The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support

Developed by the California Network of Family Strengthening Networks

Adopted by the National Network of Family Support and Strengthening Networks
• **Mission:** To connect family strengthening networks across California to promote quality practice, peer learning and mutual support.

• **Vision:** California’s Family Strengthening Networks are part of a strong, cohesive mutual support network that promotes positive outcomes for families, communities, and networks.
The CA Network of Family Strengthening Networks has more than 30 member networks representing more than 1,000 programs supporting California's families.
Our focus is on families who are responsible for raising children.

These families consist of at least one adult and one child who are related biologically, emotionally, or legally.

Families may consist of one parent, two parents, grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians or they may arise from a need for mutual support.
QUESTIONS

• What does it mean to be a quality Family Strengthening and Support Program?

• What common language can we use for working effectively with families?

• How can managers, direct service staff, and families work together to develop and sustain quality programs?
The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support are the first and only standards in the country to integrate and operationalize the Principles of Family Support Practice with the Strengthening Families Approach and its research-based evidence-informed 5 Protective Factors.

The vision is that their implementation will help ensure that families are supported and strengthened through quality practice.

They develop a shared understanding of the core elements required in quality practice.

They provide a structure for further professionalization of the Family Strengthening and Support field.
WHOM ARE THE STANDARDS FOR?

- The Standards are designed to be used by all stakeholders – public departments, foundations, community based organizations, and families – across different kinds of Family Strengthening and Family Support programs as a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice.

- The Standards create common language and expectations in the Family Support and Strengthening field across different kinds of programs, such as Family Resource Centers, home visiting programs, and child development programs.
The Standards are intended to be accessible to all. Download the Standards FREE of charge at www.cnfsn.org
STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

• National scan of 17 sets of standards for Family Strengthening and related fields

• Decided to work off of the San Francisco Family Support Standards, which had been successfully implemented since 2007.

• As part of an 18-month development process, the Standards were vetted with nearly 1,000 diverse organizations serving rural and urban populations across California.

• The Center for the Study of Social Policy reviewed and provided feedback on the Standards.

• Approved by the California Network of Family Strengthening Networks Membership in 2012.
The Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support integrate and operationalize the following two frameworks:

- **The Principles of Family Support Practice** developed by Family Support America

- The research-based, evidence-informed **Strengthening Families™: A Protective Factors Framework** developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy
FRAMEWORK #1: FAMILY SUPPORT

- Family Support is based on the premise that primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family.

- The Family Support perspective is that all segments of society must support families as they raise their children.
PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY SUPPORT

**Principle 1**
Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.

**Principle 2**
Staff enhances families’ capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.

**Principle 3**
Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
Principle 4

Programs affirm and strengthen families’ cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.

Principle 5

Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.

Principle 6

Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
Principle 7
Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.

Principle 8
Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.

Principle 9
Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, administration and governance.
Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in 2005, the Strengthening Families Approach focuses on building 5 Protective Factors with families that research has shown increase family stability, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Guiding Principles

• All families have strengths.

• All families need support.
THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Parental Resilience

Social Connections

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

For more information, please see www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families
LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT HOW THE STANDARDS ARE ORGANIZED
5 SECTIONS OF THE STANDARDS

Family Centeredness
Valuing and recognizing families as integral to the Program

Family Strengthening
Supporting families to be strong, healthy and safe, thereby promoting their optimal development

Embracing Diversity
Acknowledging and respecting families’ diversity, supporting their participation in a diverse society, and engaging in ongoing learning about and adaptation to diversity

Community Building
Contributing to building a strong and healthy community by facilitating families’ social connections, developing their leadership skills, and collaborating with other Programs

Evaluation
Looking at areas of Program strength, as well as areas for further development, in order to guide continuous quality improvement and achieve positive results for families
STRUCTURE OF THE STANDARDS

• The 5 Sections have 17 Standards

• Indicators

✓ Each Standard includes 1-2 sets of indicators of both minimum quality and high quality.

✓ The Minimum Quality Indictors demonstrate the basic application of the Standard.

✓ Programs build upon the Minimum Quality Indicators to achieve the High Quality Indicators, which represent ongoing and deeper commitment to the application of the Standard.
• **Examples**

  ✓ Each Indicator is followed by 2-4 examples from the field that illustrate its application.

  ✓ These examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list or a specific checklist.

  ✓ As Programs apply the Standards, they are encouraged to identify their own examples that demonstrate the Indicators in ways that are relevant to their communities.
QUALITY INDICATORS

Minimum Quality Indicators:

✓ Create a solid Family Strengthening and Support Program foundation
✓ Are met within a reasonable scope of resources of a Family Strengthening and Support Program

High Quality Indicators:

✓ Programs are encouraged to strive to meet them in order to serve families most effectively.
✓ Some of these indicators may require capacity building and more investment to meet.

Implementing the Standards is a developmental process and it is common that Programs may see aspects of their work on different points along the continuum of Minimum to High Quality.
MOVING FROM MINIMUM TO HIGH QUALITY

For these Sections:
• Family Centeredness
• Family Strengthening
• Embracing Diversity
• Community Building

One or more of the elements in the arrow moves a Program from:

Minimum Quality Indicator (Foundational)
- Formal Structure
- Staff Training
- Family Partnership

High Quality Indicator (Deeper integration)
SECTION A: FAMILY CENTEREDNESS

Standard A.1 – Program encourages families to participate in program development and implementation.

A. 1.1 Minimum Quality Indicator
Program solicits input from families to shape and plan the Program and services.

Some examples may include:
- Methods of collecting input from families are used, such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
- Staff members survey participants to determine which workshop topics they would like the Program to offer.
- Program welcomes participants to use a suggestion box to provide ideas and feedback.

A. 1.1 High Quality Indicator
Program’s design supports partnering with families to have an active role in the development and implementation of the Program.

Some examples may include:
- Program has a Parent Advisory Committee which meets regularly and impacts program development.
- Participants are trained to facilitate or co-facilitate with staff members a support group or parenting class.
- Participants are included in an employee hiring process, such as by helping to identify the skills and qualities needed for the job, and by participating on an interview panel.
EVALUATION SECTION

One or more of the elements in the arrow moves a Program from:

Minimum Quality Indicator (Foundational)

- Data Analysis
- Sharing Evaluation Results
- Program Modification
- Training for Evaluation Integration

High Quality Indicator (Deeper integration)
The Standards are part of a suite of materials that are used for their implementation:

- **Program Self-Assessment Tool** – designed to be used as a critical thinking exercise by Program teams of managers, direct service staff, parent leaders, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

- **Standards Participant Survey** – consists of 14 questions for Program participants to indicate how well a Program is meeting the Standards from the families’ perspective. The survey is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

- **Staff Self-Reflection Checklist** – consists of 15 self-reflection questions for staff members to use as a daily reminder to implement the Standards.
Training is a fundamental strategy for implementing the Standards effectively.

- **Certification Training:** This full-day training is designed for all management and direct service staff, as well as for funders. Each individual who completes the training receives a certificate that is valid for 2 years.

- **Training of Trainers:** The CA Network trains representatives of networks to be able to conduct the certification training through a 4-day training for trainers.
APPLICATION OF THE STANDARDS

**Family Strengthening and Support Programs**
- Blueprint for implementing best practice
- Self-Assessment
- Demonstrate Quality

**Direct Service Staff**
- Reflect on and enhance their work with families

**Policy Makers**
- Endorse for application in their areas of influence

**Funders**
- Integrate into requests for proposals, monitoring and quality assurance

**Networks of Family Strengthening and Support Providers**
- Quality Assurance
- Capacity Building
- Adopt as criteria for membership

**Families**
- Partner with Programs to apply the Standards
- Provide feedback about how well Program is applying the Standards
STANDARDS OF QUALITY FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING & SUPPORT

Network Implementation Continuum

Preparation
- Download Standards from enfsn.org.
- Review and discuss Standards with stakeholders.
- Talk with other networks/programs that have implemented Standards.

Promotion
- Share promotional materials.
- Put link to Standards on your website.
- Integrate Standards in discussions with stakeholders.
- Make presentations to stakeholders.
- Hold network meetings focusing on particular sections of the Standards.

Attend Certification Training
- Look at CA Network website to identify upcoming trainings in your area.
- Complete training and become certified for two years.
- Receive and utilize Program assessment tools.
- Develop an action plan for Program level implementation.

Host Certification Training
- Seek local funding to cover costs, if necessary.
- Identify ways to reduce costs by leveraging resources (e.g., partner prints workbooks, food donated, etc.)
- Choose what to charge, participants ranging from $0-$100/person.

Develop Network Trained Trainer
- Seek local funding to cover costs, if necessary.
- Identify applicants to join the Trainer of Trainers Program.
- Attend 4-day Training for Trainers.
- Begin offering certification trainings.

Develop Network Implementation Plan
- Develop local network Standards implementation plan.
- Integrate Standards into your network membership.
- Include Standards in grant proposals.
- Conduct informal/formal presentations to funders.
- Include Standards in giving guidelines, RFPs, grant monitoring.

Implement Topical Trainings Related to Standards
- Dive deeper into the 5 sections of the Standards with additional training on:
  - Family Centeredness
  - Family Strengthening
  - Community Building
  - Embracing Diversity
  - Evaluation

CA Network provides:
- Standards on CNFSN website.
- Powerpoint on Standards.
- Overview document.
- Standards promotion cards.
- Language for Standards link on your website.

No Cost

CA Network provides:
- Current list of trainings, Certificates.

$0-$100

CA Network provides:
- Sample grant proposal for requesting local funding, coordination of Certified Trainers to conduct training, training materials to reproduce, Certificates.

$4,000-$7,000

CA Network provides:
- Peer to peer support for developing network implementation plans.

$2,500/person

No Cost

Trainings provided by Strategies, local networks.

Varies
STANDARDS ON THE MOVE

• Adopted by the National Network of Family Support & Strengthening Networks in 2013.

• Independent research, a literature review commissioned by the Family Resource Association in Colorado and conducted by the OMNI Institute in Denver, identified seven key components for effective Family Resource Centers - all of which are represented in the Standards.

• Incorporated into the Family Engagement Enhanced Pathway of California’s Race to the Top Family Quality Ratings and Improvement System for Early Care & Education programs.
STANDARDS ON THE MOVE

• Selected by the Children’s Bureau/Office on Child Abuse and Neglect for presentation at the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in New Orleans in 2014.

• Selected by the Coalition for Community Schools for presentation at the 2014 Community Schools National Forum “Community Schools: The Engine of Opportunity” in Cincinnati, OH.
Standards Certified Individuals by County
May 2012-December 2013

Total # of Certified Individuals: 607
Total # of Counties: 23
FEEDBACK, QUESTIONS, THOUGHTS?
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