



## Strengthening Families Self-Assessment

### *Abbreviated STARS Version for Program Staff*

In combination or in place of completing the full version of the [Strengthening Families Self-Assessment](#), you may choose to use this abbreviated version as a way to increase how many staff and families can participate in the process:

- To **evaluate** how deeply the Strengthening Families Protective Factor framework is embedded in your program, and in everyday actions of the staff
- To **identify and set goals** to fully incorporate the Strengthening Families framework into your program and to support families. Information from this self-assessment will help guide you in identifying Family & Youth Engagement goals for your STARS CQI Plan.

**Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to supporting families. It builds protective factors that help to reduce stress, lead to optional child development, and decrease child abuse and neglect.** There are five protective factors identified within Strengthening Families. These are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families and communities that promote positive well-being and healthy development for children.

- **Parental Resilience:** Ability to manage stress and function well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma
- **Social Connections:** Having positive relations that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development:** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development
- **Concrete support in times of need:** Access to concrete supports and services that help to meet family's needs and minimize stress caused by challenges
- **Social and emotional competence of children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships



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*STARS Abbreviated Version for Program Staff*

**Program Name:**

**Date:**

**Person/people completing self-assessment:**

To promote Parental Resilience				
	Always	Sometimes	Not yet	Comments
1. Staff is available to greet families when they come in (1.3.1)				
2. The program has multiple avenues for regularly communicating in a variety of ways (family orientation, individual conversations, written, etc) to provide information to families and to gather family input on curriculum activities (1.2.3)				
3. Parents have opportunities to share their skills, talents and cultural traditions with children and other parents (1.7.4)				
4. The program accepts and supports diverse family structures (single parents, grandparents, same sex parents) (1.8.3)				
5. When common signs of stress occur, program staff reach out to families proactively and supportively				
6. Program offers activities designed to address interests of different family members (e.g. fathers, mothers, other family members) (1.23.2)				
7. Staff and parents talk together about their observations or concerns about a child who is experiencing stress, discuss how they will respond appropriately and follow up with each other to evaluate how they are doing				
<b>Is there anything else you'd like to share about your program's practices that support Parental Resilience?</b>				



To promote Social Connections				
	Always	Sometimes	Not yet	Comments
1. The program encourages positive relationships between families and staff members by planning informal social events where staff can interact with families (2.4)				
2. The program models positive social skills and community building by promoting families' understanding of different cultures and backgrounds (2.7.4)				
3. The program helps to resolve conflicts among families (2.8.6)				
4. Program encourages parents to set up mutual support mechanisms (phone tree, carpools, play groups, etc) (2.10)				
5. Staff are visible in their engagement with issues of concern to the community and involvement with other community organizations (2.15)				
<b>Is there anything else you'd like to share about your program's practices that support Social Connections?</b>				



To promote Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development				
	Always	Sometimes	Not yet	Comments/Ways you'd like to improve
1. Staff model developmentally appropriate responses to children's behavior, interests, temperaments and need for explorations and learning (3.1.1)				
2. When staff talk with parents about discipline, they offer ideas for alternate ways to manage children's behavior and to recognize and reinforce desired/appropriate behavior (3.4.7)				
3. Parenting and child development information is provided through multiple avenues to meet diverse learning styles (books, posting resources on bulletin board, parenting group, etc.) (3.7)				
4. Family members are encouraged to visit at any time; observe their children participating in programming when appropriate; and talk with staff about their observations and questions (3.11)				
5. Parents and staff work together to design and organize opportunities for parent-led discussions (3.13)				
6. Staff share their observations of children with parents to help parents recognize their child's growth and development patters (3.15.3)				
7. Staff reinforce positive parent-child interactions by sharing something positive with parents about what their child has done each day (3.16.1)				
<b>Is there anything else you'd like to share about your program's practices that support Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development?</b>				



To promote Concrete Support in Times of Need				
	Always	Sometimes	Not yet	Comments
1. Staff proactively respond to signs of parent or family distress by being sensitive and responsive to the impact of family stress on children (4.4.2)				
2. When a family is experiencing extreme difficulties or crisis, at least one staff member with a close relationship with the family reaches out to the family proactively (4.5.1)				
3. The program maintains up-to-date information about services in the community, and it is readily available to families (4.8)				
4. When staff make referrals to outside services, they offer to support the initial contact between service provider and family (4.11.6)				
5. Staff communicate with parents regularly about resources being available in times of need (4.1 and 4.3)				
<b>Is there anything else you'd like to share about your program's practices that supports Concrete Support in Times of Need?</b>				



<b>To promote Social and Emotional Competence of Children</b>				
	Always	Sometimes	Not yet	Comments
1. The program helps parents understand the child's age-appropriate social and emotional skills and behaviors (5.1.2)				
2. Staff nurture children and model nurturing for parents by modeling empathy and appropriate emotional responsiveness (5.3.7)				
3. Staff respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by communicating staffing changes to children and families (5.5.1 and 5.5.2)				
4. The program supports children's social and emotional development with intentional practices, such as actively involving children in solving their conflicts by talking out problems and identifying emotions (5.7.4)				
5. The program welcomes the culture of families it serves by inviting families to define and express their personal experiences and values that are most important to them (5.9.1)				
6. When staff are concerned about a child's social and emotional development, they help parents develop strategies for addressing the issue at home (5.14.4)				
<b>Is there anything else you'd like to share about your program's practices that support promoting Social and Emotional Competence of your child?</b>				

The Vermont STARS team created this abbreviated Strengthening Families Self-Assessment to make it easier for staff to complete. To learn more about the Strengthening Families framework or to complete the full Strengthening Families Self-Assessment, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)