

# FAMILY STRENGTHENING MONTH

2025 TOOLKIT



## April is Family Strengthening Month

**E**very 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 2024 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.





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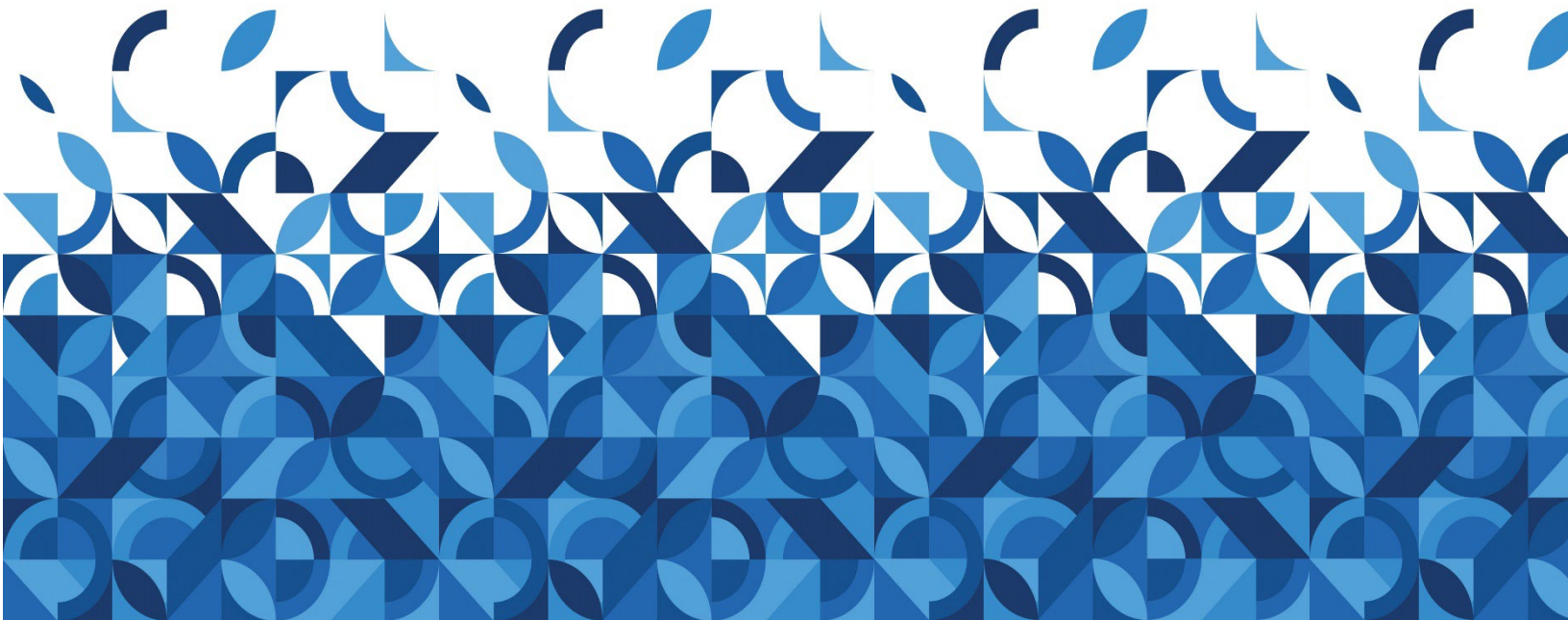
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## Create a Plan for Action!



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 7 to 11 for tips.

### Check back for more

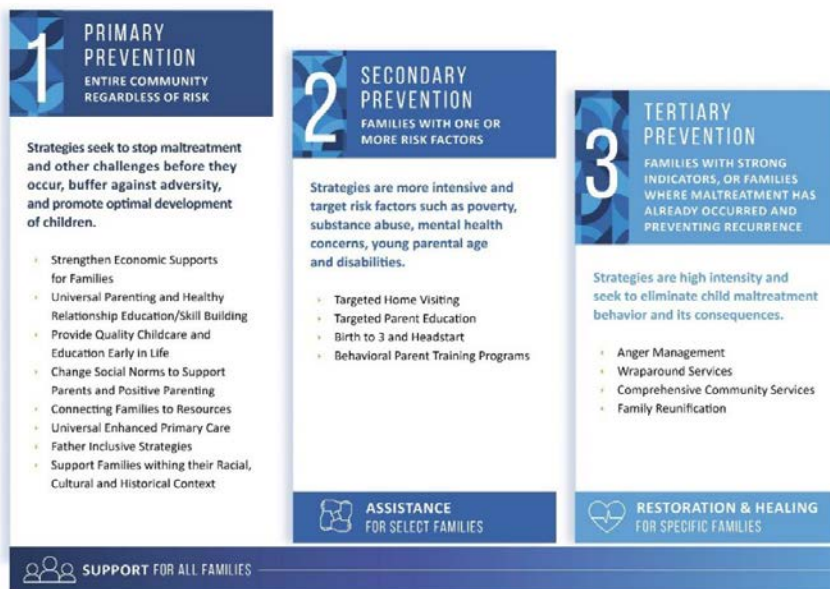
Family strengthening occurs all year-long so check back for new ideas and activities to use throughout the year. See information on page 8: Stay Connected.

### 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](https://FiveforFamilies.org) for more information.
- Get involved with the statewide *CLICK for Babies* Campaign, [clickforbabies.org](https://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](https://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](https://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.

## 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](http://a2awisconsin.org).
- Connect with your local [Family Resource Center](#). Most Family Resource Center's offer trainings to family support professionals.







## 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.

1. Start with deciding on the focus area or topic for your community, i.e. the 5 Strengths, home visiting, child development, new baby visits, public health, etc.
2. Identify 3 to 6 parents/caregivers who are willing to provide quotes or be recorded.
  - Select families that are comfortable with public speaking or sharing their story.
  - Be clear on what you are asking for.
  - Explain to caregivers that their voice or quote may show up on social media.
  - Get consent from the adults who will participate. Your agency will need to develop a release form if parent/caregiver names and photos are included in social media.
3. Develop a short series of questions that could be sent to the parents/caregivers.  
Note: Staff may need to work with parents/caregiver to practice.

### Sample Questions:

- How has home visiting strengthened your family? What is the most valuable thing you learned in (Parents as Teachers, add the program name)?
  - What makes your family strong? Or What is your family's greatest strength?
  - What did you learn about your child's development or growth that helped your family?
  - What do you love about being a parent?
  - Which of the 5 Protective Factor/Strengths is meaningful to your family and why? Which of the five strengths is your family most proud of and why?
4. Using the quotes or stories from parents/caregivers, create social media posts. Your agency can also reach out to local media. Radio and television stations sometime have free spots for local events and campaigns.
  5. As part of your messaging campaign, your agency could promote free and accessible family/child activities in your service area. These events can be happening at libraries, parks, nature preserves, bike trails, walking trails, family resource centers, community centers, children's museums, etc. The posts should indicate how the local events can strengthen participants' families.

### Examples:

- Connecting to with other families is important for both kids and parents. Come to XYZ Children's Museum for a free XX event where your kids can play with other kids and you can meet and chat with other parents/caregivers.
  - Knowing how to relax, reduce stress, and return to calm is important for everyone in your family. Come to XX park for a free walk that kids and caregivers can enjoy together.
6. As part of the messaging campaign, promote the everyday activities that could be turned into learning opportunities or bonding situations. This could include grocery shopping, making a meal together, cleaning, laundry, crafts, reading together, conversations – dinner conversations, car trips, etc.

### Examples:

- While grocery shopping with young children, ask them to identify color of vegetables, play the Eye Spy game to find items, or count the number of items you need. Request that older children help put items on the check-out belt or ask them to count the types of money you need if you were going to pay in cash.
- When you are doing laundry, ask your child to help sort colors, match socks, put clothes into the machine, or watch the washer spin together for a few minutes and ask how they think the machine works.





## 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

Social media is a perfect way to get people excited about your campaign. Use social media to engage communities and organizations not just in April but throughout the year. Start a dialogue and follow the conversations that take place. By monitoring and being actively involved in the discussion about family strengthening you are able to:

- 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 #WearBlueDay2023.
- Follow our social media sites and share posts during April:
  - Facebook: [facebook.com/preventionboard](https://facebook.com/preventionboard)  
[facebook.com/ChildAbusePrevention](https://facebook.com/ChildAbusePrevention)  
[facebook.com/OCMHwi/](https://facebook.com/OCMHwi/)  
[facebook.com/SupportingFamiliesTogether](https://facebook.com/SupportingFamiliesTogether)
  - YouTube: [youtube.com/channel/UctgbPFJU6idWu04CcX\\_N4dA](https://youtube.com/channel/UctgbPFJU6idWu04CcX_N4dA)
  - Twitter: [@WIKidsMH](https://twitter.com/WIKidsMH), [@WisDCF](https://twitter.com/WisDCF)
  - 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.*

## Stay Connected



- Visit our websites:
  - Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin: [preventchildabusewi.org](https://preventchildabusewi.org)
  - Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: [preventionboard.wi.gov](https://preventionboard.wi.gov)
  - DHS Resilient Wisconsin: [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](https://www.wisconsin.gov/health-services)
  - Supporting Families Together: [supportingfamilies.together.org](https://supportingfamilies.together.org)
  - Office of Children's Mental Health: [children.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx](https://children.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx)
  - WI Department of Children and Families: [dcf.wisconsin.gov](https://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](https://www.fiveforfamilies.org)
  - [www.preventchildabuse.org](https://www.preventchildabuse.org)
  - Upstream Prevention Brochure: Moving Prevention Upstream
  - <https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc/#resources>

## Facebook - Sample Post



Let's unite for kids and families! Share what you're doing this April to empower families and create vibrant, safe communities. Tag friends and spread the word!



Small acts, huge impact! Whether volunteering at a preschool, enhancing a playground, or helping out a family, your actions matter. Share how you're making a difference this Family Strengthening Month!



This April, Build Inner Strength



April is Family Strengthening Month! Celebrate by discovering the 5 essential strengths that fortify families through challenges. Find guidance on enhancing these strengths at [FiveforFamilies.org](https://FiveforFamilies.org)!





Empower your child's success! Explore feelings together this Family Strengthening Month. Enhance school performance, friendships, and family bonds. Discover ideas at [FiveforFamilies.org](https://FiveforFamilies.org)!



Get ready for #WearBlue4Kids Day Friday, April 4! Show your support by wearing blue and posting a pic.



### Twitter – Sample Post

- We all have a role to play in supporting Wisconsin families. Learn more about what you can do at [preventchildabusewi.org](https://preventchildabusewi.org).
- Get ready for #WearBlue4Kids Day Friday, April 5! Show your support by wearing blue and posting a pic.
- Learn about family strengths at [fiveforfamilies.org](https://fiveforfamilies.org).



## Instagram - Sample Post



During April we are sharing information and ideas on how to support and strengthen families. Learn more at [www.preventchildabusewi.org](http://www.preventchildabusewi.org) and [www.preventionboard.wi.gov](http://www.preventionboard.wi.gov).



April is Family Strengthening Month! Let's unite in building healthy, safe, and vibrant communities for children. Share your contributions and spread the word! Involve your friends too!



Your child deserves a great childhood. Family Strengthening Month is the perfect time to celebrate strong Wisconsin families and grow your family strengths.

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](http://www.fiveforfamilies.org)
- [Resilient Wisconsin | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](http://www.wisconsin.gov/health)
- [Moving Prevention Upstream \(8.5 x 11 Tri-Fold\) \(wisconsin.gov\)](http://www.wisconsin.gov/movingpreventionupstream)
- <https://childrenswi.org/childrens-and-the-community/community-partners-professionals/child-abuse-prevention/prevent-child-abuse-wisconsin/resources>
- <https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/OurWork/FFFPreventionMonth.aspx>
- <https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc/#resources>
- [www.preventchildabusewi.org](http://www.preventchildabusewi.org)
- [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)
- HOPE [positiveexperience.org](http://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>.



## 2025 Wear Blue Day Flyer



[Download the Wear Blue Day Poster](#)

## 2025 Governor's Proclamation





## Sample Letters and Press Releases

*Print on your agency/organization letterhead*

### SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **(Town/City/County Name) Residents Support Family Strengthening Efforts by Wearing Blue**

(Your agency/organization name) encourages (town, city, county) residents to wear blue on Friday, April 4, 2024, to help promote Family Strengthening Month. We believe that we can build healthier, safer, and thriving communities for our children if we work together to support families and children. When we focus on strengthening families, the results are better childhoods, leading to healthier adults and stronger communities.

Please join us on April 5th by wearing blue to help promote positive childhood experiences in nurturing environments that will provide fertile ground for children's physical and mental health, learning, and social skills.

To learn more about family strengthening visit:

- (Your agency website)
- Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin: [preventchildabusewi.org](https://preventchildabusewi.org)
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: [preventionboard.wi.gov](https://preventionboard.wi.gov)





**SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Family Strengthening Month**

**City/State** April is Family Strengthening Month. This month and throughout the year, (your agency/organization name) encourages all individuals and organizations to support family strengthening efforts in Wisconsin. Children do well when their parents do well. Research shows that positive childhood experiences in nurturing environments provide fertile ground for children's physical and mental health, learning, and social skills. We can build healthier, safer, and thriving communities for our children if we work together to collaboratively support children and families. Community members can support one another by:

- Taking time to talk to parents in your neighborhood – get to know them.
- Sharing local resources with families.
- Advocating for legislation and funding which support family programs within your community.
- Donating new or gently used clothing and toys to programs that support families with children.
- Bringing a meal or groceries to a family with young children.
- Organizing a family fun event such as a family story night, game, or movie night.

To learn more about family strengthening and for more ideas how to become involved, visit:

- (Your agency website)
- Five For Families: [fiveforefamilies.org](http://fiveforefamilies.org)
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: [preventionboard.wi.gov](http://preventionboard.wi.gov)

(SAMPLE RELEASE)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 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](mailto:preventionboard@wisconsin.gov)



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT  
Prevention Board



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families



Children's  
Wisconsin  
Prevent Child Abuse  
Wisconsin



Wisconsin Office of  
Children's  
Mental Health