties have funding |
| Protective Factor Survey | Tool for providers to use with parents | No statewide infrastructure for capturing data; not population-based |
| Help Me Grow Database | Captures data statewide for families using HMG | Not measuring all protective factors yet; not population-based |

Additional Resources

HMG Washington video:
withinreachwa.org/help-me-grow-video

National Survey of Children's Health
childhealthdata.org

King County BSK Health Survey
kingcounty.gov/bskindicators

Protective Factors Survey
<https://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors-survey>

Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework
strengtheningfamilies.net

For more information contact:
essentials4childhood@doh.wa.gov



For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 711).



All children in Washington State thrive in safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments.