



PARTNERS FOR FLORIDA'S
— CHILDREN & FAMILIES —

POSITION PAPER: The Role of Prevention in Florida

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are strongly correlated with poor long-term outcomes, including increased risk of mental health issues, substance abuse, and chronic illness. However, **Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)**, such as supportive family relationships, access to safe and engaging schools, and community connectedness, can buffer the effects of ACEs, fostering resilience and improve well-being.

Prevention strategies should integrate PCE-focused programming, such as mentoring initiatives, community-driven family resource hubs, and parenting workshops to maximize protective effects.

How: A Prevention-Oriented Framework

Florida's child and family services system must prioritize prevention to address family challenges before they escalate into crises. By addressing root causes of instability, we can intervene "upstream" to prevent child welfare involvement, support families holistically, and foster generational change. This framework not only strengthens families but also generates significant societal returns by reducing costs related to child welfare, healthcare, and criminal justice systems.

The **Protective Factors Framework** provides a cohesive foundation for this prevention approach, emphasizing building trust, addressing systemic barriers, and promoting family and child well-being.

THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

- 1. Parental Resilience:** Supporting parents to manage stress and overcome challenges.
- 2. Social Connections:** Creating strong networks of community and familial support.
- 3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Empowering parents with tools to foster their children's growth.
- 4. Concrete Supports in Times of Need:** Ensuring access to essential resources like housing, food, and healthcare.
- 5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children:** Building lifelong emotional regulation and interpersonal skills in children.

This framework highlights positive approaches that emphasize family strengths while identifying areas where additional support is needed.



DEFINING PREVENTION LEVELS

From a public health perspective, prevention operates across three levels:

- 1. Primary Prevention:** Universal strategies such as public education campaigns, universal access home visiting, parent education activities, and affordable early childhood education for the community-at-large. These activities are meant to impact families before any allegations of abuse and neglect.
- 2. Secondary Prevention:** Targeted services for families with risk factors, including families with substance abuse, teen parents, parents of special needs children, single parents, and low-income families. Secondary prevention services include parent education classes targeted for high-risk parents, respite care for parents of a child with a disability, or home visiting programs for new parents.
- 3. Tertiary Prevention:** Interventions for families already involved in the child protection system, focusing on recovery and stabilization to mitigate further harm and promote healing.

An **upstream approach** targets systemic challenges (such as economic instability and social isolation) to prevent stressors from escalating into crises. By creating environments where families can thrive, prevention strategies yield long-term benefits for families and communities.

Why: The Case for Prevention: Return on Investment

Investments in prevention deliver measurable outcomes:

- **Economic Savings:** Every \$1 invested in early childhood programs can yield up to \$13 in societal savings by reducing dependency on public systems.
- **Improved Outcomes:** Evidence-based parenting programs, community-based mental health, and resource navigation to decrease child maltreatment rates and improve family stability.
- **Resilient Communities:** Prevention reduces demand for crisis services and strengthens the social fabric of neighborhoods.

Leveraging **Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)** as a counterbalance to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) demonstrates that nurturing relationships, community support, and stable environments positively influence lifelong health outcomes.

The Partners' Role: Frontline Support for Families

The Partners for Florida's Children & Families (PFCF) are uniquely positioned to implement prevention strategies across Florida, leveraging their community connections and expertise:

1. **Building Trust in Communities**
2. **Expanding Access to Services**
3. **Strengthening Family Stability**
4. **Promoting Child Well-being**

VALUE ADDED BY PFCF

PFCF brings unique strengths to Florida's prevention system:

- **Measurable Outcomes:** Programs demonstrate clear impacts, from reduced crisis calls to improved family stability.
- **Evidence-Based Practices:** Services use proven methods with professionally trained staff and measurable family outcomes.
- **Community Connection:** PFCF members are deeply embedded in the communities they serve, fostering trust and accessibility.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** PFCF bridges public and private resources to expand program reach and impact.

The Partners for Florida's Children & Families are committed to building a **prevention-first system** that works at the community level, strengthening the family's social network and utilizing that network as a source of support. By integrating **Protective Factors**, addressing systemic inequities, and advancing both ACE and PCE frameworks, PFCF ensures families are supported long before crises arise. Together, we can create generational change across Florida.



PARTNERS FOR FLORIDA'S
— CHILDREN & FAMILIES —

To learn more about the Partners for Florida's Children & Families and how you can help lead the way for our children and our state, visit partnersforfl.org or contact partners@partnersforfl.org.

PartnersForFL.org