

Strengthening Resource Parents

A program of resilience in south central Pennsylvania

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Origins of the Project

- Child Welfare Administrator identified at risk population
- Approached Hempfield Behavioral Health, Inc. with request to design an intervention
- Initial population
 - Children with history of instability in care
 - Families currently experiencing challenges with maintaining stability

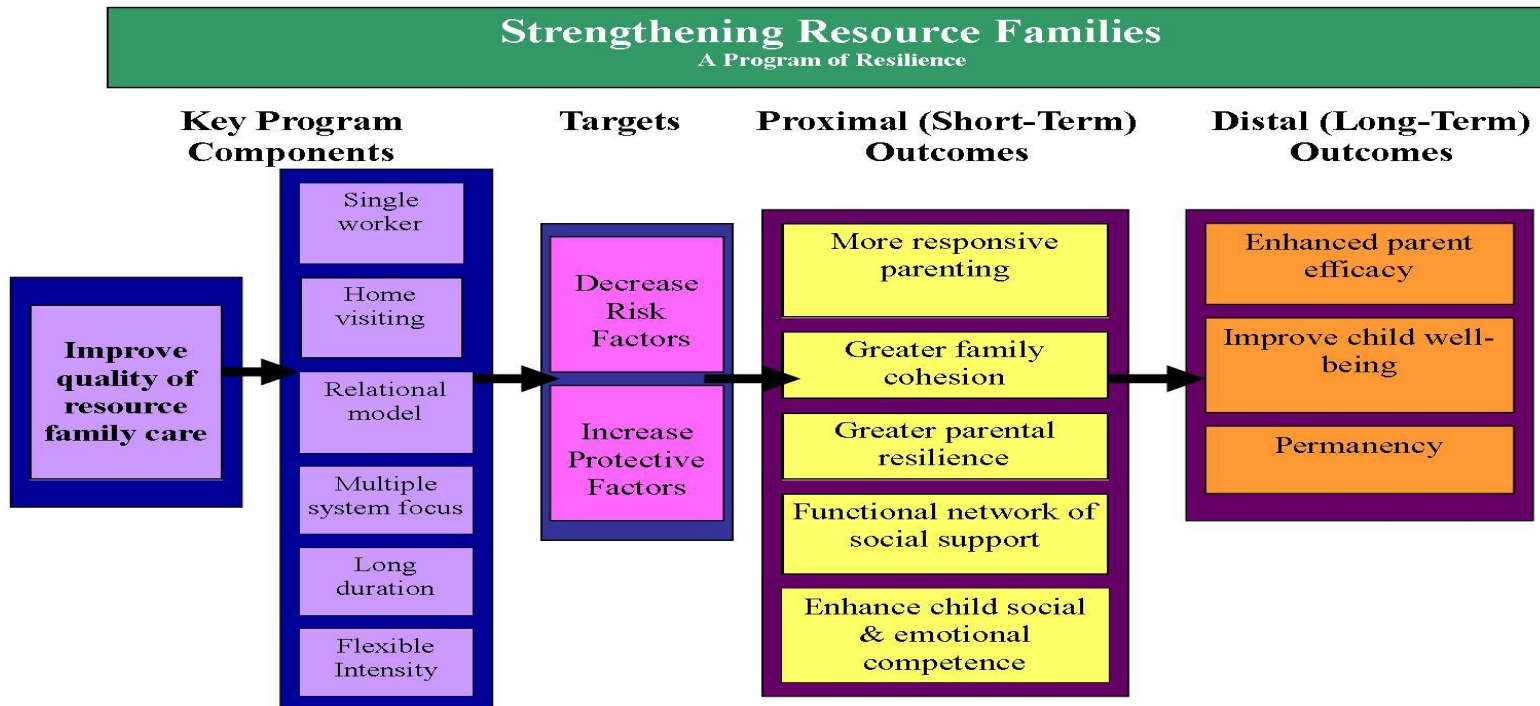
Strengthening Resource Parents

- Program Vision
 - Stabilize children in resource families by building adult capacity, thus improving child well-being
- Population Served
 - All resource families caring for a child in the care & custody of Adams County CYS
 - Post permanency families at risk for adoption disruptions in Adams County
- Method
 - Clinical coaching – in home and community
 - Frequency determined by clinician & family

Assumptions

- Children heal in the context of relationships & families
 - Resiliency research, ACES, Family Finding, Fostering Connections
- Children involved in child welfare have increased probabilities of demonstrating traumatic stress responses, emotional dysregulation, & externalizing/internalizing behavior problems
- Children's treatment needs are largely relational, not individual
- Resource parenting is inherently stressful and challenging - to acknowledge this does not reflect on the quality of the caregiver
- Training alone does not sufficiently prepare caregivers

Logic Model



Logic Model

Program Components

A clinical coach meets in the home or community with caregivers as frequently as needed to accomplish goals. Services are provided until permanency is achieved or risk of disruption has been reduced.

Interventions

Specific strategies and techniques are selected & tailored after careful assessment. Interventions are carefully monitored for effectiveness and modified as needed. Listed below are a sample of possible strategies.

Targeted Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors, which increase the likelihood outcomes are targeted for a decrease. Protective factors, which exert a positive influence and buffer against negative outcomes, are targeted for an increase.

Proximal Outcomes

Outcomes impacted by the program immediately following program completion.

Distal Outcomes

Outcomes impacted by the program from months to years following program completion.

Individual Interventions
GOAL: Enhance parental knowledge, skill, and resilience to improve parental responses.

Psychoeducation

Co-regulation

Parent self regulation

Family Interventions
GOAL: Improve family functioning and empower caregivers to address youth problems across ecologies.

Social Emotional Training

Co-Parenting Interventions

Sensory Interventions

Intervene in Community Ecology
GOAL: Improve integration of relationships for adults in the child's life; improve family connections with informal supports; improve cohesion in the formal support team

Build social supports & resources

Facilitating team discussions around best interests

Targeted Risk Factors

Child Characteristics

- Trauma
- Challenges to attachment
- Behavioral health challenges

Parent-Child Interactions

- Poor affective relations between youth and caregivers

Family Cohesion

- Poor sibling interactions
- Marital distress

Service Issues

- Lack of adoption competent behavioral health
- Overwhelming quantity of providers

Parental Adjustment

- Unrealistic expectations

Targeted Protective Factors

- Positive Family Relationships
- Supportive Family Environment
- Marital Harmony
- Natural Support Network
- Commitment to Permanency
- Problem Solving Skills

More Responsive Parenting

- Increase in use of relational parenting strategies
- Decrease in rigid parenting practices

Greater Family Cohesion

- Improved family functioning
- Decreased family discord
- Enhanced child attachment & parental reinforcement

Greater Parental Resilience

- Improved parental competence
- Improved self-regulation
- Decrease in stress

Functional Social Support

- Increase extended family cohesion, adaptability, and supportiveness

Improve emotional competence of children

- Expand emotional vocabulary
- Improve emotional regulation
- Improve distress tolerance and expression of emotions
- Decrease anger and oppositional behavior

Improve social competence of children

- Enhance feelings of safety in relationships
- Improve behavioral responses

Enhanced Parent Efficacy

- Improved parental competence
- Improved parental satisfaction
- Strengthened parent child relationship

Improved child well-being

- Improved resiliency
- Increased mood stability
- Positive social relationships

Move children to the highest level of permanency

- Increase integration among adults in child's life, preserving relationships for children
- Decrease adoption disruptions and dissolutions

Target

Enhance protective factors

- Positive family relationships
- Supportive family environment
- Marital harmony
- Natural support network
- Commitment to permanency
- Problem solving skills

Decrease risk factors

- Child characteristics
- Poor parent child interactions
- Family discord
- Unrealistic expectations
- System stressors

Theoretical Orientation

- Trauma informed
 - Neurological, psychological, social, and biological effects of trauma
- Attachment theory
- Cognitive social learning theory

Interventions

- Trauma Informed
 - Neurological
 - Psychological
 - Social
 - Biological
- Psychoeducation
- Relaxation
- Affect modulation
- Sensory interventions

Interventions

- Attachment Theory
 - Parental self regulation
 - Affect matching
 - Co-regulation
 - Descriptive commenting
 - Attunement

Interventions

- Cognitive Social Learning Theory
 - Emotion coaching
 - Social & persistence coaching
 - Time in to calm down
 - Cognitive processing for caregivers

Voice of Families

QUALITATIVE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Parental Resilience
 - “Preserving permanence”
 - “Without the service wouldn’t still be working towards permanency”
 - “Help with our concerns, provide honest feedback, learning to accept that current functioning may be the best it will ever be”
 - “Helped me work through confidence issues”
 - “Feeling understood”
 - “Not feeling so stressed out” “more relaxed and more grounded”
- Social Support & Family Cohesion
 - “Strengthen the family”
 - “Maintain relationships [with biological family members]”

QUALITATIVE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Parenting Knowledge & Practices
 - “Provide skills and advocacy to navigate the system”
 - “Assisting in setting rules and boundaries with all children in the home”
 - “Understanding behaviors and how to manage”
- Social/Emotional Competence of Children
 - “Helping children to process grief, loss and feelings”
 - “Helped child find their voice”
 - “Helped child develop coping skills”
 - “Develop strategies to reduce child stress”

QUANTITATIVE PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Assessment measures
 - Parenting Stress Index
 - Family Advocacy & Support Tool (FAST)
 - Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths
- Of families participating in Project Connect, 6% have experienced a disruption
 - Others have achieved reunification, adoption, or are committed to fostering until TPR occurs

Quantitative Program Outcomes

- Parental knowledge & competence scores improve over time
- Parental emotional response & social support scores deteriorate over time
- Children show improvement in moodiness, impulsivity, opposition, and anger

Questions/Discussion



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