



# FOSTERING HOPE: UNDERSTANDING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

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# FRIENDS is:

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The FRIENDS National Center for CBCAP (FRIENDS) is funded by Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau to promote the purposes of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program.

FRIENDS provides training and technical assistance to lead agencies intended to build their capacity to meet requirements of Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

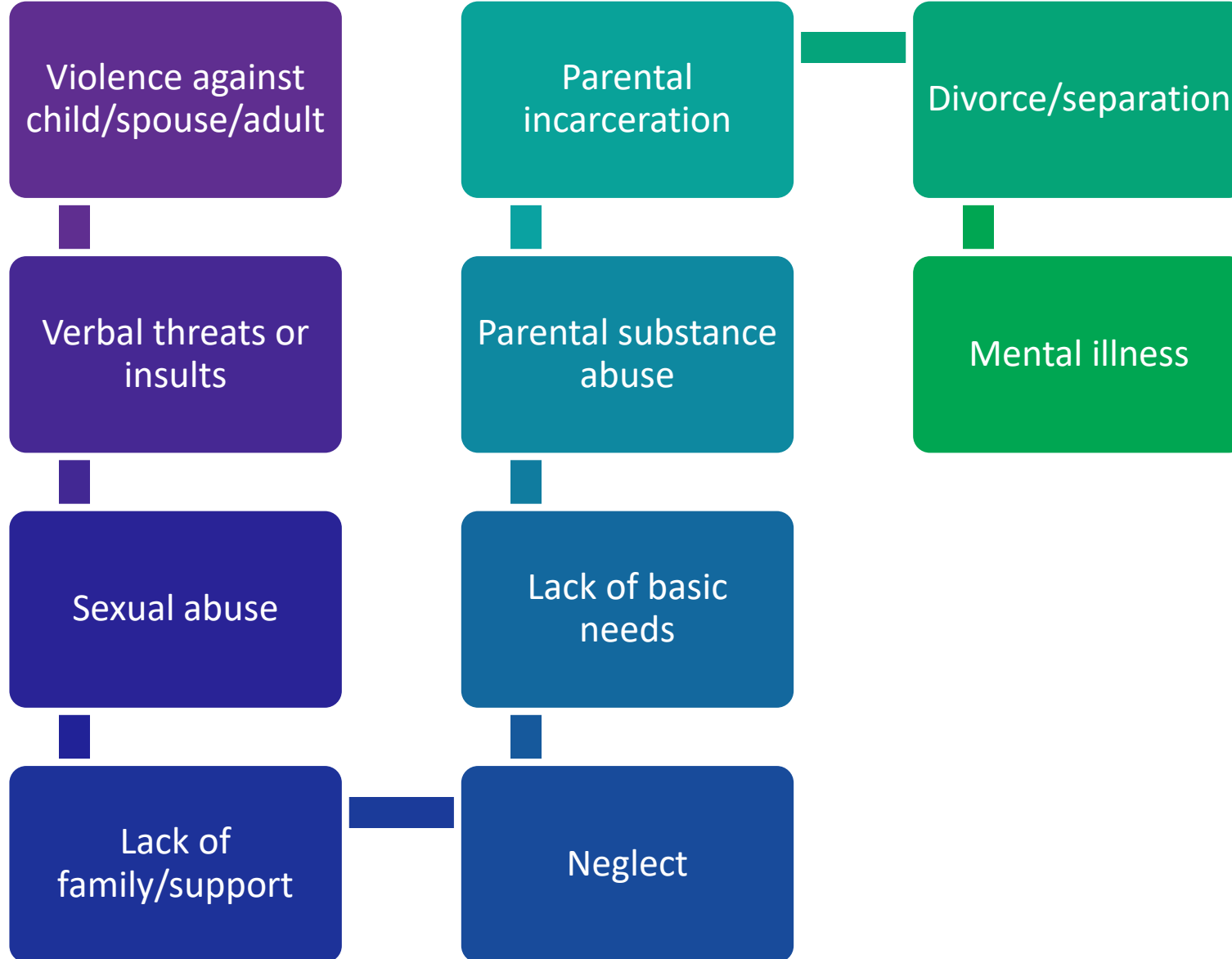




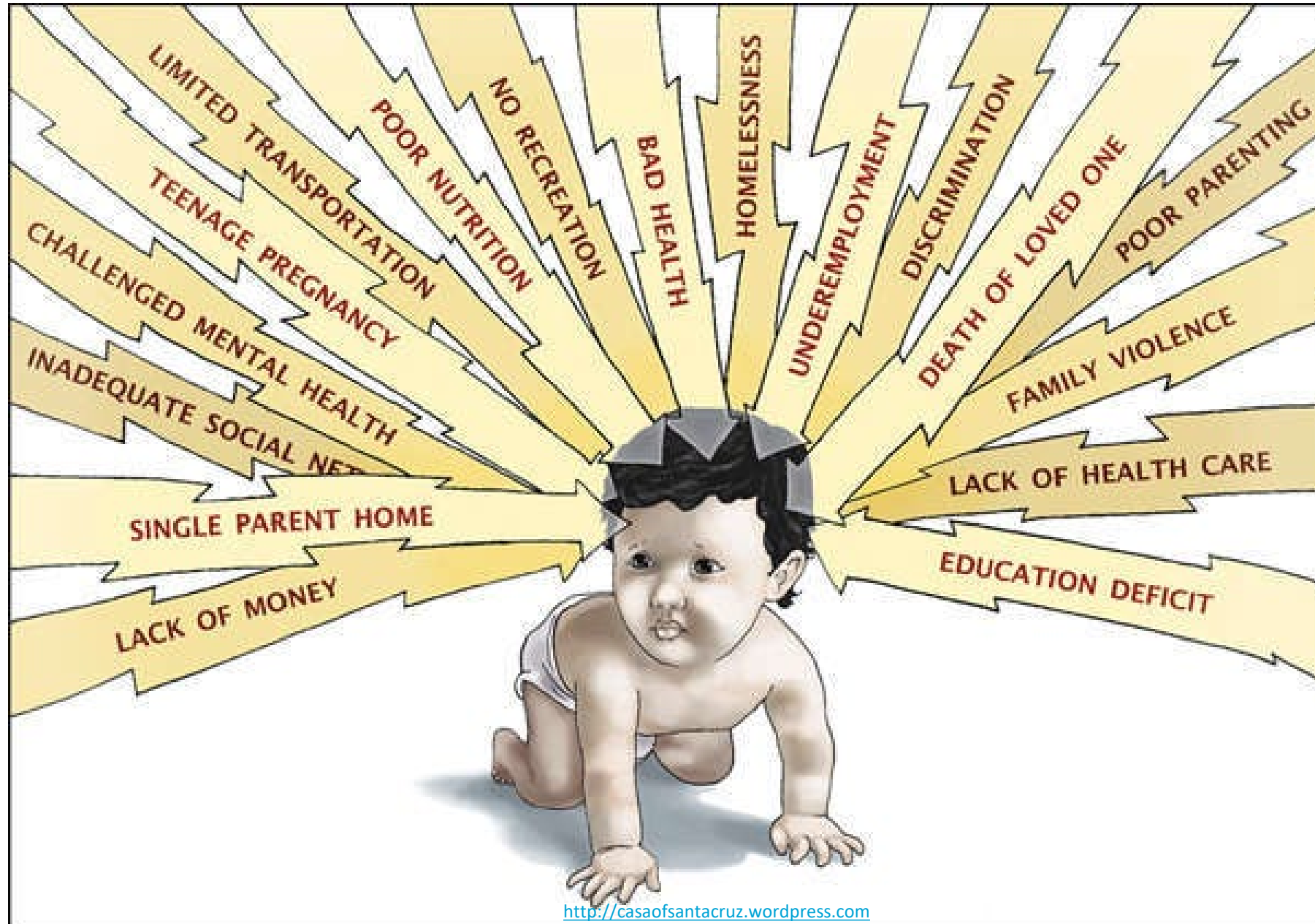
Harry Potter™



# Adverse Childhood Experiences



# Toxic Stress











# What is a Protective Factor (PF)?

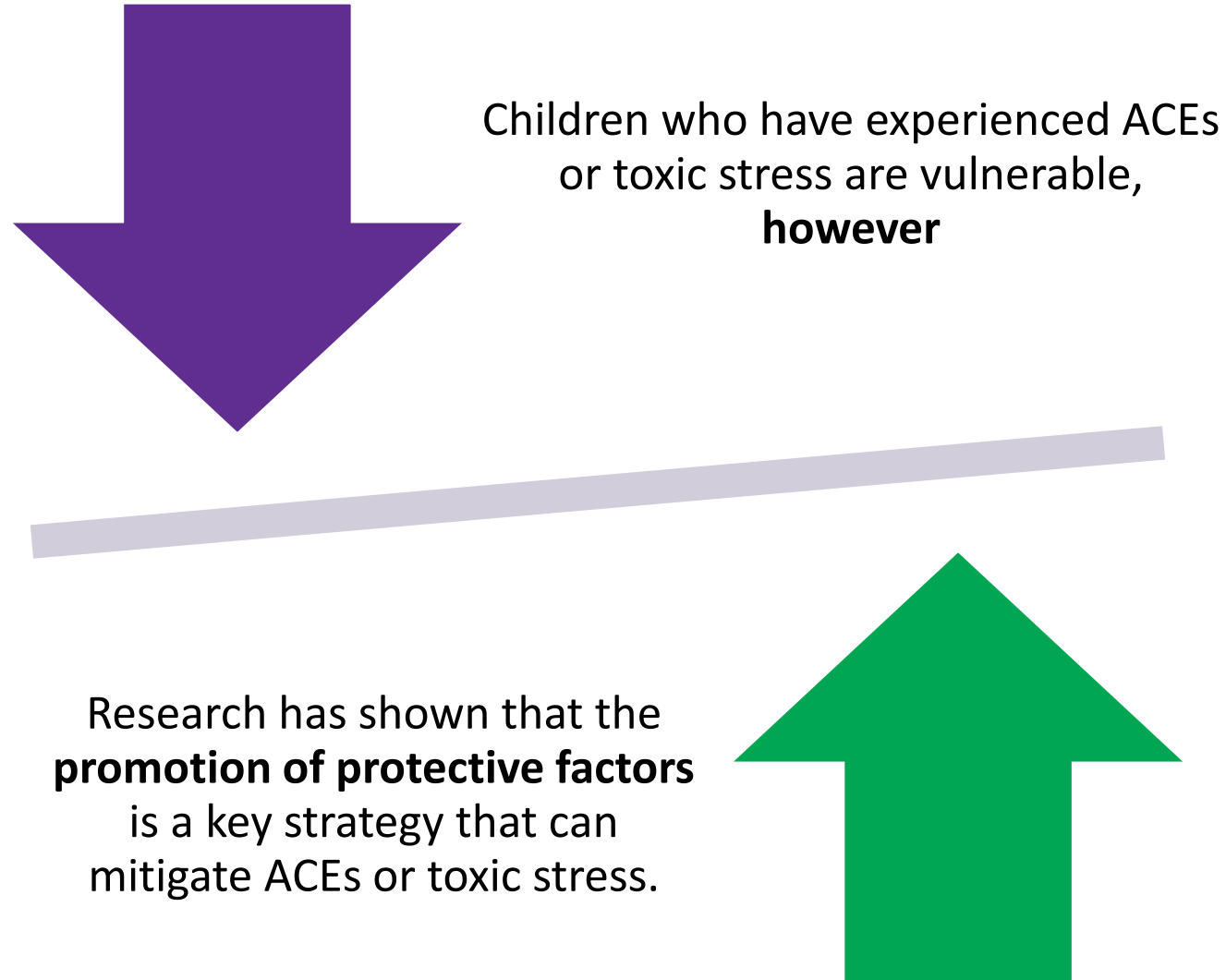
Characteristic or situation that reduces or buffers the effects of risk.

Characteristic or situation that promotes resilience in the face of risk.

It is an asset of some kind.



# Why Protective Factors?



# What does the research indicate?

Risk is not predictive—because of protective factors

Protective factors are tied to prevention of CAN, strong families and optimal child development

You can build these protective factors in many different settings





# Our Focus in Protective Factors

Conditions, when present in our families and communities, increase the health and well-being of children and families.

Nurturing and Attachment

Child & Youth Development/  
Knowledge of Parenting

Family Functioning/Resiliency

Social Connections/Supports

Concrete Support

# Nurturing and Attachment

Emotional tie  
paired with a  
pattern of positive  
interaction  
between parent  
and child that  
develops over time.



"I spend time every  
day with my child  
making sure they  
know they are  
loved"

# Fostering Nurturing and Attachment

## Program Strategies:

- Offer parents info that shares how important the bond is for their child
- Offer suggestions of activities that help parents slow down and connect
- Recognize warning signs and refer parents that seem to be struggling in this area

## Parent Strategies:

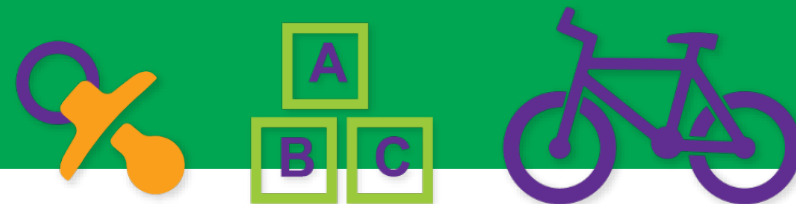
- Connect with other families for support
- Learn skills on being in the moment with your child
- Seek help for depression

# Child & Youth Development/ Knowledge of Parenting

Understand and use effective child management techniques

Age-appropriate expectations for children's abilities

"I am responsive to what my child needs to be healthy and happy"





# Applying Child & Youth Development/Knowledge of Parenting in Practice

## Program Strategies:

- Offer informal interactions with staff and coaching on challenges (e.g., inconsolable crying, biting)
- Offer parent ed that is responsive to the issues presented by parents
- Give parents the opportunity to network with each other

## Parent Strategies:

- Seek parent ed that matches your child's age
- Seek support from other parents to know you are not alone
- Find people you trust for information on what is normal for your child

# Family Functioning/Resiliency

Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis.

“I will continue to have courage during stressful times”



# Applying Family Functioning/Resiliency in Practice

## Program Strategies:

- Make mental health support an integral service that is not stigmatizing
- Provide resources to parents around stress such as coaching, problem-solving, self-care

## Parent Strategies:

- Take time to care for themselves
- Seek support from other parents in times of need
- Seek assistance in decision-making if needed

# Social Support



Perceived informal support that helps provide emotional needs and connections.

“I have friends I connect with and at least one person who supports me as a parent”





# Applying Social Support in Practice

## Program Strategies:

- Establish a welcoming space for parents to socialize
- Connect isolated families to peers
- Link parents with other organizations that offer parents the opportunity to connect

## Parent Strategies:

- Plan or attend social events that help parents and children connect
- Surround themselves with people who are positive supports
- Work to make trusted connections in the community

# Concrete Support

**“I know where to access supports to meet our basic needs”**

**Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.**



# Applying Concrete Support in Practice

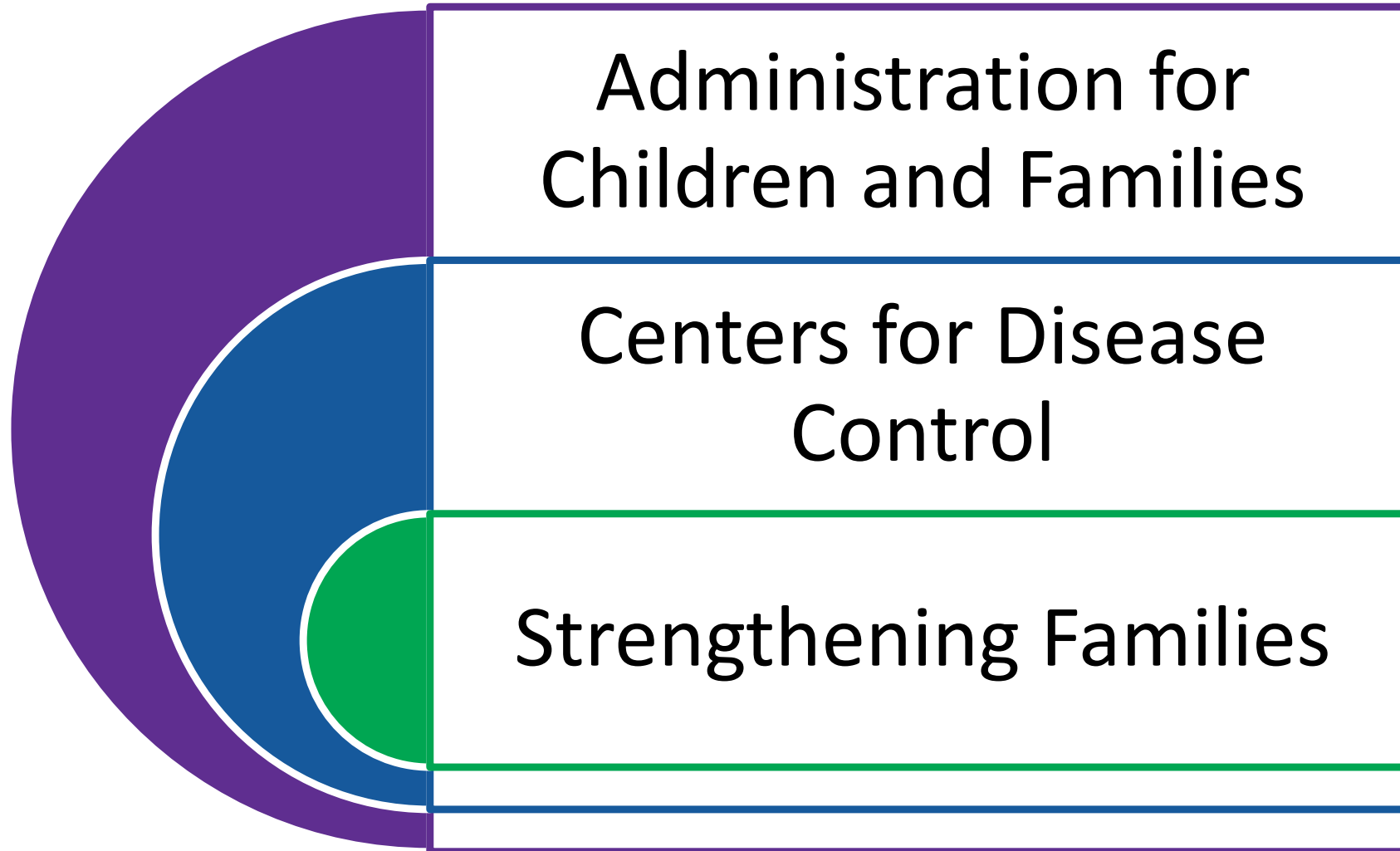
## Program Strategies:

- Connect Parents with economic resources such as job training and placement
- Provide referrals for immediate crisis needs of food, clothing, shelter
- Recognize the challenges for families in accessing services and provide support (e.g., language, substance use, mental health, DV)

## Parent Strategies:

- Share resources with friends in your circle and family
- Build your network, get to know the community
- Seek out and access the services available as needed

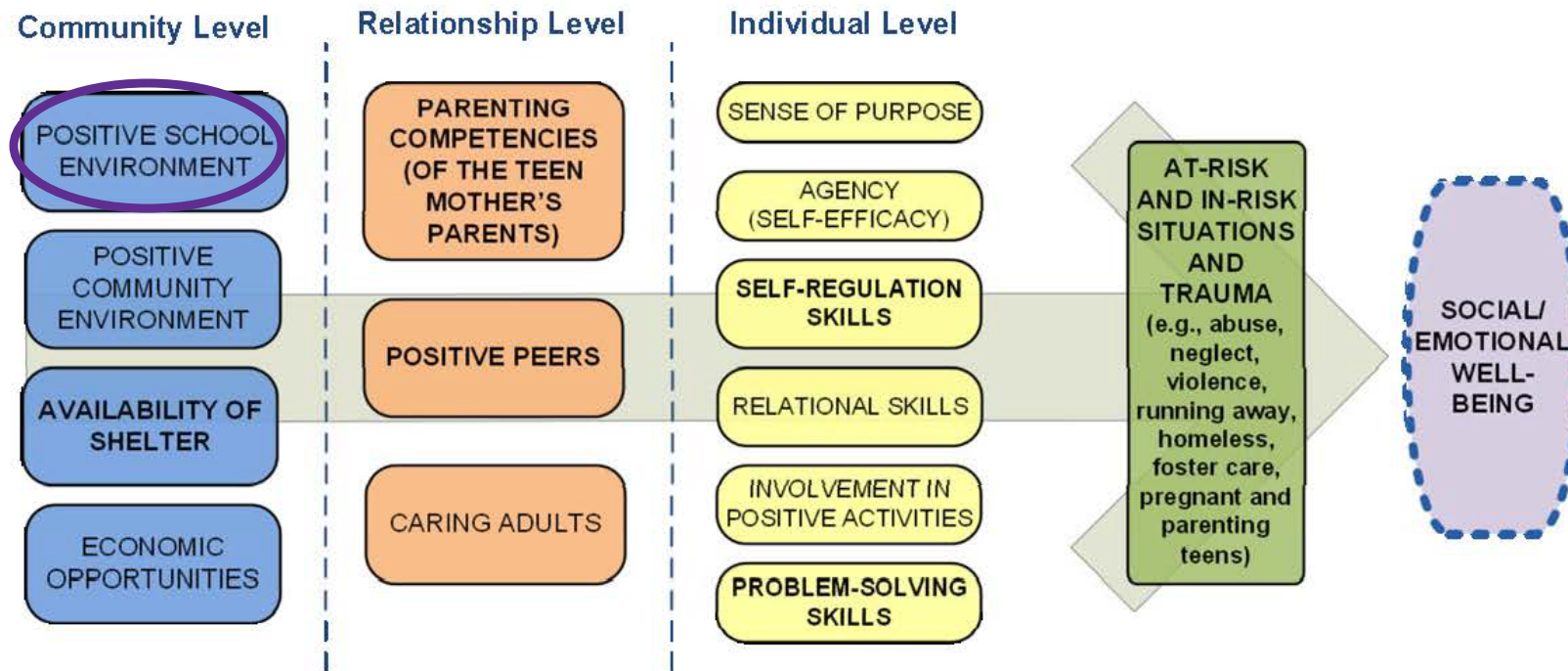
# Other National Frameworks





# ACYF Framework CAN Model

## Draft Protective Factor Model for Child Abuse and Neglect



### Key:

**Bolded factors have strong evidence**

Factors in regular font have moderate evidence

# CDC – Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships

## Three Critical Qualities of Relationships

### Safety

- The extent to which a child is free from fear and secure from physical or psychological harm within their environment

### Stability

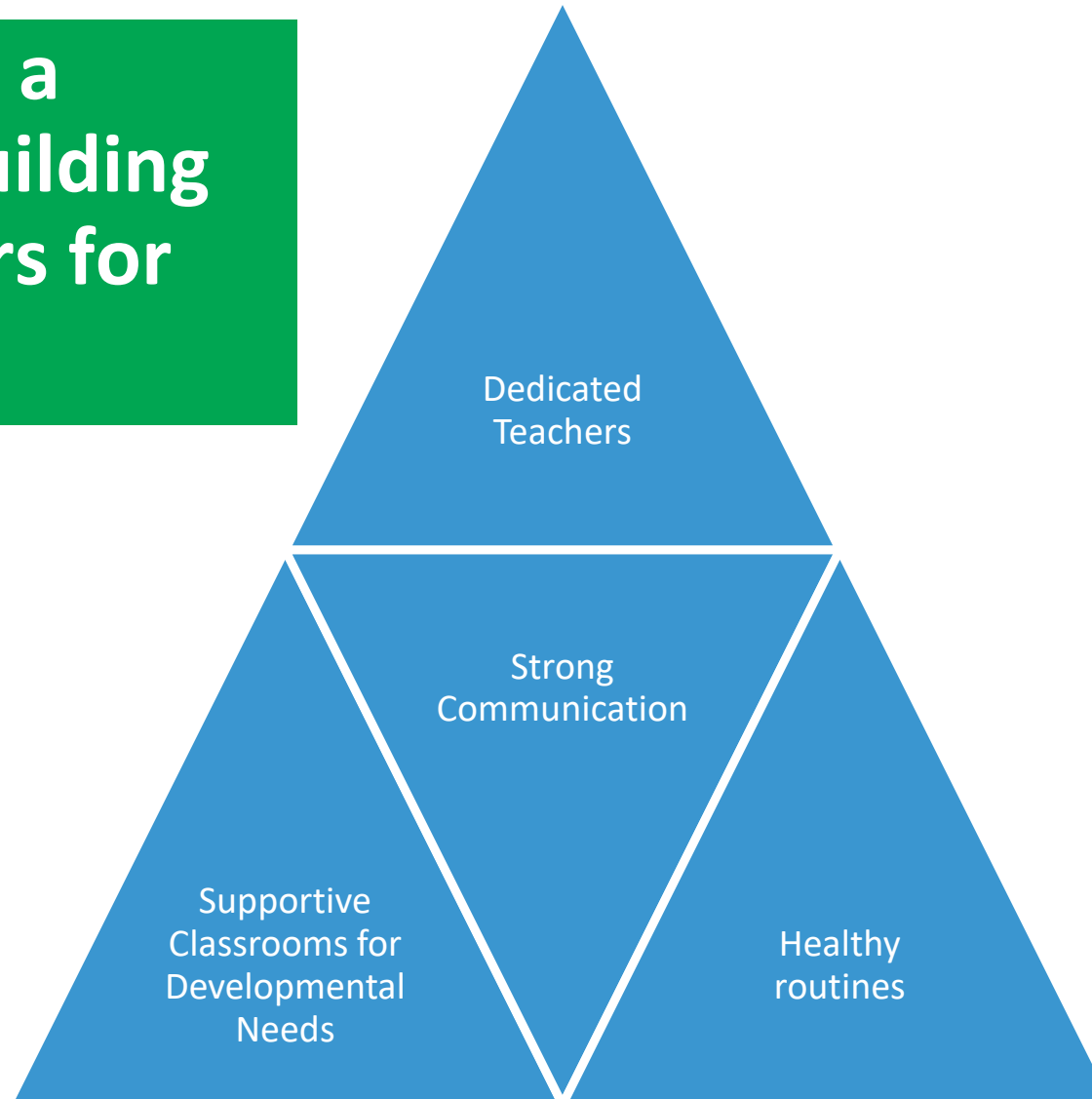
- The degree of predictability and consistency in a child's social, emotional, and physical environment

### Nurturing

- The extent to which children's physical, emotional, and developmental needs are sensitively and consistently met

# Center for the Study of Social Policy

**Head Start plays a critical role in building protective factors for families**



# Where to Learn More

## FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

- <https://friendsnrc.org/protective-factors/>

## Centers for Disease Control

- <https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/php/guidance/index.html>

## Center for the Study of Social Policy

- <https://cssp.org/ideas-in-action/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

## Child Welfare Information Gateway

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/prevention/?top=44>

## National Library of Medicine

- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3839856/>
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8514166/>



**What strategies could I use to infuse the protective factors into my work with children and families?**





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