

## Activity Ideas for Strengthening Families

These activities align with the 5 protective factors that Strengthening Families™ has identified that have been shown to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. These activities are great to provide year-round, not just during April!

**Build Parental Resilience.** Help parents learn healthy coping skills and strategies to manage stress and function well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma--like a global pandemic and so many other challenges.

Programming ideas:

- Offer classes on managing stress, in person and/or virtually.
- Provide yoga for relaxation and meditation classes, in person and/or virtually.
- Host journaling programs, with a creative DIY journal craft activity, in person and/or virtually.

**Build Social Connections.** Positive relationships can provide emotional, informational, and spiritual support that can help keep families strong.

Programming ideas:

- Offer programs that help families build communities and connect with each other
  - In person, this could include story time at the CAC or another location in the community.
  - Remotely, this could include virtual informal parent meetups and organizing community "bear hunts" in which community members place stuffed animals in their windows to form a neighborhood scavenger hunt.

**Build Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development.** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development is critical to helping children reach their full potential.

Programming ideas:

- Create a display of library resources that includes books or other publications on child development and parenting topics.

**Build Concrete Support in Times of Need.** When families are connected and have access to concrete supports in their community that help minimize stress caused by challenges, the foundation for families and communities to thrive is strengthened.

Programming ideas:

- Have referral information at the ready (in printed flyers or bookmarks) for city and county agencies, nonprofits, and other organizations that provide relevant family supports.
- Partner with local organizations to provide an on-site family support center or resource center to meet basic human needs and to help families navigate community resources.

**Build Social and Emotional Competence of Children.** Family and child interactions help children build the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships well into adulthood.

Programming ideas:

- Have displays of picture books that explore different emotions.
- Circulate kits on the theme of emotions or positive relationships to include a few relevant titles, a stuffed animal friend, and music CD or manipulative.
- Create a Story Walk featuring a picture book that explores different emotions.