



## Strengthening Families Protective Factors

Child abuse is a complex, multi-layered issue without one singular solution. Many types of abuse exist, with a wide range of variables contributing to them. It is fair to say that preventing abuse can be quite the challenge. But we have also made progress over time.

Experts and professionals have a better understanding of what can be done to help to protect children and ultimately prevent child abuse. Prevention has become more attainable through a grounded knowledge of risk factors and protective factors, as

well as ongoing research related to adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and a family-strengthening approach. But it still requires all of us to do our parts if we truly want to prevent child abuse.

**Risk and protective factors** can indicate the likelihood that a child may experience abuse based on individual, family, and community factors. Understanding these factors is a critical piece to preventing child abuse. We can maximize the potential for prevention by increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors.

That brings us to the **Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework**. This research-informed, strengths-based approach focuses on the well-being of all families and is intended to help families build their own protective factors.

This framework identifies five protective factors:

- ▶ Parental resilience
- ▶ Social connections
- ▶ Knowledge of parenting and child development
- ▶ Concrete support in times of need
- ▶ Social and emotional competence of children

These protective factors aim to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. The protective factors emphasize engaging families, providing programs, and fostering communities so that caregivers are not siloed or supported in a vacuum.

The protective factors can be integrated into various systems and organizations, such as early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention, and other child- and family-serving systems to effectively help children and families take everyday actions to improve their protective factors.

We all know child abuse and neglect produce adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and ACEs can produce serious, long-term negative effects on children that can carry over into adulthood. However,

protective factors can play a positive role. In the process of preventing abuse, the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework can lead to **positive childhood experiences (PCEs)**, which are the kinds of activities and experiences that enhance a child's life, resulting in successful mental and physical health outcomes.

PCEs reduce the negative, long-term effects of ACEs and potentially can counter risk factors. Adverse childhood experiences greatly affect children, and when they go unaddressed, the cycle of abuse can continue with ACEs. But a strong knowledge of protective factors and PCEs can break the cycle, allowing families to interact in a healthy way.

It is imperative that we, as community members, are aware of protective factors and the positive impact they can have on individuals, families, and communities. We should all understand how we can promote protective factors and support families within our individual and group roles. After all, sometimes one person can be just the example and support a family needs.

To learn more about the Strengthening Families approach and protective factors framework, check out a report produced by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) by clicking [here](#).

## PFSA Staff Highlight



Program Services Manager, Justin Donofrio, recently received a certificate in nonprofit management from Temple University. Justin has spent his career working in the nonprofit sector, and he has always had a strong interest in deeply understanding the details related to the operations and development of organizations. This certificate equips Justin with an increased foundation of best practices, strategies, and solutions for improving organizational performance. Justin's primary goal in pursuing this certificate was to increase his skill set for effectively identifying areas for improvement to drive organizational strategy and impact successfully.

# UPCOMING PFSA TRAININGS

## Mandated Reporter Training

PFSA has several options for you and your staff to receive training on how to recognize and report suspected child abuse. This training is for those mandated by law to report suspected child abuse, as defined in the Child Protective Services Law. Curriculum is approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and meets all requirements for mandated reporters to receive training in recognizing and reporting child abuse (including ACT 126).

Certificates are provided to the participants, and upon request we will upload confirmation of your training to the Department of State or Education for CE fulfillments under ACT 31 and/or ACT 48.

New this year — this curriculum has also been approved for CLEs for attorneys!

### LIVE IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

**Cost:** Free

**How to Register:** Find and register for a virtual session here: <https://pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training>

### INDIVIDUAL ONLINE, ON-DEMAND

**Cost:** \$30

**Take Anytime:** <https://pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training>

### TRAIN-THE-TRAINER (TTT)

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program for employees on child abuse recognition and reporting. With the three-year contract, PFSA provides



two days of initial instruction for approved applicants, reports CEs directly to PA Departments of State and Education, and offers ongoing technical assistance.

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer entering into a 3-year contract with PFSA (payment can be broken down by year — \$400/year 1, \$300/year 2, and \$300/year 3)

**How to Register:** You must pre-register for this training. Email Haven Evans at [hevans@pa-fsa.org](mailto:hevans@pa-fsa.org) for the paperwork or to answer any questions.

**Date:** May 25 & 26, 2021 (Virtual)

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. both days (including a half-hour lunch break)

**Date:** July 28 & 29, 2021 (Virtual)

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. both days (including a half-hour lunch break)

**Date:** Sept 14 & 15, 2021 (Virtual)

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. both days (including a half-hour lunch break)

**Date:** Nov 9 & 10, 2021 (Virtual)

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. both days (including a half-hour lunch break)



## Front Porch Project®

The Front Porch Project is a community-based prevention initiative grounded in the belief that everyone can — and should — become more aware of how to help protect children and support families in their own communities.

This program provides community members with the knowledge, training, and encouragement they need to take an active role in preventing abuse and neglect before it occurs.

To learn more about this program and how it can be offered, please reach out to our Program Services Manager, Justin Donofrio: [jdonofrio@pa-fsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pa-fsa.org).

## Donate to PFSA

Support the cause, support PA kids! Consider making a gift to PFSA to make a difference in the lives of PA kids and families. Your gift will advance the mission of PFSA to provide education, support, and training to make Pennsylvania safe for children. All donations help PFSA continue the successful delivery of training, development of educational materials, and ongoing support for community-based agencies. Visit [www.pafsa.org](http://www.pafsa.org) to learn more about our services and to donate.