

strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

parental resilience

fact sheet for early care & education program staff

COMPONENTS OF PARENTAL RESILIENCE

- Parental psychology plays an important role in both the causes and prevention of child abuse and neglect. Parents who are emotionally resilient are able to maintain a positive attitude, creatively solve problems, and effectively rise to challenges in their lives — and they are less likely to abuse or neglect their children.
- Parents who have experienced violence or abuse and neglect themselves or who have other risk factors for becoming abusers need caring relationships to help them develop and maintain positive relationships with their children
- Parents who know and trust staff are more likely to reveal problems such as domestic violence or feelings of frustration and ask for assistance.

HOW EARLY CARE & EDUCATION PROGRAMS BUILD IT

- Programs set aside space for parents, have a welcoming atmosphere throughout, offer coffee, snacks, and reading materials.
- Staff are trained and expected to create trusting relationships with the families, and the program provides times and opportunities for these relationships to flourish.
- Programs hire dedicated family support workers whose job it is to build trusting relationships with parents and employ mental health consultants who are available to parents when they need them.
- Staff watch for early signs of child or family distress and respond with encouragement, support, and help solving problems



“be strong and flexible¹”



QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM STAFF

- How do you currently build parental resilience in your work with children and families?
- What new strategies might you try to build parental resilience?
- What organizational changes would support your capacity to build parental resilience in your work?

Strengthening Families Illinois, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. *Love is Not Enough to Keep Your Family Strong Campaign*. <http://www.KeepYourFamilyStrong.org>