Parent Engagement through Strengthening Families

a pilot approach with child care centers in Maine
Strengthening Families

- Began as a family support approach to child abuse prevention
- Research based (CSSP)
- Focused on strengths not risks
- For ALL families
- Start where families already go
- Build on existing programs and strategies, not inventing new ones
Turning strategies into practice

Connections to partners in the Strengthening Families National Network

Outcomes

• Provider change in practice
• Provider change in attitude
• Parent involvement
• Parent leadership
• Policy changes
Grounded in protective factors

- parental resilience
- social connections
- knowledge of parenting and child development
- concrete support in times of need
- social and emotional competence of children
Moving from Protective Factors to Strategies

• Facilitate friendships and mutual support
• Strengthen parenting
• Respond to family crises
• Link families to services and opportunities
• Facilitate children’s social and emotional development
• Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse and neglect
• Value and support parents
Measuring Success in Maine

• Strengthening Families self-assessment
  – Provides baseline measure for family support
  – Technical assistance
    • Website
    • Learning hubs
    • Resource Development Centers
    • Child Abuse Prevention Councils

• Incentives for Providers
  – Connection to the Quality Rating System measure of family engagement
  – NAEYC accreditation

• Incentives for Parents
  – Leadership training
  – Social supports
  – Informed consumers
Implications for State Administrators

Challenges

• Linking research to policy
  – Independent measures in complex systems
  – Tools still under development in SFNN
• Modifications for Family Child Care
• Considerations for legal, unlicensed care

Opportunities

• Embed protective factors language in state contracts and statute
• Use of non-traditional partners to promote consistent messages of quality to providers and parents
• Link to existing research projects (e.g., Educare, CCRCP)