THE N.J. PREVENTION PLAN: AN OVERVIEW

Opening Doors: Partnership for Prevention and Healing Conference

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The New Jersey Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan 2010-2013
(NJ Prevention Plan)

• Outlines the prevention and family strengthening efforts of the Department of Children and Families in collaboration with the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect.

• It is a framework that invites stakeholders to fully participate in New Jersey’s prevention and family success efforts while delineating DCF’s course of action.

• Its goal is to inform the work of state and local partners and to identify key concepts, resources and strategies to support families in being successful.

• It builds upon prior planning efforts and recommendations, and incorporates current prevention and family success research, state and local input from community surveys, and evidence informed practices to prevent child maltreatment.
AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION...

- Well-being of children and prevention of child abuse and neglect is a shared responsibility.
- It is larger than any single entity or agency.
- Who bears the responsibility? Everyone.
  - Public and private stakeholders
  - Government
  - Healthcare
  - Social services
  - Early education
  - Schools
  - Legislators
  - Policymakers
  - Foundations
  - Community and faith-based groups
  - Families and other individuals

FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH

N.J recognizes the important role that prevention plays in eliminating mitigating factors that can lead to children being neglected or abused.

Through the work of the DCF’s Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships (DPCP) and the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, stakeholders and families from local, public and private agencies work together to examine the issues that impact families and may make children vulnerable to neglect and abuse.

The state is committed to the practice that all prevention efforts must be family centered, accessible, strengths-focused, community-based, culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate and reflective of shared leadership.
**DPCP DEFINES PREVENTION THREE WAYS**

- **Primary Prevention** targets the general population and offers services and activities before any signs of undesired behaviors become present; there is no screening.

- **Secondary Prevention** is directed at those who are “at risk” of possibly maltreating or neglecting children. Secondary prevention efforts and services are provided before child abuse or neglect occurs.

- **Tertiary Prevention** is provided after maltreatment has occurred, to reduce the impact of maltreatment and to avoid future abuse.

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**CORE BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES**

A primary objective for our prevention work is to introduce and heighten public awareness about the Protective Factors that help to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Prevention Plan encourages public and private agencies to foster a strengths-focused, asset-based approach to engaging families by integrating the Protective Factors into all types of community and family services. The Protective Factors emphasize assets rather than deficits.
Protective Factors

- **Parental Resilience** - Ability to cope with and recover from all types of challenges.

- **Social Connections** - Friends, family members, neighbors and others who offer and provide emotional support and assistance to parents.

- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development** - Accurate information about raising young children, appropriate expectations for their behavior, and knowledge of alternative discipline techniques.

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Protective Factors

- **Concrete Support in Times of Need** - Financial security to cover expected and unexpected daily costs, formal supports (i.e. housing and transportation) and informal support from social networks.

- **Healthy Social and Emotional Development of Children** – a child’s ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively.

  - Center for the Study of Social Policy
Protective Factors

In addition to the above factors, the Child Welfare Information Gateway suggests three additional assets which, when supported, can strengthen families and prevent child maltreatment.

- **Nurturing and Attachment** - The importance of early bonding, as well as nurturing throughout childhood. Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to, and communicate with their children.

- **Effective Problem Solving and Communication Skills** - A parent, caregiver or family's ability to identify their goals, consider challenges, set realistic approaches to overcome challenges, and communicate effectively with others to reach their goals.

- **Healthy (Marriages) Relationships** - Developing and sustaining relationships with diminished levels of conflict and other attributes such as affectionate parents, high self-esteem, or a role model that helps children and youth to achieve positive outcomes.

Principles that Focus on Families

- Parents and families are a child’s first and most influential teachers—the primary source of social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development and maturity.

- Prevention efforts focus on working with pregnant women, parents and other caregivers to develop the skills, support and confidence to raise children that are happy, healthy, safe and secure.

- Family Support (Prevention) should begin as early as possible, including prior to or during pregnancy, to ensure the best possible outcomes for infants, children, youth and families.
Principles that Focus on Families

- Support to families must be respectful and responsive in addressing the diversity of families in local communities – including race, culture and ethnicity, spiritual beliefs, language, socio-economic status, and family composition.

- Parents and families must be offered a seat at the table to provide opportunities for participation, advocacy and leadership in local and state prevention efforts. When possible, efforts should be made to schedule meetings at times convenient to parents.

- Public policies that support families; nurture healthy child development.

Principles that Focus on Practice

The planning, design and implementation of prevention programs shall be informed by the New Jersey Standards for Prevention Programs: Building Success through Family Support.

Constituents, parents, youth and families, representing the full diversity of New Jersey families, should share leadership with agencies and policy makers in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating family support programs.
Principles that Focus on Practice

• Program design and implementation must incorporate evidence-based, best practice models, and/or the rigorous study of promising programs to become model programs.

• All prevention programs shall be driven by performance-based indicators and outcomes.

• Public education, social marketing and community outreach for prevention programs should be coordinated and integrated across all levels of government and society.

Principles that Focus on Resources

• Prevention funding investments are used to support promising and proven evidence-based and evidence-informed programs that are data-driven and formally tracked through an appropriate process. Appropriate support must be allocated for the proper evaluation of prevention programs and strategies so as to be certain that funds are being dedicated to approaches that work.

• Public-private prevention funding should focus on the family system, emphasizing prenatal, parent-child, and parent-youth relationships, as appropriate.

• Government resources and training to support children, youth and families should be coordinated and integrated to create a unified system of care for families that includes prevention and early intervention services.
**Principles that Focus on Resources**

- Government and other custodians of public funding must be charged with maximizing the return on the investment in prevention, and minimizing duplication of services.

- When making resource decisions, policy makers should be mindful of the full range of diverse needs required by New Jersey families.

- As incidents of child abuse and neglect decline and cost efficiencies are realized, equivalent funds for child protective services should be reinvested in family support and prevention services.

- A concerted effort must be made to ensure a balance between child abuse prevention and child protective services funding to ensure support to families before an initial or reoccurring episode of neglect or abuse appears.

**DPCP PREVENTION PRIORITIES:**

are found in the offices of:

- **Early Childhood Services** for pregnant women, parents and young children up to age five

- **School-Linked Services** for school-aged children, teenagers and their families

- **Family Support Services** for any family in need of neighborhood center-based services

- **Domestic Violence Services** for adults and families impacted by intimate partner violence.
Office of Early Childhood Services (OECS)

Focus on Primary & Secondary Prevention
- Strengthen and support new parents—beginning in pregnancy
- Address physical and emotional health—parents & children, birth to kindergarten
- Promote healthy parent-child interaction—including with other caregivers & centers
- Prevent child neglect & maltreatment

OECS
Programs and Services
- Children’s Trust Fund
- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Funds
- Strengthening Families / Early Care & Education
- Home Visitation Initiative
- Prenatal and Early Childhood Systems-Building & Service Integration (Central Intake)
NJ Home Visitation Initiative
Evidence-Based Home Visitation (EBHV)

Common Model Elements:
- Research-driven models
- Visits begin early – prenatal/birth
- Voluntary participation of families
- Frequent, long-term home visits
  (begin weekly, then decrease over time)

Core design includes a focus on:
- Prenatal & Parent Health
- Infant Child Health & Development
- Parent Education / Parent-Child Interaction
- Parent / Family Social Support
- Early Literacy / School Readiness
- Pathway for Families to Self-Sufficiency

DCF-Funded EBHV Services

DCF currently supports 34 EBHV sites with a total statewide capacity of 3,000 families

23 HF-TIP sites Total of 1850 families
  □ All 21 counties (2 sites in Essex / 2 sites in Middlesex)

9 NFP sites (12 counties) Total of 900 families
  □ North – Essex, Passaic, Hudson, Union
  □ Central – Middlesex/Somerset, Mercer, Monmouth
  □ South – Camden, Cumberland, Salem, Gloucester

3 PAT sites (3 counties) Total of 150 families
  □ Cape May, Cumberland and Somerset
NJ Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI)
Strengthening Families through Early Care & Education

SFI strategies build protective factors for families in the childcare setting—reaches childcare providers & parents.

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

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies (21 counties) train childcare workers & monitor implementation in participating centers

180 participating childcare centers

OFFICE OF LINKED SERVICES

The OSLS goal is to help young people navigate their adolescent years, finish their education, obtain skills leading to employment or continuing education, and graduate healthy and drug free.
Office of School Linked Services

OSLS Provides:

- Mental health and family services
- Healthy youth development
- Substance abuse counseling
- Access to primary and preventative health services
- Employment services
- Pregnancy prevention programs
- Learning support services
- Family involvement
- Referrals to community based services
- Recreation
OSLS: WHERE ARE WE?

SBYSP sites, which are located in each of the 21 counties in or near schools in urban, rural and suburban communities, are open to all youth ages 10-19, and provide services before, during and after school and throughout the summer.

Sites are located in:
- 69 high schools
- 18 middle schools
- 5 elementary SBYSP sites

SBYSP CORE SERVICES:

- Mental Health Counseling
- Employment Counseling
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Preventive Health Service
- Learning Support Services

Offered for NJ Public School Families
At schools or at a site (12-month program (summer included)
SCHOOL BASED YOUTH PROGRAM: Valedictorian Harvard bound

Rony Cepeda, participated in the School-Based Youth Program at Perth Amboy High School. He was accepted to Harvard University and credits his SBYS counselors with encouraging him to apply.

Perth Amboy Valedictorian Harvard bound

Although the acceptance results were posted online 6 p.m. March 30, Cepeda said he intentionally didn’t find out where he had been accepted until the following day.

That’s because he wanted to share the news with the counselors at the School Based Youth Service Program, who had encouraged him to apply to Ivy League schools. Since his sophomore year, Cepeda had worked with the counselors to offer tutoring and learning tools for other students.

“They told me to look into these schools. They encouraged me. They said I had the potential and to not let myself down. They are like a family. I wanted them to be there,” he said.

- Press Media Papers
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (APPI)

GOAL: To reduce pregnancy among at-risk adolescent youth

- Offered to NJ Public School Families
- School based
- 12 month program (including summer)
- Intensive case management and counseling services
- Serves 60 high risk teens
- Counseling provided by or under supervision of a licensed clinician
- Service collaboration with school personnel
  - e.g. nurse, health & PE
- Group Services
  - Pregnancy & HIV/STD/STI Prevention
  - Decision making
  - Life skills with emphasis on communication, negotiation and refusal skills

PARENT LINKING PROGRAM

PLP seeks to minimize/eliminate barriers teen parents face that jeopardize their ability to complete their education. This is accomplished through:

- Life Skills Development
- Pregnancy Prevention
- Childcare
- Counseling: individual & group
- Intensive case management to promote social skills
- Relationship education
- Parenting education
Family Friendly Centers

Family Friendly Centers offer a wide range of services to enhance after-school programming for elementary and middle-school students and their families with an emphasis on parental participation and collaboration among school and community stakeholders to meet the needs of students and parents.

FFC Core Services

Education
- Tutoring, homework assistance
- Basic skills instruction and other learning supports linked to the school instruction

Social Services
- Consultations, referrals, workshops and distribution on information related to issues such as:
  - Health and Safety
  - Relationships
  - Problem Solving and Life Skills

Enrichment
- Activities that enhance learning, personal and social development, cultural awareness and leadership skills
  - e.g. field trips, drama, music, art

Recreation
- Activities that promote physical fitness, relaxation, literacy, socialization, artistic skills and development of meaningful hobbies
  - e.g. games, sports, crafts
**NJ Child Assault Prevention (NJ-CAP)**

A statewide prevention program to reduce the vulnerability of children to assault through training to recognize potentially abusive and violent situations and the arming of strategies to manage and prevent them.

- Operated by Education Information Resource Center (EIRC)

- Services provided:
  - Students in Pre-K-12 with individual classroom workshops
  - Parents and community members
  - School administrators, teachers/staff in grades Pre-K-12 through in-service

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**2nd Floor Youth Helpline**

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- Offered for NJ youth as a safe place to turn when life’s problems become difficult or unmanageable
  - Ages 10-24
  - 24-hours a day/7 days per week
  - Supervised by a mental health professional
  - Resources available by phone and or on-line

1-888-222-2228 and on-line message board at [www.2ndfloor.org](http://www.2ndfloor.org)
The Office of Family Support Services works with non-profit entities in an effort to coordinate and consolidate services provided to families and their children within community settings.

The emphasis of this office is to provide culturally-competent, strengths-based, family-friendly services in a manner that is universally accessible to those who voluntarily request these services.

**Family Success Centers**

**What are they?**

FSCs are neighborhood gathering places where any community resident can go for support, information and services.

FSCs may be in different settings such as: storefronts, houses, schools, houses of worship, office buildings, housing projects, etc.
Family Success Center Model

• The FSC approach is collaborative; local residents serve as mentors and decision-makers; families use strengths/skills to problem solve.

• FSC’s include community involvement and shared responsibility. Residents influence development and implementation and participate in governance.

• The design and delivery of FSC’s affirm and strengthen cultural identity and diversity; staff of the FSC represents the culture, ethnicity, and makeup of the community.

FAMILY SUCCESS CENTERS:
Core Services

- Access to child, maternal, and family health information
- Development of “Family Success” plans
- Economic Self-sufficiency/employment related services
- Information and referral services
- Life skills training
- Housing-related services
- Parent education
- Parent-child activities
- Advocacy
- Home visits
KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

- In New Jersey there are **180,227 children** living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives (U.S. 2010 Census).

- The Kinship Navigator Program was implemented in **January 2000** to help caregivers "navigate" their way through government programs and to find local support and resources.

**There are four regional agencies:**

- **Care Plus, NJ** - serving Bergen, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren County.

- **The Salvation Army** - serving Essex County. (973)351-1091.

- **Children’s Home Society** - serving Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset, Hunterdon, and Union Counties.

- **Family Service Association** - serving Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties.

Differential Response

- Recognizes while not all families meet the state criteria for child protective services, some need supportive services to establish or maintain family stability.

- Strengths-based, community-oriented approach to addressing the needs of families and children.

- Builds innovative partnership with community-based organizations to help support families that are in need of services, before additional problems surface.
At the heart of Differential Response are key principles that guide its practice and application.

- Children are safer and families are stronger when communities work together.
- Identifying family issues and stepping in early leads to better results than waiting until a family is in a real crisis.
- Families can more successfully resolve issues when they voluntarily engage in solutions, services and supports.

Foundation Consortium for California’s Children & Youth

Office of Domestic Violence Services

Domestic Violence Lead Agency in each of the 21 NJ counties that provide core services

PALS Program for non-offending parents and their children (11 programs)

Domestic Violence Liaison Program (each county is covered by at least one DVL)

Legal Representation Programs at Legal Services of NJ and Central Jersey Legal Services

Training and TA with NJCBW

Expanded services (Batterer’s programs, transitional housing programs)
Domestic Violence Core Services

- 24-hour Hotline
- Support Services and Advocacy for Children while in shelter
- 24-hour access to a shelter facility for at least 30 days
- Financial Advocacy
- Legal options advocacy, relief under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act
- Housing Advocacy
- Community Education and Awareness
- Counseling for Victims & Children residential and non-residential

Domestic Violence Expanded Services
(not required of each agency)

- **Transitional housing** or long-term residential services post emergency shelter

- **Voluntary and court mandated counseling** for perpetrators including individual and/or group counseling
**PALS: Peace, A Learned Solution Program**

- Eleven programs are provided for children ages 4-12 who have been exposed to domestic violence.
- Research-based intensive therapeutic program model using creative arts therapies such as art, dance movement and drama therapy.
- Parent involvement; currently undergoing an evaluation through a federal grant.

**Domestic Violence Liaison Program**

**Goals:**
- To **increase safety, stability and well-being** and improve outcomes for children and their families in domestic violence situations.
- To **strengthen DCF/DYFS capacity to effectively assess and intervene** with families in domestic violence situations.
- **Domestic Violence Liaisons** are co-located at DYFS offices to assist DYFS caseworkers in on-site assessment, case planning and safe interventions and domestic violence safety planning, support, and advocacy for domestic violence victims and their children.
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DVL SUCCESS STORY

In one county, for example, a DVL assisted a family when a husband was charged with making threats against a mother and their two children. She was introduced to the family prior to Dad’s transition back into the home. After reviewing the case file and prior history, including police/court reports, she offered additional insight into the family dynamics, and accompanied the worker to the home.

She was able to speak to the family and offer resources; in addition, the mother shared additional information about her husband’s behaviors. She was fearful of fully disclosing some of her concerns before the liaison talked to her, as she was afraid that if she was honest, her children would be removed.

Instead, there was a conversation about available options, including:
- Restraining Order vs. Order of Protection
- DV Safe Housing
- Counseling
- Reframing the reunification plan that DYFS had created to expand the services that were needed by the father.
DVL SUCCESS STORY

After consultation with Division staff, the family made a plan that was stronger and safer. The mother currently has a restraining order and is caring for her children within their family home. She has returned to work, and she and the children report that they feel safe.

The family is participating in therapeutic services, and the father has been placed in a mental health facility after a more thorough assessment. Although the ultimate outcome is not clear, the family is optimistic about their future.

PREVENTION STANDARDS

In an effort to support and expand sound prevention in New Jersey, in 2003 members of the Prevention subcommittee of the New Jersey Task Force Child Abuse Neglect developed “Standards for Prevention Programs”
The Standards are based on the “Principles and Premises of Family Support”

**PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY SUPPORT**

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

2. Staff enhance families’ capacity to support the growth and development of all family members, adults, youth and children.

3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs and to communities.

4. Programs affirm and strengthen families’ cultural, racial and linguistic identities and enhance their abilities to function in a multi-cultural society.

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**Principles of Family Support**

5. Programs are embedded in communities and contribute to the community-building process.

6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive and accountable to the family served.

7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.

8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.

9. Principles of Family Support are modeled in ALL program activities, including planning, governance and administration.
Premises of Family Support

1. Primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.

2. Assuring the well-being of all families is the cornerstone of a healthy society and requires universal access to support programs and services.

3. Children and families exist as part of an ecological system.

4. Child-rearing patterns are influenced by parents' understanding of child development and their children's unique characteristics, personal sense of competence and cultural and community traditions and mores.

5. Enabling families to build on their own strengths and capacities promotes the healthy development of children.

6. The developmental processes that make up parenthood and family life create needs that are unique at each stage in the life-span.

7. Families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources and take action to improve the well-being of children, families and communities.
NJ STANDARDS for PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Standards help provide accountability, comparison of programs, a common language and a recognition of effective programs.

Conceptual Standards:

- Family Centered
- Community-Based
- Culturally Sensitive and Culturally Competent
- Early Start
- Developmentally Appropriate
- Participants as Partners with Staff
- Empowerment and Strengths-Based Approach
Practice Standards:

- Flexible and Responsive
- Partnerships Approaches
- Links with Informal and Formal Supports
- Universally Available and Voluntary
- Comprehensive and Integrated
- Easily Accessible
- Long Term and Adequate Intensity

Administrative Standards:

- Sound Program Structure, Design, and Practices
- Committed, Caring Staff
- Data Collection and Documentation
- Measures Outcomes and Conducts Evaluations
- Adequate Funding and Long Range Plan
- Participants and Community as Collaborators
The 2010-2013 Prevention Plan and the Standards for Prevention Programs are available on the DCF website at:

http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/commissions/njitfcn/preventionplan.pdf

http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/about/commissions/njitfcn/standardsprevention.pdf

http://www.nj.gov/dcf/prevention/directory.html
END NOTES

1. Child Welfare Information Gateway, Children’s Bureau/ACYF, USDHSS April 2006; The Federal Website lists "Healthy Marriages" as the protective factor. New Jersey chooses to expand this definition to be inclusive of all relationships such as parental, kinship, foster, adoptive, intimate, partner/dating as well as spousal.


The Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships
THANK YOU