

Building Jay County's Future

Improving Parenting Skills

Strong and healthy families are the backbone of Jay County, but raising children can be a challenge. We want to give parents the tools they need to raise healthy and happy children.

We will **help families grow stronger from the inside out by offering supportive learning opportunities that promote the following Strengthening Families' five Protective Factors:**

- **Parental Resilience.**
- **Social Connections.**
- **Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development.**
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need.**
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children.**

Background

Good parenting skills play a large role in the healthy development of a child. Most people would agree that properly raising a child requires a lot of patience, nurturing, and guidance. But how does a parent acquire these skills?

Parenting is a skill that can be learned and mastered. Like any newly-acquired skill, though, expertise doesn't just happen – it requires good training and practice.

The types of parenting skills also differ. Some require forms of caring while others are firm and disciplinarian. In addition, a parenting skill that works for one child may not work for another as every child is unique, and moods and situations change on daily basis.

Acquiring good parenting skills takes time and they are not developed or enhanced overnight. And as a child grows, a parent must improve their skills at dealing with them.

The Goals for Jay County

In Jay County, we will enhance the current system which strives to ensure that **Jay County families have the parenting skills, knowledge of child development, and resources they need to thrive and address challenges they face based on the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework. As a result, instances of child abuse and neglect will decline.**

To achieve this goal, we will **provide universally available training and educational sessions to families normalizing the need for parent support and education. Specific programs will be designed after testing models such as Safe Sitter® and Parent Cafes.** Efforts will include not just parents, but also foster parents, grandparents, and others who care for children.

Measuring Our Success

To measure our progress towards implementing a successful parenting skills program, we will use the following as our metrics:

- Number of participants that complete the sessions.
- Number of participants that respond positively to a to-be-determined percentage of the end-of-program, evaluation questions.
- Number of participants that stay connected to at least one community partner after program completion.
- Number of substantiated Department of Child Services (DCS) cases of child abuse and neglect.

How will this improve the quality of life in Jay County?

If we are successful in delivering the parent training sessions, we hope to achieve multiple outcomes. As parents, foster parents, and other family caregivers are confidently and effectively leading their families, there will be fewer problems with chronic absenteeism and higher academic performance of children in school. There will be fewer confirmed cases of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. Fewer children and adults will become victims of substance abuse. While we know that we will not be able to attribute such community-level improvements directly to our efforts, research studies support the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these Protective Factors also build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.ⁱ

A Note of Appreciation

We wish to thank the following community leaders who served as members of our Steering Committee or on one of our task forces. Your contributions were greatly appreciated, and will help us to improve the quality of life for everyone in Jay County

- Chad Aker – President, Jay County Commissioners
- John Boggs – Mayor, City of Portland
- Carol Bradshaw - Forward STEPS Manager, Second Harvest Food Bank of East Central Indiana
- Michael Brewster – Jay County Coroner, Portland Police Department
- Amanda Bullion – Purdue Extension
- Ray Cooney – Editor, The Commercial Review
- PJ Corwin – Executive Director, Youth Service Bureau
- Jason Craig - Substance Misuse Prevention and Mental Health Promotion, Region 5 Regional Prevention Coordinator
- Gerry Cyranowski – Regional VP of Clinical Services, Meridian Health Services
- Randy Davis - Founder, A Better Life-Brianna’s Hope
- Chad Dodd - Principal, Jay County High School
- Dwane Ford – Sheriff, Jay County
- Julie Gregg – Principal, East Elementary School
- Jeremy Gulley – Superintendent, Jay County School Corporation
- Tammy Hanlin – Chair, The Portland Foundation
- Rusty Inman – Executive Director, John Jay Center for Learning
- Virgil Jones - Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Rex Journey – Jay County Commissioner
- Allison Keen – Youth Educator, Purdue Extension
- Justin Littman – Family Case Manager Supervisor, Department of Child Services
- John Moore – Board Member, The Portland Foundation
- Krista Muhlenkamp – Board Member, The Portland Foundation
- Michele Owen – Executive Director, Family Alliance
- Chynna Ratliffe - Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Kimbra Reynolds - Executive Director, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition
- Travis Richards - Executive Director, Jay County Development Corporation
- Jane Ann Runyon – Executive Director, United Way of Jay County
- Christy Shauver – Director of Community Development, Jay County Development Corporation
- Mitch Sutton – Police Chief, City of Portland
- Annie Van Horn – Director of Special Education, Jay School Corporation
- Jenni VanSkyock – Program Manager, IU Health Jay Hospital Outpatient Behavioral Health
- Jon Vanator - President, IU Health Jay Hospital
- Tashia Weaver – Family Resource Center Coordinator, Strengthening Indiana Families

ⁱ Protective Factors Framework, Center for the Study of Social Policy, <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>