

Social Connections

Our focus for this first full week of Prevention Month is on [Social Connections](#). One unexpected benefit of the social distancing response to the COVID-19 pandemic is that people are being so intentional and creative about [connecting with others](#). From musicians on the balconies of Italy, to teachers parading in their cars past their students' homes, to far flung family members using video conferencing to have virtual dinner together, people are finding ways to connect with friends, family and even strangers. As you are probably aware, Social Connections is one of the five family Protective Factors that reduces the likelihood of child maltreatment and promotes the optimal development of children. We have a golden opportunity to help families understand what they and others are doing *is* building social connections.

Some Prevention Month strategies to help families connect with others:

- Share the Prevention Board Facebook posts on Social Connections or Connecting with Others on your own sites.
- Post ideas of how you or others are initiating and maintaining social connections in the comments section.
- Host a virtual Parent Get-Together or modified Parent Café. The Children's Trust Fund Alliance has a resource to guide parent discussions called [Conversations for a Better Normal: How the Protective Factors Can Help Navigate the COVID-19 Crisis](#). [Be Strong Families has a COVID-19 page](#) with specialized resources, including recordings of lunchtime webinars they hosted for service providers on

each Protective Factor. They also have [Parent Café in a Box cards](#) with conversation starter questions.

- Be Strong Families has a [Living the Protective Factors Activity Book](#) available for purchase that you could distribute to families or lead families through an activity virtually one-to-one or in a small group.
- “[Ideas for Connecting with Others Online](#)” is a handout for your own reference, add to the ideas, share with families or post to your website. There are so many great ideas to collect for sharing and for future use.

Here are some resources that may be helpful for your families looking for resources:

- [211 Wisconsin](#)
- [Aunt Bertha](#) (also available as an app)
- [Well Badger Resource Center](#). 800-642-7837 this line is staffed 7 am - 6 pm, Monday - Friday.
- If your agency has a parenting helpline or warmline, please post the information. There are many parents looking for someone to talk to about parenting during the Safer at Home order or looking for local resources to help their family.

Thank you for your continued efforts to build safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for Wisconsin's children and families.