

April is ...

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Every family has strengths and every family faces challenges. 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 prevent child abuse and neglect**. 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 Parents/Caregivers Can Do
<p>Nurturing and Attachment</p> <p>Our family shows how much we love each other.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a few minutes 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>  <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore parenting questions with your family doctor, child's teacher, family, or friends. • Subscribe to a magazine, website, or online newsletter about child development. • 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> <p>I have courage during stress and the ability to bounce back from challenges.</p> 	<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. • Surround yourself with people who support you and make you feel good about yourself.
<p>Concrete Support for Parents</p>  <p>Our family can meet our day-to-day needs, including housing, food, health care, education, and counseling. I know where to find help if I need it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list of people or places to call for support. • Ask the principal of your child's school/religious ed leader to host a Community Resource Night, so you (and other parents) can see what help your community offers.
<p>Social and Emotional Competence of Children</p>  <p>My children know they are loved, feel they belong, and are able to get along with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular routines, especially for young children. Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of your routines around mealtimes, naps, and bedtime. • Talk with your children about how important feelings are. • Teach and encourage children to solve problems in age-appropriate ways.

This tip sheet was created with information from experts in national organizations that work to prevent child maltreatment and promote well-being found at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth> where you can get more parenting tips, or call 800.394.3366.



For more information or assistance, call the Erie diocesan *Office for the Protection of Children and Youth* at 814-824-1195 or email Mrs. Karen Streett at kstreett@eriercd.org