

# strengthening families

A L A S K A



Submitted by:

Charlie Johanson-Adams  
Leading EDGE Consulting

 [charlieja@mtaonline.net](mailto:charlieja@mtaonline.net)

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
FY 2011 Learning Network Participation.....	2
Learning Network Calendar.....	3
Learning Network Notes & Evaluations.....	5
October 27, 2010.....	5
November 17, 2010.....	10
December 15, 2010 .....	17
January 19, 2011 .....	23
February 16, 2011 .....	28
March 16, 2011 .....	32
April 20, 2011 .....	38
May 18, 2011 .....	43

## Introduction

This report celebrates the end of the third year of Strengthening Families Learning Networks. The Learning Networks were designed as an opportunity for Strengthening Families programs to unite on a monthly basis to have a facilitated discussion on a targeted Protective Factors topic. The facilitator of the Learning Networks began each year with a survey of topical needs. Based on the feedback from the Strengthening Programs and participants, the prioritized topics were researched and an article/website/speaker were selected. A monthly calendar of topics, the subsequent articles as they related to the Protective Factors, and the time/date and logistics of the Learning Network calls were sent to the participants beginning in October 2010.

The facilitation of the Learning Networks followed the principles of a “guided conversation.” The process went as such;

Topical articles were distributed two weeks in advance of the Learning Network teleconference.

- Participants were asked to read and prepare for a conversation about the article.
- The first 15 minutes of the Learning Network were spent on a “Program Focus,” highlighting Strengthening Families programs by a volunteer who shared how their program addressed the topic of the month
- During the Learning Network the article was discussed in this order:
  - ☐ Focusing Attention on the Facts of the Article.
  - ☐ Questions to illuminate participants emotional responses to the article.
  - ☐ Questions that highlight layers of meaning and purpose of the article.
  - ☐ Questions that allow participants to decide how the article relates to their current programs/situations.
  - ☐ Closing comments on “highlights” of the article and what other resources are out there regarding the topic.
- Following the Learning Network, an online survey was distributed which evaluated the process and flow of the guided conversation.
- A report of the Learning Network and synopsis of the online survey were distributed to the participants within two weeks of the Learning Network.
- Changes to the next Learning Network were based on the previous data/information collected in the online survey.

The Learning Networks proved to be engaging, enlightening and timely for the majority of the programs. The participants also noted that consistency was key to the success of the Learning Network. The Strengthening Families Programs viewed this venue as an opportunity to connect, share and learn all within an hour on a monthly basis. When asked if there were other options the participants would like to pursue (rather than a Learning Network) there was a resounding “keep it as it is!” with at least one or two Learning Networks scheduled where the participants could be face-to-face, if possible.

## **FY 2011 Learning Network Participation**

The following are the participant numbers, their program designation, and the total level of participation per month

### **2010**

October: 9 program staff, 2 thread staff, 1 leadership team  
Total: 12

November: 11 program staff, 1 thread staff, 2 leadership team  
Total: 14

December: 10 program staff, 2 thread staff, 2 leadership team  
Total: 14

### **2011**

January: 11 program staff, 2 leadership team  
Total: 13

February: 4 program staff, 1 thread staff, 3 leadership team  
Total: 8

March: 11 program staff, 1 thread staff, 4 leadership team (\*Note: one leadership team member was also a program staff)  
Total: 15

April: 4 program staff, 2 thread staff, 2 leadership team  
Total: 8

May: 8 program staff, 1 thread staff  
Total: 9

Ninety-three (93) participants attended the Strengthening Families Learning Networks in FY 2011.

The following documents show the process of this year's Learning Networks, beginning with the Calendar, followed by the record of the guided discussion and the participant's responses and finally, individual analysis of each Learning Network session.

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

SF Alaska Learning Network | 2010-2011 Fall /Winter Schedule

Meet Me Teleconference Number: 1-800-944-8766, Code 15569#

	Date/Time	Learning Network Topic (Link to Strategy)	15-Minute Program Highlight	Support Materials <i>*Note: Materials will be emailed a week prior to the Learning Network</i>
October 2010	Wednesday October 27 1 – 2pm	Building Program Capacity to Strengthen Families Afternoon invitation to attend the <b>thread</b> AmeriCorps Café	<i>Michele Jaeger &amp; Kathy Hall, <b>thread</b> “Capacity Building <u>for</u> Child Care Settings”</i>	Carol Robertson Center Article FACE Project Article
November 2010	Wednesday November 17 1 – 2pm	Building Respectful Staff Culture	<i>Jana Hansen &amp; Britta Rambusch Providence Child Development “A culture of respect”</i>	1. Strengthening Families Staff Survey* 2. Staff Leadership to Create Relationships that Protect Children 3. Hired for Good: Successful Recruitment and Hiring <i>*Please complete this survey prior to the November 17<sup>th</sup> Learning Network</i>
December 2010	Wednesday December 15 1 – 2pm	Face-to-Face Holiday Gathering @ <b>thread</b> Family Support Services	<i>Tracy Breimo, Credit Union 1 “Family Support Services”</i>	1. Family Support Services 2. Parents and Children Together (PACT): <i>Profile of an exceptional SFI Program</i>
January 2011	Wednesday January 19 1 – 2pm	Support for Families with Special Needs	<i>Christina Eubanks Hillcrest Child Development “Support for Families with Special Needs”</i>	1. The Role of Family Support in an Integrated Early Childhood System
February 2011	Wednesday February 16 1 – 2pm	Forming Relationships with Child Welfare Agencies	<i>Beth Snyder, ASD “Forming Child Welfare Relationships”</i>	1. Bringing Families to the Table 2. Advancing Child Abuse and Neglect Protective Factors 3. Building Community Partnerships for Child Protection: Getting from Here to There

	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Learning Network Topic (Link to Strategy)</b>	<b>15-Minute Program Highlight</b>	<b>Support Materials</b> <i>*Note: Materials will be emailed a week prior to the Learning Network</i>
<b>March 2011</b>	Wednesday March 16 1 – 2pm	Engaging Men in the Program	<i>Ronnie, KCI</i> <i>“Engaging Men in Early Learning Environments”</i>	1. Including Men
<b>April 2011</b>	Wednesday April 20 1 – 2pm	Customize the Physical Space	<i>Angie Lantz &amp; Molly Brown</i> <i>BP Early Learning Center</i> <i>“Customizing the Physical Space”</i>	1. Use of Physical Space
<b>May 2011</b>	Wednesday May 18 1 – 2pm	Mental Health Consultation & Social Emotional Competence for Young Children and their Families	<i>Erin Kinavey, EI/ILP</i> <i>&amp;</i> <i>Josh Arvidson, AMHC</i> <i>“Building Social Emotional Competence in Early Care Environments”</i>	1. Early Childhood Mental Health Program: <i>Profile of an exceptional SFI Program</i>

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Building Program Capacity to Strengthen Families

Wednesday • October 27, 2010

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child in Transition (ASD): Beth Snyder | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest: Christina                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.: Ronni, Katrina, Rebecca |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids:                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana, Britta                   |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT Lisa Danielson |

#### **thread** SFI staff

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathy Hall | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michel Jaeger |
|--|---|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley             | <input type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Nordeen            | <input type="checkbox"/> Carol Prentice             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington         | <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey             | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski          | <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish              | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier              | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts         | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch |

**Also on the call:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes.

## Welcome, Charlie Johanson Adams, Facilitator

- The format for this year's Learning Networks will be a Program Highlight for the first 15 minutes. One program will share (based on the Learning Network topic) how that particular protective factor has been or is being implemented in their program.
- The remaining 45 minutes of the Learning Network will focus on the articles emailed to all programs ahead of time. Programs will be expected to read the articles and engage in a dialogue about them during the call.
- Programs are asked to review the Learning Network calendar and select which month they'd like to present their program highlight. The hope is to complete that at the end of today's call.

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Building Program Capacity to Strengthen Families

*thread* / Kathy Hall/Michele Jaeger

- It's important to note this is a work in progress for *thread*.
- *thread* strives to serve parents in a way for them to make the best selection for child care, and also to provide consumer education and the importance of the early years.
- They've developed a standard script that's delivered to parents when they call. The emphasis is to really connect families with resources out there; financial, shelters, food pantries, etc.
  - The challenge: because they do need to standardize and also be listening to the families for need, it can be difficult to individualize beyond the standard script.
- New initiative this year is Parent TALK: much more friendly in terms of parenting education. *thread* presents a general topic and invites parents in; more of a networking opportunity for families to build social connections. The topic is taken in a direction that's meaningful to parents. Parents can bring children so they don't have to face the challenge of finding child care.
- Have to have the ability to let go and not be the "expert in the room."
- Other service is the Warm Line (**800.278.3723**) for parents and providers to call for support around a challenge they're having with a child. Much more of a partnering focus; not us as experts.
  - The Warm Line calls can be challenging as we're not able to develop a relationship with parent on the other end.
- Professional development: *thread* offers core training (12 hours).
  - In-depth training; some are on the *thread* calendar. Would like to look at trainings associated with promoting male involvement in children's lives; and improving the relationships of different generations working together.
- *thread* can always use input from those working "in the trenches."
- The Parade of Centers will be on November 13<sup>th</sup>. There are a limited number of registrations so register early. This will be an opportunity to network with other SFI programs, see the different sites and what's working at other programs, as well as how you may be able to implement those things in your work. It'll also be a day of celebration.
- *thread* is reviewing program action plans as they come in to help with specific training.

*The Parade of Centers is  
November 13<sup>th</sup>.*

*This will be an opportunity to  
network with other SFI programs,  
see the different sites and what's*



## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of building capacity)

*Programs received two articles of exemplary SFI programs [Carole Robertson Center (IL) FACES (GA)] and were asked to read one or both and consider two points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

### Carol Robertson Center (IL)

- Britta (Providence): The article talked a lot about education for parents and how they do that. Made her think of how Providence could help parents who can't afford to go to the sessions offered at Providence.
  - Referring to education beyond high school, GED or a different type of education?
  - Providence offers Babes in the Woods and Saturdays with Dads. They're not GED types, but are important education for parents. Many are just one day. If there was no fee to attend or some kind of reimbursement of fees there might be more motivation to attend.
- Christina (Hillcrest): Enjoyed reading about the Learning Basket Curriculum. Hillcrest has parents use the ASQ and they take advantage of teachable moments.
- Tracy (Credit Union One): Liked the Learning Baskets, too, and also liked how they talked about partnerships with local arts organizations. Bringing that back to Alaska and her center, she noted that the Imaginarium offered a free night for parents and shared that with the families at her center.
  - (Charlie): Taking it one step further, would be fun to have parents come in and participate in an evening where a resident artist comes in.
- Kathy (thread): What struck something for her in reading the article was when she does trainings about play, it's easy to forget that play should have a component of beauty and enjoyment for children, too.
- Michele (thread): Liked hearing about benefits where parents could see with the touch of a button what services they were eligible for. Anything that a state or government agency can do to ease access.
  - They also come from where the parent is at. Had emergency kits there with resources for families so they wouldn't have to go to another agency for that immediate need.
- Christina (Hillcrest): It'd be great to have an interactive map of the different resources that included a paragraph about what to expect when you call them, the process. If you can talk about what they can expect and understand the process it makes it easier for families.
  - Not only staff having the knowledge, but being able to have the relationships to follow through with the parent.
- Beth (Children in Transition): Knows that many parents don't have the perseverance and strengths to not get stopped at that first phone call. Helps for us to have relationships with parents and staff at those support agencies to help parents not get frustrated about the process.

*...it's easy to forget  
that play should  
have a component  
of beauty and  
enjoyment for  
children.*

## FACES

- Beth (Children in Transition): Interesting how much the FACES program mirrors the model we're trying to emulate with state funded Pre-K in Alaska; especially the Head Start/Pre-K partnerships. Likes the concept of a resource coordinator and sees similarities to the Education Specialist position the Head Start/Title I programs have. What she's found personally, it seems the programs that have the strongest connections with families and responsiveness to families with needs are those that have those positions. Liked how they are teaming with the teacher to provide comprehensive services for families. Help for families in crises with discretionary funds (FACES). Children in Transition worked to create a fund created to help support families since the school district can't accept donations. It's helped in various ways.
- Christina (Hillcrest): Reading about the response protocol was helpful as it's on Hillcrest's "to do's" this year.

## Questions?

- How do we move outside of our own silos in times of economic challenges to utilize the strengths of each other and share resources differently? It's only going to get more challenging. How do we redefine what we're doing and work more collaboratively?
- How can we take what we know we have in this community and break down the walls? So much is built on budgets.
- If you find an area of need, instead of you having to provide it all, how can you in a FACES way, work towards more collaborative work?
- FACES philosophy: not to rescue families but to support them.
- Are there any programs on today's call doing collaborative work in terms of supporting families?
  - Hillcrest: Partners with Alaska Parent Needs Network for classes for parents and trainings for teachers (Love and Logic).
  - Kids' Corps, Inc.: Collaborates with many in the community including Red Apple, Just Kids, and Glacial Dental.
    - Just Kids – pediatric dentist provides preliminary check up of children and writes follow ups for parents.
    - Red Apple: High percentage of parents in the Mountain View area; they donate gift cards during the holidays.
  - That might be a great Learning Network call: the current collaborations and the possibilities. Charlie will research when this focus would fit in the calendar.
  - One area the school district would like to explore is how to work with child care. Use **thread** a lot for referrals to families. Could open up new ways of working with families.

*How do we move outside of our own silos in times of economic challenges to utilize the strengths of each other and share resources*

**Call ended at 2:05 pm.**

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the October Learning Network through survey monkey. Five responses were received.

Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	40% (2)	60% (3)				
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	50% (1)					50% (1)
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	40% (2)	40% (2)	20% (1)			

Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	80% (4)	20% (1)				
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	80% (4)	20% (1)				
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	100% (5)					
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	60% (3)	20% (1)	20% (1)			

### Additional Comments:

1. I like the new format for the calls.
2. In my position as the PAT State Office Coordinator, these are ideas and/or articles that I might share with other PAT programs to assist them in working with families.
3. Have people talk about the core or in-depth trainings and how they are using the information in their programs.

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Building a Respectful Staff Culture

Wednesday • November 17, 2010

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP: Molly                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest: Christina              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.: Ronnie        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids: Anna, Tammy, Bethany |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana, Monica, Britta |   |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Arms: Lenetta | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

### **thread** SFI staff

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathy Hall | <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger |
|--|---|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Nordeen             | <input type="checkbox"/> Carol Prentice             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington          | <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey              | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski           | <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish               | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier               | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz             | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beverly Wooley |   |

**Also on the call:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; Sheila Wray (incoming SFI Coordinator), and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes.

#### Welcome, Charlie Johanson Adams, Facilitator

- Charlie welcomed and thanked participants for joining the Learning Network. The updated Learning Network schedule was revised and emailed to all. Participants were reminded of the new format: a 15-minute spotlight on a program linked to the Learning Network topic with a 45 minute discussion on the articles emailed in preparation of the Learning Network. Participants were asked to read the articles and share what they found surprising or what information specifically interested them.

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Building a Respectful Staff Culture

*Providence Child Development Center / Jana Hansen, Britta Rambusch, Monica Anderson*

- Building a respectful culture at Providence Child Development Center begins with a mission statement that both staff and parents know. Embedded within the mission statement are core values of: respect, compassion, justice, excellence, and stewardship.
  - Respect: Used daily, every minute of the day, when talking with parents, with staff talking with one another. Everyone realizes there isn't only one way to get the job done.
  - Excellence: The staff feels they do this often and are always striving for excellence. Parents expect the Child Development Center to provide excellent quality care. Staff works hard not to have excuses when things go wrong.
- Staff from both the infant and toddler programs meets once a month; preschool and school age staff meet monthly. Department goals are developed from Providence staff engagement surveys which are conducted annually. Departments choose 2 goals that they want to improve upon or want to build upon.
  - Britta (Infant/Toddler): Goals chosen:
    - 1. My ideas and suggestions count (involvement and belonging). They're addressing this by having frequent, updated communication, knowing their assignments and new equipment, how communications are working with parents; ensure everyone has the same information.
    - 2. I get the support in dealing with difficult situations at work. One way they're working on this goal is to have discussions at staff meetings about difficult things they're facing in the classroom; it's an opportunity to work with others who've also faced those difficulties.
  - Monica (Preschool goals): Goals chosen:
    - 1. Open, honest, 2-way communication.
    - 2. I get support in dealing with difficult situations. The meet as a team to strategize how to meet those goals.
- During annual evaluations with staff, one item reviewed is service standards evaluation and included is teamwork (there are many components under that evaluation). For example, recognizing others daily, giving credit where credit is due. It's not easy to do when everyone is busy.
- What we do to keep a friendly environment: Providence has an employee activities council that plans yearly activities. Staff members from all departments at Providence come together to plan events. The most recent was pumpkin carving contest between departments that wanted to participate. A company picnic is held in the summer and a holiday/Christmas party for the children is held. Smaller events are also planned throughout the year.
- Al's Action Line: Al Parish is the CEO of Providence and "Al's Action Line" is one way for all staff to communicate with him. If staff wants to recognize someone for doing a great job, or if there are questions, this "line" is available for staff to write in and get a response from the CEO. During holiday months the CEO uses it as an inspiration line; a positive way for folks to recognize each other.

*Building a respectful staff culture at Providence Child Development Center begins with a mission statement that both*

- Other strategies to support one another and show others that we care:
  - Thank You Wall: A big piece of butcher block paper is posted on a wall and any staff can post a thank you.
  - Providence Bucks: If someone does a really good job gets \$1-2 Providence Bucks to use for coffee, etc.
  - A box of thank you cards is available, and potlucks are held. At Christmas have Secret Santa program, and one staff member keeps a large jar of candy to share with everyone.
  - The cook, Naomi, makes staff a big lunch 1-2 times a month. She'll cook a full Thanksgiving dinner that everyone enjoys this month.
  - Outside of work, staff members come to CCDC cafés. Had a group who participated in heart health walk together.
- Many CDC staff is parents here so sometimes it's the teachers supporting them, sometimes it's another staff member. Feel we've learned to be very respectful for staff that has children with challenging behaviors.
- Trainings have helped staff connect with each other.
- Ideas from other programs?
  - Likes the respect issue and appreciated the great ideas – thank you for sharing. At Open Arms (Fairbanks) 90 day and annual evaluations are conducted. As the director, she sends a congratulations note to the staff member at the 90 day evaluation and asks if there's one thing you could change that would make your job less frustrating what would it be? She asks this again at the one year evaluation. You have to have a real culture of trust for staff to share what's frustrating them (and many times it's something simple like a paper cutter). Open Arms has family wellness coordinators and recently added staff to those able to utilize them. They're starting to link that staff support to increased retention.
  - Another idea that came out of Providence's presentation: how closely a respectful staff culture is linked to the lead person of the organization (link to CEO).
  - Appreciate the fact that the Providence team talked about their mission statement and how that guides their daily work with families and children.

*...send staff a  
congratulations  
note at their 90 day  
and annual*

## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of building a respectful staff culture)

*Programs received two articles as well as a staff survey and were asked to complete the survey and read one or both articles and consider two points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

### Staff Survey Piece | Framework and Uses of It

*Charlie began the dialogue with a brief explanation of why we survey staff*

- Providence CDC shared how they used a survey. Why survey? “If you don’t know me, you can’t really work with me.” Know thyself and know thy staff. Know how you work, what are your goals? Surveying is one way of getting to that.
- Once the survey is complete, it’s important to gather the information and look at how we can use that to create the best possible, most respectful culture to work in.
- It’s also important to individualize and look at where each staff member is at. Sit down and talk with them about it; know where your staff is coming from. What are areas they’re most comfortable and uncomfortable with? Maybe large pieces of common issues would warrant a training plan. It’s simple, quick, and not costly to do.
- Never give staff a survey you haven’t taken yourself.

*Never give staff  
a survey you  
haven’t taken  
yourself*

### Discussion

- Kathy (thread): On page 4 what struck her was that it’d work well for her training tonight for building relationships with families.
- Charlie: Insert “I” instead, and reflect on that means.
- Lenetta: What Open Arms started doing to help learn the names of parents/family members of the 230 children in their care is to have a second monitor on the receptionist’s desk that shows check-in.
- Alyse: Her work is mainly with K-12, but found this particular survey remarkable and strong.

*Charlie suggested taking those areas that seem challenging and develop team skills around it. If one is struggling, others probably are, too. The survey is online and you can pull reports on this (i.e. for a Protective Factor).*

### Staff Leadership to Create Relationships that Protect Children

*We are the ones who create relationships. In order to do that, we have to have the foundation and be able to nurture that relationship within ourselves and with others.*

*Participants were asked to share insights that were key points for them.*

- Kathy (thread): Right from the beginning, it says programs are committed to sharing power with families and staff which is a value shift; a paradigm shift. Looking at strengths and building on them was evident throughout the entire article. Empowering everyone: children, staff, and families. Not top-down. It’s the positive relationship piece that carries over from staff to families.
- Lenetta (Open Arms): There’s a change from clients to partners. Seeing yourself as a professional but there are still times when you need support yourself.



- Tracy (Credit Union One): Proactively discovering and nurturing leadership potential.
  - How do you see that as working in a cultural shift?
    - Communication piece; staying on top of things. Feel it goes back to the survey. Give staff an opportunity to let you know and talk with you (families, too). Open-door policies.
  - Relating to the article: to be a good communicator you have to be aware – eyes and ears open aware. Have to be alert to what’s going on. If you’re not alert, you miss the cues that are there. In one’s opinion, power is a turn off as to why parents may not want to be engaged.
  - Paying attention to reciprocity.
- Sheila Wray: Thinking of power and shift of power sharing. That’s not something we’re trained to do – it’s something that we learn as we go. It’s really about taking up our own lens and how we perceive things. Viewing through someone else’s lens – that’s hard to do.
- Anna (King’s Kids): Sometimes it seems we can get busy knowing the “right things” and sometimes it’s just part of what you do day-to-day. Comes down to that moment of having that relationship with a person. What works for one person may not work with others. We tend to lump them into “they’re a parent of a preschooler” but there’s much that comes into that.
 

*Sometimes it seems we can get busy knowing the “right things”*

  - We can make assumptions without doing that perception taking. We’re missing cues if we do that.
  - List out fantastic things in staff leadership. If you just make it standard practice to develop relationships individually, everything falls into place. Make every time you interact as part of the relationship building.
  - Strong nod to how you hire people who come in from the start. How you pay attention to hiring practices. What are their intentions, core values, beliefs?
- Turnover is approximately 40% in the child care field; still not great – about half of your staff – but down.
  - With turnover, you’re always starting over. What wouldn’t you have to start over – what could be stable?
    - New hire orientation – things change but the process stays the same.
    - Mentoring, orientation binders handed down from directors to new hires remain constant.
    - BP: a lot of it has to do with trainings and orientations. Protocol – transitional periods. Consistency, having new people feels welcome and good communication.
  - How do you show staff culture and have that be consistent?
    - Lenetta: working at assigning a mentor/teacher who’s been with the program for a while. Having them work with new staff, and providing a substitute so the teacher can meet with the new staff one hour a week. Getting to know the new staff personally. Hopefully your goals and mission statement is communicated consistently through that, too.
    - See challenges: whoever hires has to be a quick judge.
    - Goal is that we bring on this person and if we have more than one opening, they try out the different classrooms for a couple of hours a day.

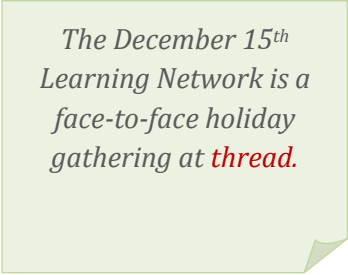


Charlie encouraged participants to read *Hired for Good* article; has great ideas for retention. Provide a culture of respect that's permeated through values, mission, etc. When it's there and demonstrated, modeled and felt, there's less turnover. Realistic Job Previews can be powerful. RJP's can be videos, walkthroughs, or a side-by-side opportunity for candidates to really get a feel for the job and the organization. It shows them the realities of the job before they get the job.

#### **December's Learning Network Reminder:**

The December 15<sup>th</sup> Learning Network is a face-to-face holiday gathering focusing on family support services (program spotlight presented by Credit Union One). The face-to-face will be held at **thread** beginning at noon with the Learning Network from 1-2 pm. Programs will get to meet Sheila Wray, the new SFI Coordinator at the face-to-face.

Charlie thanked everyone for being on today's call and encouraged everyone to continue the conversations.



*The December 15<sup>th</sup>  
Learning Network is a  
face-to-face holiday  
gathering at **thread**.*

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the November Learning Network through survey monkey. Five responses were received as of November 23, 2010.

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)			
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	2 (40%)					3 (60%)
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	3 (60%)	2 (40%)				

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	3 (60%)	2 (40%)				
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)			
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	2 (40%)	3 (60%)				
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	1 (20%)		3 (60%)			1 (20%)

### Additional Comments:

1. We always find the dialogue informative and it gives us fresh ideas and/or outlook on the subject
2. Thank you for the information. I like the way the learning networks are organized with articles and speakers and Charlie you do a fantastic job facilitating the process.

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Family Support Services

Wednesday • December 15, 2010

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy, Marybeth, Kayla | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest: Christina |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.: Rebecca, Irene        | <input type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Molly, Britta, Jana          |  |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC: Karin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |   |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### **thread** SFI staff

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathy Hall  | <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |   |

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley               | <input type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beverly Wooley             | <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Nordeen      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington           | <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski            | <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish                | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier     | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts   |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes (*attended via teleconference*).

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Family Support Services

*Credit Union 1 Learning Center / Tracy Breimo, Kayla, Marybeth*

- Credit Union 1's Learning Center opened in May 2006 and is licensed for 32 children. It operates a school-age program as well as a toddler program (begin at 19 months).
- Extended hours are offered to accommodate branch hours.
- CU1's Mission Statement, Core Values and Vision permeate the entire organization, down through the community of the Learning Center:

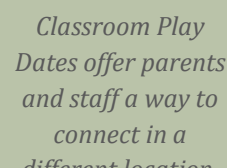


- Making employees (families) feel welcome begins with CU1's CEO. She knows everyone's name and something about them; birthday, child's name, etc; she frequently distributes employee paychecks.
- Even prospective employees are made to feel welcome during the interview process. Once hired, employees receive a welcome card at the end of the first week and a welcome standard checklist is given. The welcoming environment comes from the top down through the community of the Learning Center.
- Employees are allowed time away from their job (with permission from their managers) to visit the Learning Center, join with special events, have lunch with their children, etc. Even employees who don't have children will come and read a story to a class.
- Family nights are held twice a year. Families receive pictures at these events and this year photos were done in a card format. CU1 has several community service projects including "Dollar Dog" who comes to visit children. There's a "Dollar Dog" marketplace where the kids can sell their handcrafted items; money raised was used to purchase items for family in Anchorage. The classes also decorated "Beanie Boxes" for Bean's Café. The Learning Center hosts birthday parties and other events throughout the year, and frequently has special visitors.
- Other family resources offered include health and wellness benefits, health fairs, smoking cessation sessions, etc. The Learning Center utilizes family resources from **thread** and Providence as well.

*"Even employees who don't have children will come and read a story to a class."*

### **Kayla and Marybeth (Classroom teachers)**

- Each classroom sends a monthly newsletter that reflects what the kids have done, and highlights the next month's activities. They also acknowledge birthdays and other special occasions.
- Parent board: Set up daily for each child; staff has found it's a great way to begin conversations between parents and staff.
- Parent/teacher conferences are another way to reach out to families. Each classroom hosts two conferences a year. They're a great way to celebrate children's achievements and get feedback from families.
- The Learning Center uses technology to accommodate families:
  - Blocked out time for an off-site parent using video conferencing.
  - Cameras are in all the classrooms so parents can view their children without their children seeing them (some children have difficulty saying good-bye to parent).
  - Email is important for connecting with families. Frequently faster than playing "phone tag."
- Celebrations are important and held frequently throughout the year (i.e. when projects culminate, etc.). Staff also gets a lot of information from families on what they celebrate.
- Conversations at drop off/pick up times are important. Time to let parents know you're there.
- When a new parent arrives at the Learning Center, they and their child are introduced to other parents and staff, policies and procedures are reviewed as well as the curriculum and what goes on in the classroom.
  - Parents have a lot of paperwork to fill out, but that starts the connection with them.
- Classroom play dates offer parents and staff a way to connect in a different location (other than the Learning Center).
  - Idea started with a teacher who was also a parent. Play dates are held on Saturdays, notices are sent via email.
- A lending library was established. Parents were getting tired of the same books but didn't always have time to go to the library so they appreciate having that on site. Children and families can choose a book, check it out and return it together. Also have CDs, DVDs, to check out.
- Lesson plans reflect family involvement: things parents can do at home to tie into what's being learned in the classroom.
- A family information board is available where parents sign child in and out daily. Flyers and other information specific to Learning Center families and the classrooms are posted daily.
- Staff accomplishments wall is where achievements can be posted for parents to see (i.e. staff receiving CDA, etc.).
- Parent Cafés have been a huge success. Get to know parents on a different level. Parents realize there are others (parents) to support them.
  - Had one parent who was a table host at the last café who wants to become more involved in the process.
  - Café training will be done at AEYC; might be of interest to parents.



*Classroom Play  
Dates offer parents  
and staff a way to  
connect in a  
different location*

## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of family support services)

*Programs received two articles as well as links to online resources related to family support services and were asked to read one or both articles and consider points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

Charlie: A parent (who is also on the SFI Leadership Team) asked at a recent café: How do you know what supports parents need?

Questions for the group to consider: Are we honoring the parent where they stand? How do we get to that point?

### Reflection on the Articles (what stood out to participants)

- Literacy: having lending libraries that parents can check materials out with the child, having an area for sharing of materials.
- A separate “welcoming” position that was created specifically for a staff member to greet and welcome families; it’s typically everyone’s job but that one program had a dedicated position to just that.
  - Related to that: It’s hoped that **thread** will be working to get 10 AmeriCorps members in the future. One area that’s being explored is having them as that connection to parents in centers (not taking a teacher’s role). Sometimes connections are difficult.
- Inspired by cultural sensitivity in talk stories.
  - Could see talk stories being used for evaluations of staff and programs. Having them sit down and talk through their story of being a classroom teacher.
- Targeting areas where families meet; family centers. Article referred to middle schools, etc.
- It’s important to remember that great things start very small. It’s very easy to become overwhelmed with all of the ideas presented and feeling like you want to implement them all.
  - These efforts don’t have to be huge. Each center has protective factors interpreted in different ways.
- (Kathy and Sheila): On a recent visit to Kings’ Kids the discussion with the staff was that being part of SFI has changed the way they practice what they do. They felt empowered.
- When reading through article on family support; focused on retention patterns. Are people staying now because of engagement in SFI? Is what we’re doing in Strengthening Families helping people to stay on longer? Are we really retaining people because they know they fit in? Think it’d be worthwhile to track. Two years ago were the same people sitting in the room?
- In one program’s perspective, the reality is those who applied for SFI and received the opportunity don’t represent the norm and don’t typically have the same turnover as other centers. The concern is the other centers out there that aren’t practicing it.
- One suggestion was a Compass piece on the “Community Center of SFI.”
- *Charlie and Jeanette will look at creating a template for “Profiles of Excellence” for SFI Alaska programs to document the efforts taking place.*
- Corporate sponsored care can do phenomenal things. It takes a long time, though.

*A separate  
“welcoming”  
position was  
created specifically  
to greet and*

## Announcements

AEYC Conference: 3 things happening related to SFI:

1. Karin facilitating community café
2. SFI presentation where programs will be highlighted (*would be great to have profiles ready to go by then*).
3. Saturday: Having a full day parent café – space for 30 parents. Theme is: “I have hope and I’m not afraid to use it.”
  - Hope to have a parent toolbox developed soon.
  - Also planning to develop a DVD on community café model; help to get understanding of the model and how it works.
    - If anyone is hosting a café and parents are open to being filmed, please contact Panu at Alaska Children’s Trust.
  - SFI Leadership Team is hoping to embed this in other fields. Have trained ILP staff.
  - Do have a postcard developed on SFI; contact Shirley if interested in using them.

*Theme for the parent  
café at AEYC:*

*“I have hope and I’m not  
afraid to use it.”*

Thanks to all for the tremendous work!

Next Learning Network is January 19<sup>th</sup> from 1-2 pm on Mental Health consultation.

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the December Learning Network through survey monkey. Four responses were received as of December 22, 2010.

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	50% (2)					50% (2)
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A.**</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	100% (2)					
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	100% (4)					

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	75% (3)					25% (1)
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	50% (2)	25% (1)				25% (1)
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	50% (2)	25% (1)	25% (1)			
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	50% (2)	25% (1)	25% (1)			

### Additional Comments:

1. It was fun thanks.



# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Support for Families with Special Needs

Wednesday • January 19, 2011

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest: Christina, Cheryl      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.:               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids: Anna, Tammy, Bethany |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana, Britta, Monica |   |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC: Karin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |   |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### **thread** SFI staff

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |
|---|--------------------------------------|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beverly Wooley             | <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Nordeen           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington           | <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski            | <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish                | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier                | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts        |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes (*attended via teleconference*).

We'll be gathering write-ups of each Anchorage SFI program spotlight and a template will be sent to the three programs that have presented so far. The plan is to publish these to demonstrate the wide variety of programs and the great work taking place in Alaska's Strengthening Families' programs.

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Support for Families with Special Needs

### Hillcrest Children's Center | Christina Eubanks

- Hillcrest is a parent cooperative with the board composed of parents; makes an interesting dynamic between administration and the parents. Has to be a cooperative relationship.
- The Center places emphasis on parent involvement, trust and respect.
- Seeing a lot more children with behavioral issues; again, some are more diagnosable. Sometimes it's due to families being in crises and sometimes it's temporary.
- Hillcrest doesn't un-enroll children, but families. Staff and families work to be a team in supporting the child. Continue making efforts and accommodations to help child.
  - 98% success rate; have only had one situation where had to ask a family to leave.
- Children who come to us with diagnosable issues usually have a plan of care and Hillcrest's staff works with families to coordinate what's already in place, which they're currently working with; integrate with support teams. The Center works with PIC and other therapists; have they come into the classroom to observe the child in that setting and how staff works with them.
- Started using the ASQ, getting a more systematic process in place to work with a child who develops a special need/challenging behavior while at Hillcrest.
  - When there are issues, referrals are made and staff works with families on the follow through, checking in to see where they are in the process. Staff follow up, listen, and affirm what families are doing.
  - For follow up, staff assists families in contacting referral agencies, aiding with clarification. The process can be overwhelming for families; staff sometimes finds it's best to slow down and see what families need to know at the moment.
- Utilize **thread**'s mental health services heavily. Spent five months with them in the classrooms doing observations, and giving feedback to staff. Have PIC come out weekly for observations and feedback.
- Christina is learning to be an advocate for staff and program as well as the families by working with other agencies to show them that they're all needed to support families.

*Hillcrest's philosophy is that all children have special needs; some are just more diagnosable and pronounced than*

#### Questions

- Has Hillcrest used the mental health consultation services through thread and ACMHC?
  - Yes, a year ago had them visit the toddler classroom weekly for 3 months and then provided follow-ups. Hillcrest staff had to commit to meet weekly outside of the classroom. Still follow up with **thread** and ask them to come out when experiencing challenges. Use their services as an impartial observer to affirm what staff is seeing.
    - Using an outside observer is important, especially when looking for triggers that set off a child's behavior.
- What was that like for parents when Hillcrest began using the ASQ's?
  - Just stated using in December (also using ASQSE). Worked with the board first with the ASQ so they understood it. In some situations, parents have expectations that are above where their child should be at that age, and for others it's helping to catch delays.
    - The ASQ is a nice avenue to give deeper conversations with parents about their children. Allows for discussion of developmental or environmental issues.

## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of Support for Families with Special Needs)

*Programs received an article related to support for families with special needs and were asked to read it and consider points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

Charlie prefaced today's discussion with the fact that this was a lengthy article (28 pages) but that this is going to be a hallmark article. Twenty years from now we'll be able to refer back to it as such. Judy Langford went to past articles that were the hallmarks; Charlie remembers reading many of the articles years ago. It shifts the paradigm: want to hear how it shifted everyone's paradigms.

*Be mindful that articles such as these are the driving forces that keep us centered as early childhood educators and family*

What are some learning's?

- One liked the diagram on page 20 that showed all the different agencies and services and the inter-relatedness that makes up comprehensive services. Family support is the glue that holds them all together. Reality is when you have a family in crisis, understanding how many different agencies families are dealing with, the multiple appointments, etc. was eye-opening.
  - Diagram shows comprehensiveness: not just the “feel-good” stuff; it truly helps to understand how comprehensive family support is.
  - Another was very struck by how ominous it must feel from family perspective; this mapping for navigational work is incredibly helpful. To think of all of the moving parts, people, and relationships from the perspective of the child.
  - Navigating comprehensive services; so many initiatives and they overlap and it's helpful to have one agency to bring them all together – cross-pollination.
  - How to use resources, time and energy wisely.
- Principles of family support (page 11) – many endeavors and research was happening. What does family support mean? Families giving input, their direction. How it should be defined? Found it was an ever-evolving definition.
  - Looking back on own family and support; came from a welfare family that was homeless at one point. There's so much more support avenues now for families, and it seems families are more open now to receiving the support; knowing they're going to find the help and support they need.
  - Feel it shows how families have opened up. Generational issue: asking for support is “wrong,” but we've moved beyond that – all families can use help every once in a while.
  - During one parent interview, the issue of having no-cost family activities was emphasized repeatedly. Having places to take kids and connect with others would have been helpful for them.
- What are we going to be writing about for the 2015-2020s on this topic? Will social networks be a factor? Where are parents finding support though social networks?
  - Hearing from parents on leadership team of benefits of social network supports (concept of “hook-ups”).
- Another program has a goal this year to respond to families in crises so trying to be very conscientious on what parents tell them so staff can follow up.

**Parent Day at AEYC Conference | Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup>**

**8:00 am – 4:30 pm**



- This will be a reservation only family event at no charge to participants.
- Families will be invited to participate in the morning keynote, and then will break-off to their own workshops for the remainder of the day.
- Charlie will kick off the session with leadership skills, and intentional choices, “discovering the parent within,” and finding balance.
- Josh Arvidson will present about parenting and what can make parenting easier (generic topics: rules, consistency, etc.).
- Six topics will be presented at six tables; parents can choose three (15 minutes at each) to attend:
  1. Early literacy
  2. Quick meals and good nutrition
  3. Physical exercise - getting outside
  4. Infant and adult massage
  5. Community resources
  6. Early learning parent activity cards
- A Community Café will be hosted that afternoon.
- Making the day as interactive as possible.

Process to apply:

- Only have 30 slots, and are reserving two slots per program (some are outside of SFI network). Ask that programs look for two parents with one back-up.

**February 16<sup>th</sup> Learning Network**

**Forming Relationships with Child Welfare Agencies**

**Beth Snyder, Anchorage School District**

- Three documents will be sent two weeks prior to the Learning Network for participants to read.

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the January Learning Network through survey monkey. Four responses were received as of February 2, 2011

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	50% (2)	25% (1)				25% (1)
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	50% (2)					50% (2)
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	75% (3)	25% (1)				

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	100% (4)					
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	50% (2)	50% (2)				
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	75% (3)	25% (1)				
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	50% (2)	25% (1)				25% (1)

### Additional Comments:

1. We always garner a few gems (or more) of helpful information from each Learning Network. Thanks!

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Forming Relationships with Child Welfare Agencies

Wednesday • February 16, 2011

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest:                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc. Ronnie, Rachel | <input type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids:              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana                 |  |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### **thread** SFI staff

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |
|---|---|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Hoffbauer            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner              | <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz               | <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandy Manning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish                | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier                | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts         |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes (*attended via teleconference*).

## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of Forming Relationships with Child Welfare Agencies)

*Programs received three articles related to forming relationships with child welfare agencies and were asked to read them and consider points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

### Advancing Child Abuse and Neglect Protective Factors

- Page 16 talked about making a commitment to engage parents and it drove home to one that they have quiet parents who come and go with little interaction with teachers unless there's an issue or reason to interact. Need to be aware of that. Many parents are content; they drop off their children and come and go. We need to make an effort to get to know them better.
  - Piggyback: differentiating parenting workshop (from an early literacy workshop). We need to help caregivers recognize that there are parents who are different from us and we need to find ways to make meaningful connections with them.
  - Talks about altering focus, child first and parent second. Focus on both simultaneously.
  - Fact that parents are part of a community, a neighborhood. They're also representative of the neighborhood they live in. Putting our money into an infrastructure of neighbors, partners, people who care about one another. Not just money into direct care but putting money into our communities.
- For one, it struck home that there needs to be a (sizeable) shift in how we look at early care and education and family issues in the country. What would create this shift? How do we get past an article, these discussions, and these little steps? When do the little steps form the bigger, "mother may I?"
  - Not only shifts in what we've been working on, but what do we currently have in place? Have many plans are out there; how do they resonate to form this infrastructure?

*We need to help caregivers recognize that there are parents who are different from us and we need to find ways to make meaningful*

### General Discussion

- We know that this work is happening in many places. The Strengthening Families framework allows that check off to ensure they're reaching all areas and we're talking the same language.
  - Regardless of services offered or business you're in, you can use Strengthening Families as a common way to serve families with language that any system can understand.
  - It's an opportunity and challenge: all speaking with same language and vision in mind. We all have silos of systems in which we work – the challenge is to get people out of their silos to invest in this language.
- Focus on mind shift versus motion. Most are going through the motions.
- Need diverse thinking; prompt folks to begin thinking out of the box but depending on where you sit and what you do day in and day out, that can be challenging.
- Seventh page in; building community partnerships: stages that accurately reflect. Gain consensus and enroll.
  - Differentiating on the work that we do with parents.
  - In the child welfare world; is this the process they're taking?



- Fair to say there's an emphasis of helping families figure out what they need to keep their kids safe. Don't feel we're doing a sufficient job on prevention with high risk families that are in the system.

*Advancing Child Abuse and Neglect Protective Factors* article is about promotional versus preventative (our framework for Strengthening Families). It's a call to action; redefining quality.

- Know the child welfare language as well; we in early childhood need to stretch and see what other organizations and entities are doing. Know how their system works, know their language. We'll miss a true partnership/collaboration if we don't.
- Comes through that we've been "shutting the doors" and have been in our own world. Many programs are just making it through the day; in a reactive mode. Difficult to be preventative at times.
- What are we doing in our programs? What does high quality mean? What scales are we using? How are we promoting them throughout?
- Accreditation does seem to help a change in behavior, thought processes, etc. have to have evidence, prove that you're meeting criteria.
  - Credit Union 1 went through accreditation in April. Was a mind shift for staff; going through the process makes you think and reflect, and it gives an opportunity for dialogue.
- Know that kids who enter the system need the highest quality child care, but the families need additional information on things like dealing with trauma.
- Child abuse and neglect situations: those need the highest trained staff; has there been training promoted for staff on trauma training? HS hasn't had in-depth training on that and is looking for specific training (*Josh Arvidson's program. Anchorage Community Mental Health*). Some training is complimentary. Shirley will talk to Josh about hosting a workshop on trauma for SFI.
- What's going on with the child; what kind of behavior will you see in the classroom?
- **Connecticut Head Start and Child welfare Collaboration**  
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED470318>
  - Held "myth busters" sessions. Started meeting on a regular basis with "gang" colors based on the office locations. OCS started serving on Policy Council; gave parents an opportunity to see child welfare workers as real people who care for children.

*The report describes the initiative and the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating a protocol, a set of strategies for better working together.*

Building community partnerships article has information from different states that are easy to pull out.

### Final Thoughts

- Providence has several grandparents raising grandchildren; haven't changed anything in terms of seeing them as the parent (dual roles). Is there any research out there, information for staff on how we should talk with them?
  - *Volunteers of America Alaska have a whole program for grandparents raising children. Good organization to call for materials or for a speaker.*

### March Learning Network: Engaging men in the programs (KCI program spotlight)

- Materials, including a YouTube video will be sent a week prior to the call.



## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the February Learning Network through survey monkey. Six responses were received as of March 1, 2011

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.		16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)		<b>50% (3)</b>
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.						<b>100% (6)</b>
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	<b>66.7% (4)</b>	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)			

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	<b>33.3% (2)</b>	<b>33.3% (2)</b>	16.7% (1)			16.7% (1)
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	16.7% (1)	<b>50% (3)</b>	16.7% (1)			16.7% (1)
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	<b>66.7% (4)</b>	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)			
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	16.7% (1)	33.3% (2)	<b>50% (3)</b>			

### Additional Comments:

1. Sorry- I keep missing the articles.
2. I was under the impression that we would learn new ways or ideas to connect to OCS or partner with them to help our children and parents.
3. I thought the articles were informative and enjoyed them however they were very long.

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Engaging Men in Early Learning Environments  
Wednesday • March 16, 2011

### **On the call:**

#### **Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP   | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy, Kayla            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest:                                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc. Ronnie, Rachel, Katrina | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids: Jana, Tammy, Bethany |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana, Monica, Britta          |   |

#### **Other Agencies**

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### **Strengthening Families Pilot Sites**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### **thread SFI staff**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |
|---|---|

#### **Leadership Team Members**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley               | <input type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brook Hoffbauer | <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner              | <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz               | <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandy Manning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marcey Bish                | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier     | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts   |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes.

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Engaging Men in Early Learning Environments

### *Kids' Corps, Inc. / Ronnie Brown*

- Thanks to Rachel and Katrina for assisting with today's presentation.
- KCI's executive director is very much into parent involvement, especially fathers. Allows staff to be very creative in ways to engage fathers in the program. Having him on the staff's side is a big plus.
- KCI's strategies to involve men:
  - Train staff in how to be comfortable talking and interacting with dads. Feel there's been a stigma for too long that staff doesn't talk with them.
  - Calling them by name (not Johnny's dad).
  - Have several different forms geared specifically towards dads. Ask questions such as what they like to do with their children, what they like to do in a group of other dads (games, sports and eating mentioned frequently).
  - Host monthly Man-to-Man group the last Thursday evening each month that's facilitated by two male staff members (made a huge difference). Program provides transportation if needed. Evenings are based around a fun activity (ideas for evenings gathered from surveys of dads). Past activities have included BBQs, sledding, kite building, rocket launching, Easter egg dying, face painting and crazy hair. Give them snippets of information – i.e. positive stat about being involved, why dads are so important in the lives of children.
  - Classroom staff is encouraged to invite fathers to home visits, parent-teacher conferences, etc. Encouraging staff when they call home to talk with dad and don't always ask to talk with mom. He has just as much input as the mom does.
  - During the month KCI has a Monday Munch; put out fruit, muffins, coffee, and cocoa and encourage parents to stop, grab a bite and talk for a short time.
  - Ask both moms and dads to attend parent involvement day (monthly). Parents develop a hands-on project; pointed days for them to be involved.
- Dads have great ideas; giving them information relevant to their child is helpful to opening the door to more communication.
  - Train parents at Policy Council to do an activity back at their centers. When you get dads involved in games, they have a lot of fun, are more open and talk.
- Barriers
  - Men exposing what they consider to be their inadequacies.
  - Staff still don't understand eye contact and the importance of looking up and acknowledging, waving, when a dad enters a center.
  - Have a lot of moms that do "gate keeping" – mom's started taking over the man-to-man group; had to regroup. Now have a mom's group that allows KCI to keep man-to-man group special.
  - Inappropriate program design/delivery: Dad's aren't real open to just talking about things. You can't have them just sitting at a table and expect them to converse. Have to find ways to help them feel comfortable and talk.
- When dads are involved with kids they develop empathy and when they spend time alone with their children it builds compassion.

*Staff are encouraged to invite fathers to home visits and to not always ask for the mom when they call a family at home to discuss their children.*

- National Fatherhood Initiative website (<http://www.fatherhood.org/>): ideas about getting dads involved. Assessment on how father-friendly your center is (<http://www.fatherhood.org/Page.aspx?pid=790>). 24/7 Dad training is highly recommended.
- Keep in mind it's not always the dad who's involved in a child's life: it may be an older brother, uncle, grandfather. Doesn't have to be the father.

*Keep in mind it's not always the dad who's involved in a child's life*

## Questions/Discussion

Has it been easier to do this work because KCI's executive director is a male?

- Maybe; his understanding of parent involvement is a great plus.
- You learn much from conversations with dads. One father was on a Policy Council and he was making calls to parents of his center to invite them to a parent night. He was only given mom's names so when he called families and a dad answered, he asked for the mom. The fathers weren't very pleased with having a strange man call and ask for their wife.
- KCI has students from a nearby high school government class who visit classrooms; staff do their best to place the male students in classrooms with male teachers to show them the shift in thinking (it's not only women involved in early learning).

Has KCI considered hosting a father's café?

- Yes, but cafés don't seem to be jumping off the page. Have tried a couple different nights; are going to do a Just for Parents night and have it the same night as the man-to-man night.

## Article Review/Discussion (in the context of Engaging Men in Early Learning Environments)

*Programs received one article related to engaging men in early learning environments and were asked to read it and consider points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

The article talks about a shift in thinking. The shift really begins in the hiring processes. How do we bring our early care and learning staff on? Are our messages geared towards women only?

- One center noticed that when men walked in, teachers who'd been talking with great animation to moms shut down. The dads can sense that; gives them a sense of not belonging.

Other centers: Have any shifts been made? Do they need to be made or are they open to including men? Have you been successful in making that shift or do you already have a lot of male involvement?

### Ki ngs' Kids

- They haven't really taken a different approach; they all see the value in male involvement in the program.

### Providence

- Feel it's fairly balanced; have both moms and dads who pick up/drop off, share that role. Have two male staff. Could be more intentional about male groups, etc. Whenever they host parent groups or cafés, they seem to get a balance. Rarely have just one dad show up at a meeting.

- Are more aware since there's more research out there showing the difference men make in children's lives.

### Credit Union One

- Have a male staff member. Many of the children want to call him Miss Leo – have had dad's help facilitate talks with kids on calling him Mr. Leo.
- Cafés have included a lot of couples.
- Appreciate the ideas of involving men with intentionality.

### **Discussion**

One key question during a café in a village was how to bring dads into the program?

- There was only one male staff member: Spent 1.5 hours on how to engage men, strategies, and the shift needed to integrate those thoughts into daily work. Rather than isolate a dad's event, started the discussion looking at a project that moms did with children. They brought in leaves and created a collage. The question was asked how fathers would have approached this activity. Ideas about cultural aspect: where did the leaf come from, the importance of the leaf; story about the culture and passing of generational knowledge and ways of knowing. Once that opened up, a flood of other ideas surrounding engagement and integration were discussed.
- What are the cultures and what do dads know and want from the program?

Sharing a dad's perspective prior to a café last weekend:

- The father was very shy, reticent. Obvious that he was very involved and engaged, though.
  - He had difficulty getting started, but shared story with one of the café hosts about raising his children, and how his first partner had committed suicide, and the second left him. He was terrified at being left alone with these young children. Café host told him he was very brave.
  - Father then shared that it was good for his self-esteem to share the story and hear that the host felt he was brave.
- Showed what an impact a simple word or two can be. We tend to overlook the impact of our phrases, strategies. Sometimes we hold back (because of gender).
- How to handle feelings, stress – gender-wise. Real difference in how women and men handle things.

### **Other ideas/resources for engaging men**

- Google dad blogs, Face book has dad's point of view. Read them to understand what dad's are saying "get into their heads" – read about fears and what role you take in that.
- Providence has a dad's group on Saturday for hikes, etc.
- Daddy Dynamic – replays at 7pm today (public radio).
- Are the ways in which you do team building different when you involve men?
  - Absolutely – work to have men take the lead. Nice to have men's perspective. They tend to want to group together so we try to make up the groups.
  - Have to think about the players when designing trainings; need to ask them what they'd like to see done and how they can see it happening.

- When select a game for Policy Council – watch for their response. Have one father who always groans but he'll frequently get engaged in it. Uses him as her guide as to how others will respond.

### **What new idea are you taking from today's discussion?**

- Appreciated all the different ideas on how to engage; appreciate the article that spoke to how dad's being involved really do make a difference (educational, cognitive, verbal). Liked that question just presented: how do leaders think?
- Liked the idea of differentiating forms for moms and dads to get a whole family picture. Get an idea of how they spend their time together and what they do differently.
- Like the idea of the male community café – she'll ask the men who run the man-to-man group what they think and also host a mom's café. Like the Google dad's blog and Face book dad's page.
- Resources – Google blog and Face book. Also had a good reminder not to underestimate the abilities of men at the center. Feel we can use them to reach dads a little better. Would like them to be more involved.
- Encouraging hearing the work people are doing.
- When drafting an invitation for anyone in general write: pen pal and no judgment as reminders. How can I compel them to come rather than “get” them to come?
- Remind yourself to ask versus making assumptions.
- Thanks to all of those who tuned in today. Impressed with how engaged everyone is. Powerful to have men involved in the recent parent day events; pay attention to our messaging. What would compel men to participate?
- Simple things like the types of photos used on the invitations. What does it show? Does it speak to gathering that excitement and wanting to be engaged?

Customizing physical space is April's topic. Please contact Charlie if your center is interested in presenting on this topic.

Call ended at 2:05pm.

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the February Learning Network through survey monkey. Five responses were received as of March 22, 2011

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	50% (2)	25% (1)				25% (1)
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	33.3% (1)					66.7% (2)
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	100% (3)					

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	50% (2)	50% (2)				
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	50% (2)	25% (1)	25% (1)			
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	50% (2)	50% (2)				
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	75% (3)	25% (1)				

### Additional Comments:

1. Perhaps it would be helpful to also invite guest speakers to participate. The discussion would have been even more in-depth if we had male perspectives on the call. Just an idea for next time.
2. Great Ideas thank you so much

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Customize the Physical Space

Wednesday • April 20, 2011

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BP: Angie Lantz           | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.: Ronnie | <input type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Monica        |  |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### **thread** SFI staff

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |
|--|---|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Hoffbauer          | <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner            | <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz             | <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner           | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandi Manning | <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar               | <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund       | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts         |   |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes.



## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Customize the Physical Space

*Krista Phillips / RIM Architects*

*Krista has direct design experience with child development centers, most recently with the Providence Center for Child Development.*

What does physical space design have to do with Strengthening Families?

- This is a dear topic to Krista as she has a 2-year old and is learning a lot through his eyes. Her architect experience has grown because of him.
- It's important to recognize what goals would be necessary in design of the physical layout of a child focused building and how that impacts the idea of safety and minimization of abuse and neglect.
- The physical space should strengthen relationships.

*How does the design of the physical layout...impact the idea of safety and minimization of child abuse and neglect?*

### Eight goals of design:

1. Look and feel (comfort)
  - a. Include the local culture for the center to feel as welcoming as possible for parents and children.
2. Way-finding, particular to level changes (movement through the spaces). That can be a challenge in retro fitting buildings that weren't intended to be child care centers. Listen to stakeholders.
3. Transparency: maximizing observation opportunities as much as possible of all spaces utilized by children. Incorporate a lot of glass, and well-lit rooms.
4. Texture. Choose color palates that are child friendly but also ones that adults won't grow tired of looking at.
5. Color: Consider the psychology of color.
6. Social aspect of the projects includes having a space, reception that's inviting and secure. Finding spaces where parents can come together with each other and with teachers.
7. Safety inside and outside the facility; does it communicate to parents and visitors the fact of safety? Building can contribute to the learning process from a safety standpoint.
8. Staff development. Is there ample work space, space to rest, space to socialize?

Beautiful examples and points; just talking this morning at a Strengthening Families training about what makes a welcoming environment. It's a good reminder that if we don't feel welcome, we don't become attached. Krista touched on nearly all the points addressed at the training.

### **Article Review/Discussion (in the context of designing the physical space)**

*Participants received one article related designing the physical space and were asked to read it and consider points of interest in preparation for today's dialogue.*

The article asks, "How do we set up that environment to engage parents? How do we make it real?" It begins with the philosophy and beliefs of an organization.

What pieces in the article were most compelling and made you think, "We need to do this in our environment?"

- Ideas from specific facilities and how they used windows was interesting. In the K-12 environment they don't use a lot of windows, although many principals and others have gotten rid of the high counters in the office; removed that visual barrier.
- Have to put on a different hat when designing spaces for children; look at the facility from a different perspective. Providence Center has widows at different levels; audience was much broader.

*Does Krista have any suggestions for centers that don't have the money to make major renovations? How can programs use what they have and look at space through the lens of the protective factors? Repurpose, move things around? Any ideas?*

- Kids' Corps, Inc. Davis Center: It's very welcoming and homey – how did they do that without spending a lot of money?
  - A lot of volunteers came in and painted; new rugs and furniture were purchased through quality improvement funds. Received parent input on what would make it feel more homey. Smaller furniture was one suggestion.
- In a rural village program, the teacher did amazing things with fabrics and textures. There were hand-woven baskets for toys and fabrics leftover from kuspuks were crafted into pillows. They made a real connection to the community.
- (Krista): Low to no budget ideas, page 5 in the article touches on that. Step back and look at the big picture, then prioritize. Revisit the list annually. Start to organize funding around each of the items. Diagram that and have several options and always include a lot of stakeholders when planning. The more people, the more ideas can be generated. Make planning/strategizing an inclusive process when cost is an issue.
- Self-assessment tool: An interesting concept might be to align a column of the environment that enhances that protective factor. Has anyone tried that?
  - Maybe as a starting point, survey parents with one or two questions. Ask, "How do you feel when you walk into our center or classroom?"
- Space, aesthetics, smells, etc. are very tied to emotions and our feeling brain.
  - At one program, had a cook who came in early before anyone arrived and baked a loaf of bread. We were welcomed into our center with that smell.
  - Monday Munch: Homemade baked muffins are served. That's one morning we know parents will stay for 10-15 minutes and visit. It's a very comfortable and inviting smell.
- (Krista) When assessing centers, air quality is important. The physical issue. It's a necessity that these buildings need and have particular design criteria when it comes to air quality.
- Bringing back in the protective factors, our environment needs to serve many people, not just little ones. Staff, parents, family members. Whole idea of inclusiveness.
- Inclusive space: used to be called accessibility.
  - More than that, the emotional component. The component that makes people feel welcome, there's a part of them there, the connections made, space for them to sit down, etc.

*Fabrics leftover from kuspuks were crafted into pillows for the classroom.*

How does your space encourage team building? Are there areas that promote that and what do they look like?

- One center is set up for more relationship and team building. The staff at the center is responsible for that. Center Director took out tall barriers and made a larger space, created room with a bookcase, not having a wall. Before, staff and parents were separated, now it's more open and inviting.
- Providence has open space between them; able to share back and forth. How has that promoted team building?
  - Fortunate to have that. Staff is there to support one another on a daily basis.
  - Used to come and peek in; certain times of the day rooms would be dark and uninviting. Much happier feeling of being a part of something fun.

Think about home-based services, too. How can they make this work for them as well? How do we encourage parents in their use of physical space in their homes?

- (Mandi): The Child Care Program Office has the child care grant program that smaller programs can partake in that helps improve their program. Many want to use the funds to improve their physical space. Appreciated the article provided with today's call and will include that with the grant brochures. Are there other resources for a perspective center or licensed center to refer to? Looking for concise, not overwhelming information.
  - *Refer them to thread.*
  - Environmental Rating Scale initiative – can get an ITERS observation, or family child care observation.
- When you're looking to reduce challenging behaviors, look first at the environment for any triggers that might be there.
- Video monitoring – has anyone done that? Most costly is it? How effective? Do we need parent permission?
  - Have to be very specific in its purpose.
  - The article mentions them, but it was written by centers in large urban centers, so the cameras may be there for safety reasons?
  - Tracy has a video monitor; because they're a financial institution they have a lot of cameras. Parents are welcome in her office to observe but they do that only on occasion.

*When you're looking to reduce challenging behaviors, look first at the environment for any triggers that might be there*

### **Next Learning Network – May 18<sup>th</sup>**

Mental health (Social Emotional Competence) with Erin Kinavey and Josh Arvidson.

The end of year picnic will be held in June instead of a Learning Network. A questionnaire will be sent to programs regarding that.

Call ended at approximately 2:00PM

## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the February Learning Network through survey monkey. Two responses were received as of April 27, 2011

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	50% (1)					50% (1)
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.	50% (1)	50% (1)				

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	100% (2)					
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	50% (1)		50% (1)			

### Additional Comments:

None

# strengthening families

## A L A S K A

Learning Network | Building Social Emotional Competence in Early Care Environments  
Wednesday • May 18, 2011

### On the call:

#### Strengthening Families Anchorage Sites

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BP  | <input type="checkbox"/> Anchorage School District                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Credit Union One: Tracy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hillcrest                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids' Corps, Inc.: Ronnie, Katrina | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kings' Kids: Anna, Tammy, Michelle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providence: Jana, Britta           |  |

#### Other Agencies

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska Literacy Project (ALP) | <input type="checkbox"/> AKPIRC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospice of Anchorage          |                                 |

#### Strengthening Families Pilot Sites

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BBNA      | <input type="checkbox"/> Juneau Montessori |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> RurAL CAP/PAT     |

#### thread SF staff

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michele Jaeger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sheila Wray |
|---|---|

#### Leadership Team Members

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abbe Hensley       | <input type="checkbox"/> Alyse Galvin               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brook Hoffbauer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cindy Harrington           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coleen Turner      | <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Kinavey               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hilary Seitz       | <input type="checkbox"/> June Sobocinski            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Katrina Letner     | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Curran             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandi Manning      | <input type="checkbox"/> Panu Lucier                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Sugar         | <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley Pittz              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Berglund | <input type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas McRoberts   |   |

**Also in attendance:** Charlie Johanson-Adams, Facilitator; and Jeanette Gardiner, Gardiner Business Support Services for recording of the meeting notes.

## 15-Minute Program Highlight | Building Social Emotional Competence in Early Care Environments

*Programs were asked to provide a two-minute overview of what they're doing for the social emotional well-being of young children (including nurturing relationships amongst families, children and staff).*

**Kids' Corps, Inc (KCI):** Katrina: Head Start is fortunate at in that we contract with mental health professionals who do observations in each classroom, and as needed, will conduct individual observations. The observations help teachers gain new perspectives on working with the class as a whole and with individual children. The mental health professionals help teachers come up with methods and ways to work with children. KCI also has staff trained in ECERS, we utilize the training through thread, and have implemented CLASS (*looks at quality of interaction between children and teachers*). Have a KCI staff mental health specialist who conducts observations when needed and provides suggestions for improvements; calls in professionals when necessary.

**Providence:** When there's any big move for a child there's a plan for transition (*move to next age group, move to new classroom, etc.*). Staff support friendships in the classrooms, pair younger/older children together, help kids work out differences, emphasize the importance of sharing, talking, and working through issues that can be tricky. Center has a lot of celebrations. Manners Jar: Positive interactions that children are working on or display are placed into the Manners Jar (*i.e. helping someone new, any good manners to support each other, etc.*), and the kids work up to a celebration. Other ways they support SE development: Support having siblings visit whenever possible, call parents to say hello, and have an open door policy. Recently been in contact with PIC to help a young boy with a transition and are working well on that. Proactive communication with each other: teachers, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents who are active in children's lives. Staff bounces ideas off each other, talk during down times (playground, end of day, etc.).

*A Manners Jar helps children work up to a celebration by recognizing their positive interactions*

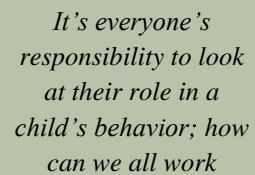
**Kings Kids':** This year there have been many families in transition, which has trickled down to children as well, so the focus has been on supporting families through these transitions. Staff works with parents/kids in the morning. Some parents are coming in a little earlier to have breakfast with kids before they go to work and some siblings are spending time before they go to school. Even those not in transitions recognize the importance of the breakfast time. *Has there been a noticeable difference in the classrooms?* Yes, especially with the younger children, there's been a big improvement with behavior. One advantage to being a smaller program can have more staff available. Many of the parents are very open about the transitions in their lives and are more open with the staff.

**Credit Union 1 (CU1):** Much of what the other programs have mentioned is what CU1 does as well, along with being intentional and planning for those SE development opportunities. Social opportunities for children are noted on daily parent reports, the center has an open door policy, and transfer plans. They offer visitations to other classrooms and have some siblings who eat breakfast and dinner together. Recently held a "Lemonade Day" where children made and sold lemonade for Japan relief (kids voted on what money would go for). Hop-a-thon for MDA was a fun curriculum to discuss – kids with different abilities. Have lots of parties and the credit union supports us in that. Kids love to do special deliveries through the inter-office mail.

**Sheila Wray:** General observations of programs in terms of SE development. There's intentionality that seems small when you talk about the simple things (i.e. breakfast, sibling visits, etc.), but she feels they make up the fabric of everyday life in group care that we tend to forget about. We forget that it's the small things that make a huge impact and difference in the lives of families. The programs she's working with (through TACSEI) haven't noticed that yet. Costs very little to implement practices. It's not about extra work; it's about doing the work differently. Driven home to her that seemingly small practices make a huge impact.

**Charlie:** If programs would like more details about TACSEI, please email her at [aktacsei@gmail.com](mailto:aktacsei@gmail.com). New data has emerged after 8 months of program-wide implementation (in the TACSEI Demonstration Sites). Erin Kinavey is sharing data with the Commissioner today. Seeing changes in children, program environment, and relationships with families, staff. Behavior incident reports are filled out daily. One program was initially reporting 40 incidents a day/180 a month (in the therapeutic model program). Went from 40 to 2 incidents a day. Teachers/ children have responded directly to the fidelity of the training and coaching that's been happening. Data is reflecting the goodness of what we were told would happen. Staff buy in has increased by 50%; staff are seeing that they can set the tone and focus on the strengths of relationships they are building. There's been a huge shift in relationships with each other and the organization. More retention; people want to stay on. Family piece is embedded through Strengthening Families and Positive Solutions for Families training.

Sheila also mentioned Alicia Deaver's efforts: thread has a mental health consultation project in collaboration with Josh Arvidson and Shirley Pittz. The other piece about TACSEI training; you don't have to be a demonstration site to receive training. Programs can request training through thread (6 hours each for levels 1 and 2). The training helps staff feel empowered to help children with challenging behaviors. It's everyone's responsibility to look at their role in a child's behavior; how can we all work together?



*It's everyone's  
responsibility to look  
at their role in a  
child's behavior; how  
can we all work  
together?*

In the TACSEI model, coaches support the teachers. They work together; it's not someone coming in and telling them what to do. Identifying with participants according to what the tool is showing, what would be best to try? It's definitely a support/coaching project rather than consulting.

For those online, after hearing about the coaching/partnership piece, and starting with staff, how do you see this occurring differently in your program? What would you like to see different with regards to SE after reading the information and hearing this?

- **Kings Kids:** Feel we can be more intentional and supportive. Because the program and staff have such longevity, they tend to "fly by the seat of our pants." Really need the intentional movement forward. *Perhaps using coaching model would be good?*
- **Providence:** What might be helpful for them is that it seems once they get to a point of needing outside help, they don't always know who can help; they don't have a relationship in place. They do have a lot of Providence resources and PIC, but not a lot of connections otherwise. Sometimes when do call upon help, find a roadblock (i.e. have tried a, b, and c) eventually work it out and outcomes are positive.
  - **Charlie:** In reference to another program that got "stuck;" they identified an internal coach and trained 2 staff members through the TACSEI coaching model



who are there for internal support and if needed, can turn to an external coach for additional support. One idea for Providence might be to train someone internally rather than searching for someone outside.

- Not everyone has the opportunity to attend all trainings; would like it to be a goal so everyone is on the same page, but would like it to go deeper. Is there information on the coaching model that can be sent to programs?
- Train-Coach-Train: Contact Kathy Kline at thread to be put on a list (if training comes up for coaching). Before you get direct training on the modules, are asking that you first do the Leadership Module – get clear direction on how to get that into place to move through. Programs can also visit [www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org) for more information on resources. More resources are available at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html>

### **Final Comments/Reminders**

- This is the last Learning Network of the year. The next meeting will be the face-to-face in June. It's been suggested that we have the face-to-face in the evening (*please email Sheila with thoughts on the date and time*) and have a celebration where everyone can attend: staff, leadership team, parents, etc. Sheila will put together slide show of successes through the year, so please email her ([swray@threadalaska.org](mailto:swray@threadalaska.org)) any digital materials. Event will probably be hosted at thread. May just be a staff function; tend to lose families once they pick up children and ask them to head to a different location. Invite state leadership team. Sheila is out on leave from Friday through the 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Hoping to do Strengthening Families in a bigger way over the next year; Commissioner has bought into Strengthening Families.
- Thank you for energy and input over the last year. If the Learning Networks have been valuable let Shirley know and if they haven't let her know, too, so we can find a different way to connect.



## Learning Network Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the May Learning Network through survey monkey. Two responses were received as of May 23, 2011

**Please evaluate the 15-Minute Program Highlight segment of our Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Hearing how a program is implementing this month's protective factor gave me new ideas to try in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
<i>**This question pertains to you if your program provided this month's highlight. If your program was NOT the highlight this month, select N/A. **</i> Sharing our program as this month's highlight has helped us recognize how Strengthening Families makes a difference with our staff, children and families.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
Having a monthly focus on an individual program and article does assist us in embedding the Strengthening Families framework into our daily work with families and young children.		50% (1)	50% (1)			

**Please evaluate the Article Review and Dialogue Segment of this month's Learning Network.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Reading the article(s) reinforced what I've learned about Strengthening Families and how I'm approaching it in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
Reading the article(s) helped me think of new approaches to implementing the protective factor in my program.	50% (1)	50% (1)				
It was helpful to hear what other programs learned from reading this month's article(s).	100% (2)					
The general dialogue helped me learn about new (or different) resources I can reach out to in my community to help support children and families.	50% (1)	50% (1)				

### Additional Comments:

1. It might be rather exciting and helpful if each program signs up to research and send out an applicable article or news item for discussion this might guarantee involvement and investment.