

## Talking Points for NAEYC Affiliates about strengthening families

- ▶ Early childhood professionals have always strengthened and supported children and families and are uniquely positioned to do so.
- ▶ That early childhood professionals have a significant role in preventing child abuse and neglect is receiving new emphasis in the prevention field. This professional role reflects a long history of ethical conduct and practical experience in the early childhood field and has gained even more support from research conducted since 2002 by [NAEYC](#) and the Center for the Study of Social Policy ([CSSP](#)).
- ▶ The [Doris Duke Charitable Foundation](#) provides generous support to NAEYC, CSSP, [Zero to Three](#), the [Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds](#), and others for efforts related to this new approach to family support and child abuse prevention.
- ▶ The approach centers on building the following five protective factors:
  - Parental resilience;
  - Social connections for the family;
  - Adequate knowledge of parenting and child development;
  - Concrete support in times of need; and
  - Children's healthy social and emotional development.
- ▶ Early childhood professionals are *well-positioned* to build protective factors, yet research indicates that they are not always *well-prepared* to do so. NAEYC [research](#) conducted in 2002 revealed that early childhood educators lack key skills needed to understand and handle—and help families to understand and handle—children's challenging behavior; promote children's healthy social and emotional development; and communicate effectively with families, especially about difficult topics.
- ▶ Strengthening families and the protective factors are reflected in NAEYC's ten [Early Childhood Program Standards](#), especially the standards on Families and Community Relationships. Early childhood programs must meet each of the ten standards to be recognized as NAEYC-accredited.
- ▶ Early childhood professionals in at least 40 states have been touched by one or more of the DDCF grantees' work—and the list keeps growing. These states—with varying types and levels of activity—are depicted on a [map](#).

- ▶ Work varies according to the grantee’s mission, priorities, and unique organizational structure; collectively, the work is complementary and in some cases, overlapping.
- ▶ In states and communities across the country early childhood professionals are:
  - developing needed knowledge and skills through training and technical assistance in pre-service and in-service settings;
  - building new collaborations and coalitions with a variety of stakeholders;
  - advocating for improvements in public policies that affect families and children;
  - communicating and reaching out through trainings, presentations, and media efforts;
  - developing new supportive services for children and families;
  - implementing changes in licensing or credentialing;
  - promoting parent leadership;
  - developing curricula and tools; and more.
- ▶ NAEYC’s DDCF-funded activities include:
  - Development of [resources](#) and training materials;
  - The [\*Supporting Teachers, Strengthening Families National Leadership Program\*](#);
  - Professional development opportunities; and
  - Communications and outreach.
- ▶ Many [NAEYC Affiliates](#) and Affiliate leaders are actively engaged in family strengthening work in their communities—through NAEYC and/or other DDCF grantees pursuing common outcomes.
- ▶ NAEYC is a National Partner in the new [Strengthening Families National Network](#)<sup>TM</sup>. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) is working to build this network by facilitating a process whereby states must provide evidence of their work in order to become part of the Strengthening Families National Network<sup>TM</sup>.
- ▶ More information about NAEYC’s efforts and the efforts of DDCF grantees with whom NAEYC partners is available at [Supporting Teachers, Strengthening Families](#).