



FAMILY STRENGTHENING MONTH

2026 TOOLKIT



April is Family Strengthening Month

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment. Families are the best resource to provide the positive interactions and healthy conditions that children need to flourish. During **Family Strengthening Month**, please join us in highlighting how strong Wisconsin families promote the well-being of children in our state. This toolkit contains activities for use by Wisconsin programs to support family strengthening during the month of April 2026 and throughout the year.

Children are the foundation and the future of our communities and our state. Children raised in loving and supportive environments have healthier relationships, a greater tendency to prosper academically and financially, and are more likely to become successful contributing members of society. Wisconsin must act as a leader and champion for all of our children by supporting communities and promoting programs and policies that enhance the lives of children and families. Research has shown the most effective way to prevent child abuse & neglect is to strengthen families and communities, so they can provide nurturing environments where children can thrive. Access to quality childcare, affordable housing, and safe neighborhoods reduces parental stress and allows families to focus on creating a secure and nurturing home.



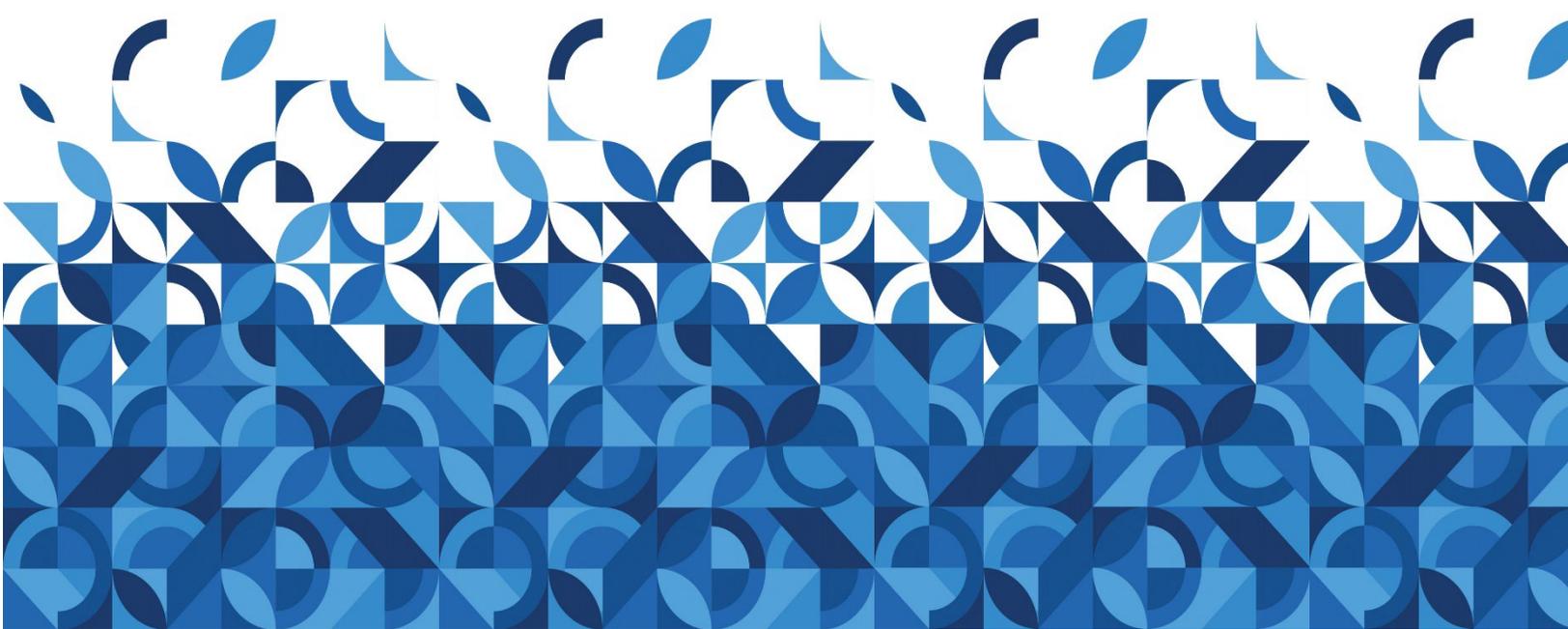
This Family Strengthening Month toolkit provides resources for communities, organizations, and individuals to promote family strengthening efforts in April as well as throughout the year. Please feel free to modify and enhance the information contained within the toolkit and use it as a launching point for your own ideas. It doesn't matter how big or small your effort might be. Providing positive messages and opportunities for families and children is always a worthwhile goal.

We welcome you to join with the Wisconsin Family Strengthening Month Committee and numerous partnering organizations from around the state in uniting together to support children and families throughout Family Strengthening Month and beyond.



Table of Contents

Celebrate Family Strengthening Month.....	1
Promote Family Strengthening in Your Community.....	3
Share the Message: Use Sample Social Media Posts and Hashtags	
Media Tips	8
Social Media Tips.....	9
Show Your Support: Participate in Wear Blue Day.....	12
2025 Governor's Proclamation Sample.....	12
Sample Letters and Press Releases.....	13



Create a Plan for Action!



This toolkit provides ideas for planning a Family Strengthening campaign for the month of April and continuing throughout the year. Developing a strategy early will ensure the best outcomes for your organization. Use these steps to create your action plan:

- Develop a timeline
- Identify the audience(s) you are trying to reach
- Tailor your message to each identified audience
- Choose activities to implement in your community
- Use social media. See pages 9 to 11 for tips.

Check back for more

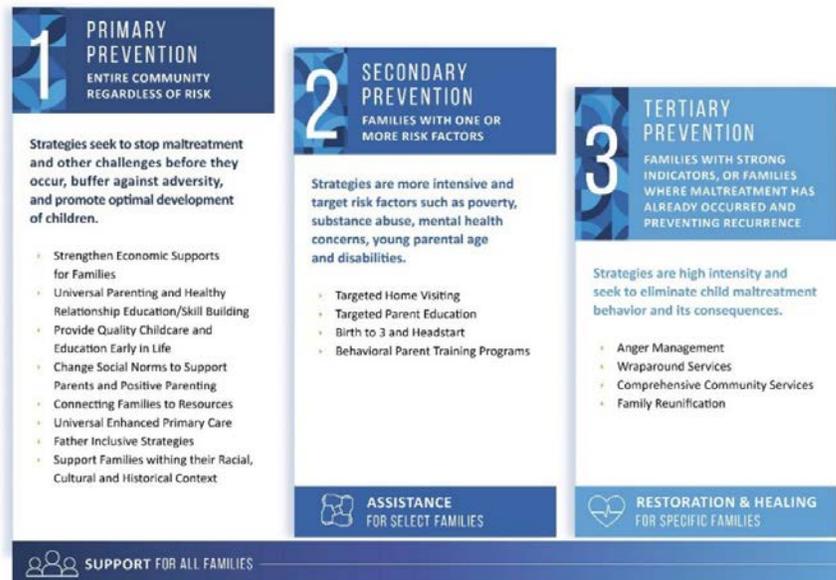
Family strengthening occurs all year-long so check back for new ideas and activities to use throughout the year.

Build a community partnership

The power of building community awareness relies on strengths in numbers. Join resources by partnering with other organizations, business leaders, faith-based groups, families, teachers, law enforcement, students, or other adults to implement effective family strengthening strategies that promote safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children and families.

Definitions

Primary Prevention focuses on the general public, addressing root causes and underlying factors to stop child maltreatment prior to occurrence. Primary prevention activities with a universal focus are broadly accessible and seek to benefit all members of a population regardless of risk.



Ideas to Promote Family Strengthening



Public Awareness

- Five for Families is a statewide public awareness campaign developed as a universal prevention strategy by the Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Board. The primary goal of the campaign is to increase knowledge of the Protective Factors Framework, an evidence-informed, strengths-based approach to child maltreatment prevention and family well-being promotion created by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. Visit FiveforFamilies.org for more information.
- Get involved with the statewide *CLICK for Babies* Campaign, clickforbabies.org.



CLICK for Babies
Period of PURPLE Crying Caps



- Set up a display, here are some examples:
 - Number of children/families who participated in your programs (playgroups, parenting classes, etc.) this past year.
 - Number of children born in your service area during 2022.
- Have children color pinwheel or garden-themed coloring sheets (available at www.preventchildabusewi.org) and display them at your site or in public places such as a bank, library, etc.
- Decorate “Donation Jars” and put them in stores to collect money for a family strengthening program in your area (family resource center, home visitation program, after-school care, day care) or for Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin.
- Decorate your site with flowers or pinwheels. You can purchase pinwheels from Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin at www.preventchildabusewi.org.
- At work, employees give a donation to wear blue jeans on one day. Monies raised would be given to a family strengthening agency.
- Join Children’s Advocacy Network to stay up-to-date on Children’s Wisconsin’s policy work and what they are doing to help children and families. Learn more at <https://childrenswi.org/ways-to-help/advocacy>



Community Involvement

- Ask local businesses to display informational or promotional materials that promote Family Strengthening Month. Host a parent support group in a local church, school, library, or social service agency. Host a family fun event, such as a family story time, craft event, family game, or movie night.
- Work with a local Family Resource Center, Community Center, Family Respite Center or Crisis Nursery to collect items needed by families in your community.
- Involve Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, church groups, youth groups, school groups, or classes, and other volunteers to distribute pinwheel pictures or pinwheels throughout your community.
- Ask schools, faith organizations, businesses, and others to share messages about strengthening families in their newsletter and bulletins.
- Advocate in local healthcare systems to promote the *Period of PURPLE Crying* or other Abusive Head Trauma Prevention initiatives.



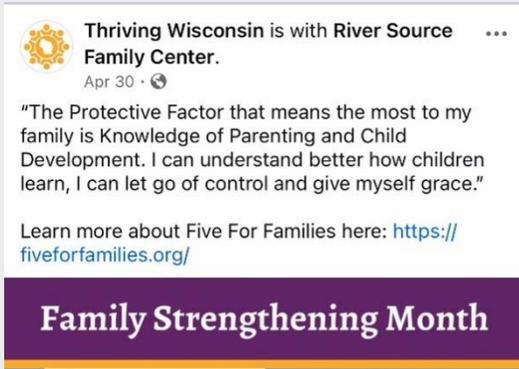
- Connect with your local home visiting services or advocate to start one if none are available in your community.
- Contact local area politicians to advocate for city/county recognition of April Family Strengthening Month.
- Connect with other organizations that have awareness events that align with April Family Strengthening Month messaging.
- Distribute seed packets with information on growing strong families and children.



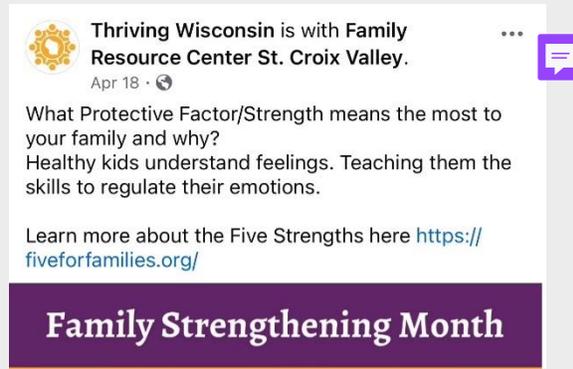
Local messaging

Family Strengthening Month messaging can be enhanced on the local level by aligning with local events and including photos, messages or quotes from families in your community.

Here are a couple of examples of using families quotes about the Five Strengths:



Local Family IMAGE



Local Family IMAGE



To learn more ways to connect local messaging and events to Family Strengthening Month, please see more details: <https://preventionboard.wi.gov/PublishingImages/Pages/OurWork/April/LMpage.pdf>



Media Tips

Consider the message

We encourage organizations to share the vision that all Wisconsin children and families have the opportunities and support they need to be safe, stable, and connected in their communities. We can often get a better response by sharing stories that illustrate the benefits and impacts of programs. Some ways to promote the importance of building productive and prosperous futures for our children include:

- Educating and engaging community members to focus on family strengthening programs.
- Reminding the community that while being a parent is challenging, there are approaches and resources that provide parents and families with support.
- Highlighting approaches and resources that provide families with support.
- Encouraging community members to help lead, plan, and participate in events so that they have the opportunity to contribute and become invested.

Establish Your Message for Strengthening Families

Build your message to motivate people to action.



- Create a call to action through your social media platforms indicating how individuals, groups, and organizations can participate in family strengthening efforts.
- Share success stories from family strengthening and support efforts both within and outside the community.
- Be clear and consistent in your commitments to support family strengthening programs and efforts.
- State the importance of family strengthening and support in combating child maltreatment.
- Use images to portray a positive and engaged community.



Social Media Tips

Use social media to engage communities and organizations not just in April but throughout the year:

- Positively influence how the public perceives family strengthening efforts.
- Share positive responses through retweets, shares, and likes.
- Control the flow of incorrect information by answering questions or responding to misconceptions that people may have.
- Use the hashtags: #FamilyStrengthening and #WearBlueDay2026.
- Follow our social media sites and share posts during April:
 - Facebook: [facebook.com/preventionboard](https://www.facebook.com/preventionboard)
[facebook.com/ChildAbusePrevention America.com/](https://www.facebook.com/ChildAbusePreventionAmerica.com/)
[OCMHWI](https://www.facebook.com/OCMHWI)
[facebook.com/ThrivingWI](https://www.facebook.com/ThrivingWI)
 - YouTube: [youtube.com/channel/UCtgbPFJU6idWu04CcX_N4dA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtgbPFJU6idWu04CcX_N4dA)
 - Instagram: [@youthmentalhealthwi](https://www.instagram.com/youthmentalhealthwi)
 - <https://children.wi.gov/Pages/TrainingsVideos/Parenting.aspx>



Note: For safety and security purposes, do not include any personal or private information in public social media posts.

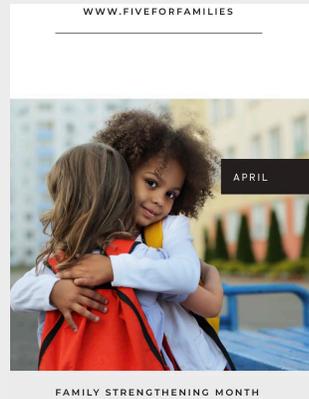
Social Media Sample Posts



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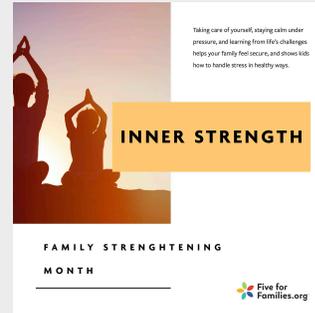
Five for Family Social Media Posts



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Stay Connected



- Visit our websites:
 - Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin: preventchildabusewi.org
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: preventionboard.wi.gov
 - DHS Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Health Services
 - Thriving Wisconsin: thrivingwisconsin.org
 - Office of Children's Mental Health: children.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx
 - WI Department of Children and Families: dcf.wisconsin.gov
- Connect to community partners, services, and local stakeholders via social media to promote, share, and collaborate on prevention efforts.
- Learn more about supporting families at:
 - www.fiveforfamilies.org
 - www.preventchildabuse.org
 - [Upstream Prevention Brochure: Moving Prevention Upstream](#)
 - <https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc/#resources>

2026 Wear Blue Day Flyer



2026 Governor's Proclamation



[Download the Wear Blue Day Poster needs update!](#)

[Download the proclamation WILL update](#)

Sample Letters and Press Releases

[Sample Letters](#)

[Press Releases](#)

For additional outreach ideas and social media sample posts, please visit the [Children's Bureau's Prevention Month Webpage](#), [Prevent Child Abuse America](#), and [Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board](#).





Family Strengthening Resources

Below are links for resources to use in planning events and/or for families to use. There are specific activities, information on these sites.

- www.fiveforfamilies.org
- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Moving Prevention Upstream \(8.5 x 11 Tri-Fold\) \(wisconsin.gov\)](#)
- <https://childrenswi.org/childrens-and-the-community/community-partners-professionals/child-abuse-prevention/prevent-child-abuse-wisconsin/resources>
- <https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/OurWork/April.aspx>
- <https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc/#resources>
- <https://childrenswi.org/who-we-are/community-programs/child-abuse-and-neglect-prevention>
- <https://childrenswi.org/who-we-are/community-programs/child-abuse-and-neglect-prevention/resources>
- www.preventchildabuse.org
- HOPE positiveexperience.org
- Short video on upstream: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pn2akD5joXM&t=13s>
- <https://www.celebrate-children.org/>

Note: The focus of Family Strengthening Month is not just to prevent child abuse and neglect but rather to promote optimal child development through strengthening families. However, reporting child abuse and neglect is mandatory and necessary in some situations. In Wisconsin, to report a case of child abuse or neglect, contact the county or tribe where the child or child's family lives. If the agency is not known, contact the closest county. See the Department of Children and Families website for more information: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reportabuse>.

Trainings



Coordinating trainings for staff and the community are also a good way promote family strengthening in April. There are a number of professional development opportunities available for professionals who work with children, youth and families.

- The Wisconsin Family Resource Center Professional Development System is housed within the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System – Milwaukee and is designed to offer educational opportunities and trainings geared specifically toward the needs of family support program professional staff within family resource centers as well as other family serving professionals.
- Host a Stewards of Children™ training to educate adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. It is the job of adults to protect our children. Find out more at <https://www.d21.org/education/stewards-of-children/> Work with area organizations, youth sports leagues, schools, faith communities, and anyone interested in assuring safe environments for kids while participating in programs by arranging for a training on policies and procedures to protect children from child sexual abuse. Find out more at a2awisconsin.org.
- Connect with your local Family Resource Center. Most Family Resource Center's offer trainings to family support professionals.

PROCLAMATION:

Each April, our committee requests a Governor's proclamation to promote Family Strengthening Month. The proclamation builds awareness and highlights the protective factors. As soon as the proclamation is issued, it will be available on our websites. If your community is interested in the language to request a proclamation for your city, please contact preventionboard@wisconsin.gov



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
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CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
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Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families



Children's
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Prevent Child Abuse
Wisconsin



Wisconsin Office of
Children's
Mental Health