

# Family Well-Being: Strategies to Support Family Safety, Health, and Financial Stability

For Early Childhood Professionals



## What is Family Well-Being?

Family well-being includes the safety, health, and financial stability of all family members. Safe, healthy, and financially secure families are more likely to reach the goals they set for themselves and their children.

Early childhood professionals can contribute to the well-being of families and their children by building strengths-based relationships that foster trust and confidence. Relationships with professionals, community organizations, and peers and neighbors are important for family well-being, even after a child leaves the early care setting.

Professionals can promote well-being by

- providing quality services to families,
- linking families to other community organizations, and
- encouraging families to broaden their social support network by helping them connect with other families and members of the community.

Whether you are a family child care provider or work in an early childhood center, Pre-K program, Head Start, or Early Head Start program, you can make a positive difference in the lives of families.

This resource offers strategies for early childhood professionals and programs to support family well-being. We will address actions specific to each aspect of family well-being on the following pages.

## What can early childhood professionals and programs do to support a family's well-being?

- Create a healthy, safe, welcoming, and caring environment for children to learn and grow.
- Share resources and materials that are responsive to the culture and language of families.
- Learn more about the cultures and languages of families.
- Build relationships with parents that honor their strengths.
- Offer times for individual conferences or group get-togethers for families who express an interest or a common need.
- Create a practical system that ensures smooth and supportive referrals to community service providers.
- Display a resource board with information about services and activities that children and families can take advantage of in the community.
- Join your local early childhood council or professional network to increase understanding and access to community resources and connect with other professionals interested in promoting family well-being.
- Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) to learn more about strategies to promote family well-being.
- Find out if your community has 211 or other comprehensive health and human service referral and information services.

Adapted from [Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series, Family Well-being.](#)

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## Family Well-Being: Safety and Stability

### What can early childhood professionals and programs do?

Aspects of Safety and Stability	Individual- and Program-Level Strategies
Safe and adequate housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share information about local housing programs and available services.</li> <li>• Encourage families with housing concerns to access assistance.</li> </ul>
Safety of neighborhood and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and share information about neighborhood watch programs in your area.</li> <li>• Invite law enforcement and/or other emergency personnel to speak and answer questions at get-togethers focused on neighborhood safety.</li> <li>• Support families' connections to peers and community by offering space for parent and neighborhood discussion groups.</li> </ul>
Personal safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss ways to keep children safe from accidental contact with medicine and cleaning products and when crossing the street, riding a bike, playing in the park, or swimming in a pool.</li> <li>• Learn more about how to recognize signs of child abuse, neglect, and domestic violence and the effects on children.</li> <li>• Reach out to your local child welfare agency, domestic violence support provider, or crime victim support services agency to learn how to help families experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect.</li> </ul>



**Early childhood professionals and their situations are unique. How might these ideas work for you and your program?**

**What strategies do you already use to promote safety and stability?**

**What new strategies can you plan for and implement in the future to promote safety and stability?**

## Family Well-Being: Health and Wellness

### What can early childhood professionals and programs do?

Aspects of Health and Wellness	Individual- and Program-Level Strategies
Overall health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn more about health and wellness activities in your area and share information with families.</li> <li>• Provide nutritious food (e.g. participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and/or use CACFP guidelines as a reference for planning meals).</li> <li>• Identify and share information about nutrition assistance programs, including SNAP, WIC, and food banks.</li> <li>• Post information on nutrition and meal planning.</li> <li>• Model positive health by taking good care of yourself.</li> </ul>
Food security: enough healthy food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest healthy food and grocery options that are accessible at reasonable prices.</li> <li>• Work to create access to healthy foods in the neighborhood or community, including local farmers' markets and fresh produce stands.</li> <li>• Invite cooperative extension staff or other nutrition experts to demonstrate and/or provide tips for how to prepare nutritious and low-cost meals.</li> <li>• Discuss healthy eating behaviors with children and families.</li> </ul>
Health care: sufficient and accessible services for the entire family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and share information about community health fairs and community health services.</li> <li>• Learn more about symptoms of common mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and trauma.</li> <li>• Offer your support for families who want to access services.</li> </ul>

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**What strategies do you already use to promote health and wellness?**

**What new strategies can you plan for and implement in the future to promote health and wellness?**

## Family Well-Being: Financial Stability

### What can early childhood professionals and programs do?

Aspects of Financial Stability	Individual- and Program-Level Strategies
<p>Income and assets: adequate to meet needs of the family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post information about finances, including budgeting worksheets or information about local banks or credit unions.</li> <li>• Share information about how to access tax credits during tax time.</li> <li>• Offer families opportunities to discuss financial issues, and provide information to help them connect with resources for financial assistance.</li> <li>• Create flexible policies for payment of child care.</li> </ul>
<p>Education: sufficient to obtain good jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post employment opportunities on resource boards, or have a relationship with employment groups.</li> <li>• Respect and support the educational goals and aspirations that parents have for themselves and their children.</li> <li>• Learn about where to refer families interested in GED programs, DLL classes, job training, or higher education.</li> </ul>



**Early childhood professionals and their situations are unique. How might these ideas work for you and your program?**

**What strategies do you already use to promote financial stability?**

**What new strategies can you plan for and implement in the future to promote financial stability?**

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