

Child Abuse Prevention Month: The Caregivers' Role

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, an important time to reflect on the impact we have on the lives of the children in our care. Every member of a community can play a part in preventing child abuse, but the role of the Early Childhood Educator is one of the most significant. This is not only due to the many hours children spend with their teachers, but also because early childhood educators are often the first to notice signs of abuse or neglect. We can play our part to prevent abuse because we have opportunities to shape the lives of children, make meaningful connections with families and help to find and provide them with support when needed. The Grow NJ Kids process can strengthen these opportunities by assisting in policy development, staff training, collaborative support, and with tools like Strengthening Families.



In 2013 there were 94,486 cases of reported abuse to children in New Jersey¹. There are risk factors for this type of maltreatment, but research shows there are also protective factors that may guard against the dangers of abuse and neglect. As providers of early childhood education, we have important and serious work to do and we are able, through GNJK, to learn about and to implement the Strengthening Families framework and self-assessment. The Strengthening Families Approach uses research-based strategies to reduce child abuse and neglect by building on five Protective Factors. (See right.)

Blake, Allison, Ph.D., L.S.W. "Child Protection and Permanency Abuse and Neglect Findings Report: Calendar Year 2013." (2013). New Jersey Department of Children and Families. Web. <http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/childdata/continuous/2013_AnnualAbuseNeglectReport.pdf>.



5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Parental Resilience - The ability to bounce back, find ways to solve problems, build and sustain trusting relationships, and find help when needed

Social Connections - Friends, family, neighbors and community members who provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give assistance

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development - Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations which help parents see their children in a positive light and promote their healthy development

Concrete Support in Times of Need - Basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care, essentials for families when they encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse

Social and Emotional Competence of Children - A child's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior, and effectively communicate their feelings. Challenging behaviors create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance can prevent negative results and keep development on track.

A Look at GNJK Category 3: Family and Community Engagement

Question from Center:

“There are so many ways we engage families at our center. Why do we need to use Strengthening Families?”

Answer from TAC:

Sending photos of children home, inviting family members into the classroom, and providing events for parents to attend can do so much for your school. You may feel very satisfied that you have active parents and that you know what their needs are. However, many families may have needs that we cannot recognize through these activities. We might never realize we are missing what these families need most.

Strengthening Families is a research based framework with tools designed to help:

- ◇ build relationships with families
- ◇ identify the strengths they possess
- ◇ build on these strengths
- ◇ recognize the activities you are doing that have the most impact
- ◇ provide skills and techniques for addressing challenging behaviors
- ◇ decrease unrealistic expectations that result in frustration and anger
- ◇ incite feelings of contentment and connection instead of uncertainty and isolation

The result of Strengthening Families is an improved quality of life, with a decrease in the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

To find out more:

visit their website <http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/about>

download the Self-Assessment http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/resources/SF_Program-SelfAssessment_2012.pdf



Center Spotlight

We are pleased to welcome **Little Treasures Learning Center** to the Technical Assistance Center!

Little Treasures, located in Edison, New Jersey is run by Christine and Troy Glennon. They have been in business since 2001 and will be celebrating 15 years this October. They are proud to have a large facility that includes a gym, an enrichment room, a computer lab, and 17 classrooms for infants through 1st grade.

Christine has found the Grow NJ Kids process challenging, but rewarding: “It’s not easy; it’s a lot of work. But we are always asking, ‘What can we do better?’ and Grow NJ Kids brought us things that we never would have considered. I like that we are getting support, because it can be overwhelming. This process is going to help us improve the quality of our program. I especially like the initiative for professional development. Employees can pursue their CDA or degree through a scholarship. This is a great benefit for our employees.”

The staff at Little Treasures involves families by inviting them into classrooms and holding events such as their recent Read Across America Read-a-thon where each child received a new book to take home. They are beginning work with the Strengthening Families framework.

Child Abuse Prevention Events– JOIN US!

Plant a Pinwheel Garden

The pinwheel is a symbol for PCA. It was selected as a fun, whimsical symbol of the great childhood that we desire for all children. Prevent Child Abuse chapters have been “planting” pinwheel gardens since 2008. Join us as we kick off Child Abuse Prevention month by planting a pinwheel garden! This year’s New Jersey garden will be planted at the

Rutgers University

College Avenue Gym New Brunswick

Originally scheduled for April 1 but **postponed** due to weather.

Visit www.preventchildabusenj.org for the last information or this exciting event.

Want to plant a garden at your center?

Contact your TAS for details and to order pinwheels!



2nd Annual

Great Childhoods Radiothon

Prevent Child Abuse-NJ will be participating in a Radiothon to discuss our programs.

We will be live at the

Brunswick Square Mall in East Brunswick

And on the radio at 1450 WCTC

April 15, 6 am– 6 pm

Call in to chat with the Director and

Program Managers from

GNJK from 3:00—4:00 pm.

Night at the Movies

PCA-NJ is hosting a free screening of the award-winning film “*Paper Tigers*” because raising awareness about the importance of healthy child development and positive parenting can build a foundation of healthy behavior that can ensure that children enjoy a happy, safe and healthy childhood.

Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville

April 26, 4:00 – 7:00 pm

Register on line:

<https://pcanj.wufoo.com/forms/m1yjrdg0187ik7n/>
or by phone 1-800-CHILDREN (Stephanie or Joanne)



Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey™

PCA-NJ, your GNJK Technical Assistance Center, operates a broad range of preventative service designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties.

PCA-NJ offers free **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention workshops** to agencies once annually, as well as specialized topics for a fee, including: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Home Visiting Safety Training, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking 101, Neglect, Protective Factors.

To schedule a workshop call (732) 246-8060 x109 or email smichael@preventchildabusenj.org

If you would like more information on any of these events

or ***if you would like to order your own pinwheels for your center,***

Consult your TAS or visit the Prevent Child Abuse NJ website at: <https://www.preventchildabusenj.org>

Need to Know!

Save the date for these upcoming opportunities...



Webinars

Open to all GNJK programs

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
April 28	1:00 - 2:00	“Strengthening Families– Protective Factors”	Jeannette Alcantara, Sr. TAS	This webinar will provide participants with an understanding of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors, how to incorporate them into their everyday activities, why they are important and the benefits to both parents and center staff. Registration URL: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1638205628751592193
May 18	12:00 - 1:00	“Family Engagement”	Kim Leary, Sr. TAS	This webinar will focus on how to establish and engage enrolled families and support their participation in their child’s learning. Registration URL: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/738742445069182468



GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLC)

County– specific

Date	Time	Location	County
May 19	12:00- 2:00	Montgomery Presbyterian Church, 638 Mill St, Belleville, NJ	Essex

Needs Assessment Survey

Please help us cater to YOUR needs by completing our Needs Assessment survey. Follow this link and share your thoughts about PLCs.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gnjkneedsassessment>



Training

Click on the link provided below to view all currently offered professional development opportunities specifically designed for GNJK centers.

[Trainings](#)



Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

www.preventchildabusenj.org/programs/growtac