



Business: Improving the Triple Bottomline

Why Strengthening Families is important to your business plan

Family issues impact businesses every day, from how focused and productive employees are to - in some cases - whether they are able to come to work on time or at all. They can also affect consumer activity and overall business reputation. By taking a vested interest in strengthening families, the private sector can do more than just support local efforts. Using some, or all, of five evidence-based protective factors (side bar) to promote healthy families and reduce abuse and neglect, businesses can:

- Increase their corporate responsibility
- Reduce potential human resource issues and costs
- Improve internal culture
- Increase worker productivity
- Attract and retain quality employees
- Maintain a positive community image

These are just some of the ways companies can make a real difference, most in no-cost or low-cost ways.

The unique role of the business sector

Business professionals have several important roles to play with employees, customers and the broader community. With employees, the protective factors can provide a framework for a holistic human resources approach that can help with developing and retaining a workforce. Over time, these investments can help build a strong, competent workforce and a successful business. Both of which contribute to the economic foundation of this country.

Many businesses touch thousands of families on a daily basis. They have access to those who come through the door and who they reach through advertising. They also play a role as community leaders. With visibility and often a large infrastructure for disseminating information, through training and skill building and by influencing customer behavior, companies are well poised to be a powerful vehicle to help provide information that supports and strengthens families (and at the same time, their business).

More importantly, when businesses integrate these messages into their environments, families see and understand that these issues and solutions are things that *everyone* is thinking about. When business leaders demonstrate that they care about whether families are getting the support they need it sends an important message.

About Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy to help people and organizations take action to support families and reduce child abuse and neglect. The approach focuses on five protective factors associated in research literature with lower rates of child abuse and neglect:

- **Parental Resilience:** The ability of parents to form nurturing relationships and respond to stressful situations in productive ways.
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development:** a parent's understanding of how children develop and the role families play in fostering development.
- **Social Connections:** The many positive relationships families need for emotional and concrete support.
- **Concrete Supports in Times of Need:** A family's ability to access help and resources when they need them.
- **Social Emotional Competence of Children:** Children's ability to express and control their emotions in a developmentally appropriate way

More than 30 states have active Strengthening Families initiatives that include funding, support and training to help build protective factors in families with young children. Your state may have tools, training and other resources you can access. To find out if your state is participating and find materials and tools from the national Strengthening Families work go to: www.strengtheningfamilies.net



Business: Improving the Triple Bottomline

Action Steps

- Create environments in your workplace or business to promote social connections and parent/child interaction.
 - Provide resources and opportunities for families to meet and engage (picnics, take child to work day).
 - Create safe environments for consumers (play area, kid-friendly equipment).
 - Help share information about the Strengthening Families approach.
 - Have informative material available in the workplace.
- Connect families to resources and support.
 - Build relationships with local programs that can support families (sponsor local youth programs or activities).
 - Have information about these programs available for families or encourage these providers to come into your business to talk about the services they provide (YMCA's, sports programs, nonprofits).
 - Bring services that can support and strengthen families into the work environment for either consumers or employees (for example, a local family resource center might be able to lead a parent child activity at your place of business).
- Serve as a champion for strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.
 - Find out if there are ways to partner with the Strengthening Families efforts in your state.
 - Serve as a spokesperson for why this is important with other businesses, policymakers and law enforcement.

United Way Worldwide has developed a toolkit full of practical tips, a process and a self-assessment for integrating Strengthening Families into the workplace
(http://strengtheningfamilies.unitedway.org/uwsf_work_overview.cfm)

Network For Action

This fact sheet was developed as part of the Network for Action. Network for Action is a group of federal partners, national organizations and state and local leaders concerned about child abuse and neglect prevention. Through this network, a number of strategic projects are being developed to enhance collaborative work that will move a broader vision of child abuse and neglect prevention.

Network for Action is sponsored by the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN), at the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Violence Prevention's Knowledge to Action Child Maltreatment Prevention Consortium Leadership Group (K2A) and other national organizations and networks that support prevention efforts.