

# strengthening families

Westwood • O H I O • Cheviot

## **Background**

4C for Children, Centerpoint Health and The Children's Home of Cincinnati, three organizations within The Consortium for Resilient Young Children, have been awarded \$493,000.00 from the Hamilton County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) to bring a new child abuse and neglect prevention approach to Cincinnati's 45211 ZIP code. Partnering with Santa Maria Community Services, the two-year initiative will strive to increase awareness of effective child rearing practices and ensure the wellness of children through the development of early childhood interventions and resources.

## **Strengthening Families**

The Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI), being delivered within the Westwood and Cheviot communities, was developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. It is an evidenced-based, multi-layered approach. These communities of the 45211 Zip Code were selected for the initiative by FCFC. The area has demonstrated an increased need for support and intervention as based upon growing reports of child abuse and neglect and the large number of children under the age of 6. The overall goal of this initiative is to increase community awareness and decrease the reported incidences of child abuse and/or neglect in the area by introducing and supporting protective factors for children ages 0-6. The protective factors, as outlined by Strengthening Families and listed below, are being introduced and supported within these neighborhoods through the creation and delivery of a community awareness campaign and the implementation of the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood settings.

### **Protective Factors**

- **Parental Resilience**
- **Social Supports**
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need**
- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development**
- **Social and Emotional Competence (of children)**

## **How does the program work?**

Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers who participate in this initiative will receive technical assistance and support in implementing the *Strengthening Families* approach. An initial assessment will lead to the development of an action plan focusing on building and enhancing the use of the "Five Protective Factors". Research shows these factors reduce the incidences of child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need to parent effectively, even under stress. By building relationships with families, programs can recognize signs of stress and build families' protective factors with timely, effective help. Coaching, training opportunities, incentives and parent outreach activities will support the use of the following *Strengthening Families* strategies:

- **Facilitate friendships & mutual support**
- **Strengthen parenting**
- **Respond to family crises**
- **Link families to services & opportunities**
- **Value and support parents**
- **Facilitate children's social & emotional development**
- **Observing and responding to early warning signs of abuse or neglect**

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