

Supporting Parents in Out of the Home Settings

Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families is a proven, cost-effective strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. The strategy involves early care and education centers working to build protective factors around children by supporting family strengths and resiliency. Family support is offered to all families, not just those identified as “at risk.” In 2005, Alaska was one of seven states to be selected by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to pilot this approach.

Some early care and education program strategies for building protective factors:

- Facilitate parental friendships and mutual support
- Strengthen parenting
- Respond to family crises
- Link families to services and opportunities
- Facilitate children’s social-emotional development
- Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect
- Build a respectful staff culture
- Support parents as leaders
- Engage men
- Form relationships with child welfare personnel

Program Costs:

- For approximately \$375 per person, early care and education professionals can be trained in family-support principles.
- For small mini-grants of \$5,000-\$10,000 per program, significant family support strategies can be implemented.
- For approximately \$2,500 per program, mental health consultation can be provided to support staff and families dealing with children with social emotional issues.