

# Strengthening Families through Protective Factors



## Children's Trust Fund

Protecting Michigan's Children

How can we build strong, healthy children and families? By building protective factors in our families and communities! Protective factors increase the health and well-being of children and support effective parenting, even under stress. The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) promotes the use of research-based protective factors as a strategy to support Michigan's children and families. What are these protective factors?

**Parental Resilience** is the ability to handle all kinds of challenges, both big and small. Resilience helps us solve problems, cope with difficult situations, and maintain a hopeful attitude. *In your own life:* How do you bounce back from a bad day or stressful situation? From where do you draw your strength? Do you take time to care for and nurture yourself?

**Social Connections** are networks of support that help parents care for themselves and their children. These connections include family members, friends, and neighbors who provide emotional support and concrete assistance. *In your own life:* Do you have someone to turn to for advice or support? Do you have friends or family members who can help you out? What personal interests would you like to develop (such as cooking or parenting classes) to strengthen your social connections?

**Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development** consists of having accurate information about parenting techniques and child development, including appropriate behavioral expectations. *In your own life:* Do you have realistic expectations of what your child can and can't do? What does your child do that makes you proud? Are you familiar with non-punitive discipline techniques, such as logical consequences for actions?

**Concrete Support in Times of Need** helps to minimize stress in difficult situations, such as a family emergency or unexpected event. Examples include financial assistance or access to community services. *In your own life:* Are there local services or community groups that could help you get through a tough time? Do you feel comfortable asking for help? What resources in your community could help you and your family stay strong and healthy?

**Nurturing and Attachment** is the ability to form a strong and secure parent-child bond. Research shows that babies who are nurtured and given affection have better brain development and grow into more healthy, stable children and adults. *In your own life:* How do you show affection in your family? What do you and your child like to do together? How do you comfort your child?

**Social and Emotional Competence** is a child's ability to communicate emotions, to interact positively with others, and to self-regulate his or her behavior. *In your own life:* Does your child communicate his or her emotions? How do you support your child's social and emotional development? How does your child cope when he or she feels angry or sad?

To learn more about Strengthening Families and the protective factors, as well as CTF-funded programs in your community, visit:

- [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)
- [www.childwelfare.gov/preventing](http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing)
- [www.michigan.gov/ctf](http://www.michigan.gov/ctf) and click on "Programs" or call 1-800-CHILDREN

