



King County

Department of Community and Human Services

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2012 – 2017 Veterans and Human Services Levy

Activity: 4.3.A Parent Education and Support: Promoting First Relationships

1. Goal

Increase self-sufficiency of veterans and vulnerable populations

2. Strategy

Strategy Four of the Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) is “Strengthening Families”.

3. Activity

The Promoting First Relationships program described below is part Strategy 4.3: “Parent Education and Support”.

4. Service Needs, Populations to be Served, and Promotion of Equity and Social Justice

a) *Service Needs*

Promoting First Relationships is an intervention that supports the early relationship between young children and their caregivers. There is substantial evidence that the foundation of emotional organization, attention regulation, and communicative skill emerges from early, pleasurable interactions with caregivers (Emde and Sameroff, 1989; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). All children are born into this world totally dependent on the relationships they develop with their parents and their caregivers, the people who are closest to them. These first relationships are the foundation for young children's growth and development in social, emotional, behavioral, language and cognitive domains. This is true for all children, including children with, or at risk for developmental disabilities. Promoting First Relationships supports the parent child relationship in families with infants and young children facing multiple risks and in doing so supports positive social emotional development in these infants and young children.

b) *Populations to be Served*

This VHSL strategy will provide training in Promoting First Relationships for staff from community agencies who are serving families experiencing increased risk due to poverty, family violence, having a child with special health or developmental needs and /or experiencing social, mental health or substance use challenges.

c) *Promotion of Equity and Social Justice*

The Equity and Social Justice Ordinance requires King County to consider the impacts of its policies and activities on its efforts to achieve fairness and opportunity for all people, particularly for people of color, low-income communities and people with limited English proficiency. The King County Equity Impact Review Tool available online at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/equity/toolsandresources.aspx> provides a list of the determinants of equity that may be affected by your activity.

i) *Will your activity have an impact on equity?*

Promoting First Relationships supports optimal social –emotional development, enhancing skills vital to future success in developing positive relationships, being ready for school and enriching language development. All of the agencies who will be trained serve an economically and racially diverse population. In providing the intervention to families at risk, they will be serving families most likely to gain skills and support to address the disproportionate risks they are facing.

ii) *What population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal? How will communities of color, low-income communities or limited English proficiency communities be impacted?*

All of the agencies who will be trained serve an economically and racially diverse population. In providing the intervention to families at risk, they will be serving families most likely to gain skills and support to address the disproportionate risks they are facing. Many of these agencies also employ home visitors from the communities they serve. In the course of their training they will be reflecting with the Master PFR Trainer about the use of PFR in their particular community. This ongoing dialogue improves the cultural sensitivity of this intervention.

iii) *What actions will be taken to enhance likely positive impacts on these communities and mitigate possible negative impacts?*

Agencies will target families who are experiencing the highest risk and most in need of support around parent-child relationships. The skills the families gain will hopefully help to mitigate the negative impacts experienced due to risks they face. The PFR intervention is not expected to have negative impacts. PFR Master Trainers have trained providers from many different communities, and learners have been bilingual in English and their native language. Learners are encouraged to bring their questions and concerns about implementing PFR in their communities to the Master Trainers, and to make adaptations if necessary to improve cultural appropriateness.

5. Activity Description:

This VHSL strategy trains professional staff from community agencies to support early parent-child relationships in families experiencing stress or risk. Professionals who work with caregivers and young children (birth to 3 years) often see the need to support and guide caregivers in building nurturing and responsive relationships with children. Promoting First Relationships gives professionals the knowledge, tools, and strategies to do so.

Through this training, participants learn a unique consultation and intervention strategy that

they can integrate into their work, whether in the high risk, special needs, child care, or other early childhood fields. The strategy can be used one-on-one with parents, in the clinic or in home, and also with child care providers and early childhood teachers responsible for group care. Because Promoting First Relationships is a positive, strengths-based model, caregivers are open to the intervention and gain competence, and thus investment, in their caregiving.

The Promoting First Relationships training program integrates theory, practice and intervention. Trainers use various learning approaches including video case studies, role-playing, and reflective dialogue. These approaches allow participants to apply the framework directly to issues faced in their work environment.

Staff from community agencies will receive a three tiered training resulting in them being able to deliver the Promoting First Relationships intervention with the families they serve. Initial training is a 2-day workshop. The two day workshop is designed to give service providers knowledge about using Promoting First Relationships within one's own practice. The workshop is taught by PFR Master Trainers and includes the curriculum, parent handouts, and training in the following elements:

- Elements of a Healthy Relationship
- Attachment Theory and Secure Relationships
- Reflective Capacity Building
- Development of Self for Infants and Toddlers
- PFR Consultation Strategies
- Challenging Behaviors
- Intervention Planning Development

In addition to the two day overview, all staff trained under this strategy will be trained as PFR "learners" to allow them to deliver PFR to the families they serve. To be trained as a learner, 1) A PFR Master Trainer first meets with the learners in a pair group during six on-line sessions to discuss and reflect on core concepts in the PFR video training series; 2) Next, the PFR Master Trainer works on-site with service providers within their own practice setting mentoring the trainee in the use of PFR methods and consultation strategies as s/he implements 10 weekly home visits to a caregiver-child dyad. Each mentored visit lasts 2 ½ - 3 hours and includes a 75-minute visit with the family and a 1.5-hour reflection with the mentor afterward; 3) Finally, each learner pair will receive two 2-hour follow-up consultation visits with the Master Trainer

Once staff are trained as learners, they will deliver the intervention by:

- Videotaping caregiver-child interactions to provide insight into real-life situations.
- Giving positive feedback that builds caregivers' competence with and commitment to their children.
- Focusing on the deeper emotional needs underlying children's challenging behaviors.

Providers previously trained in PFR describe using the PFR materials and videotaping with families:

"In my nine years of experience working with homeless families, the Promoting First Relationships project has been the most relevant technique I have learned to help parents promote their child's development."

"Promoting First Relationships is such a different way of working with families. In particular for CPS involved families, it may be the first time that someone has ever really noticed that they are doing well and celebrated this. PFR provides us with a way to encourage and reflect on parents' interactions and to increase and build upon the strengths that they bring to parenting."

"I think that the Promoting First Relationships training is very, very valuable. I think that whether or not you specialize in seeing families with children 0-5 years, it's valuable for any clinician to do home based work that's really strengths based and has a great foundation based on attachment. I think that the families I've seen have benefitted from this immensely."

6. Funds Available

The 2012 Service Improvement Plan identified an annual allocation of \$260,000 for Activity Parent Education and Support. The Public Health – Seattle and King County (PHSKC) has decided to divide this allocation between Promoting First Relationships and Family Friend and Neighbor / Play and Learn Groups. PHSKC plans to use \$207,000 annually to support the Promoting First Relationships program and \$53,000 annually to support Family Friend and Neighbor / Play and Learn Groups.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Veterans Levy						
Human Services Levy	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000
Total	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000	\$207,000

A total of \$ 207,000 is available in 2012 to implement Promoting First Relationships. Additional funds will be available annually through 2017 based on the activity's performance.

7. Evidence-based or Promising Practices

There is substantial evidence that the foundation of emotional organization, attention regulation, and communicative skill emerges from early, pleasurable interactions with caregivers (Emde and Sameroff, 1989; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). All children are born into this world totally dependent on the relationships they develop with their parents and their caregivers, the people who are closest to them. These first relationships are the foundation for young children's growth and development in social, emotional, behavioral, language and cognitive domains. This is true for all children, including children with, or at risk for developmental disabilities.

A young child's social and emotional development that is a positive sense of self and of others, can only be developed in the context of relationships. Social and emotional development, or mental health, begins from the first day of life and future growth and experiences are based on what a young child internalizes about himself and others. "Children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love and nurturance, security, responsive interaction, and encouragement for explorations. Without at least one such relationship, development is disrupted, and the consequences can be severe and long lasting" (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

In a child's early years, what a child has internalized about his/her effect on others affects the child's perception of social transactions, cognitions about social transactions, and behavioral responses. In addition, the child's language and representational abilities permit the development of negotiation and joint plans with the caregiver regarding issues of self-control, emotion regulation, exploration, and safety. Robust findings in the field of psychology show a strong association between secure caregiver-child relationships and better functioning in a number of domains; including early language acquisition, peer competence, and resilience. In summary, young children need sensitive and secure relationships with the adults who are most important to them in order to grow in social-emotional, language and cognitive domains.

Promoting First Relationship developers have partnered with many community providers to study the effect of the PFR. Populations include but are not limited to homeless families and their children, childcare providers, service providers working with families with young children with disabilities, and low-income grandparents providing care to their grandchildren. They recently completed a randomized controlled trial of PFR delivered to caregivers (birth, foster, or kin) of toddlers with recent child welfare placement changes. Positive results were published (Nelson & Spieker, 2013; Spieker, Oxford, Kelly, Nelson & Fleming, 2012) In addition, positive results from research with childcare providers show a change in perspective on children's emotional needs, providers becoming more empathetic and learn new strategies for dealing with behavioral issues.

Research with grandparents showed improved caregiving skills and decreased grandmother depression. In a project serving families transitioning from homelessness, parents rated children more socially competent than before the training and with fewer behavior problems.

8. Service Partnerships

Partnerships in this strategy will be with a variety of community based organizations who will receive training in Promoting First Relationships.

9. Performance Measures

The following performance measures were identified by the Levy's Evaluation Team. Performance will be evaluated annually or as appropriate and outcome and performance indicators and targets may be modified and documented in the activity evaluation template and posted on the levy website: <http://kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy> or [2012 - 2017 Levy Evaluation Plan Implementation Plan and Activity Level Evaluation Templates](#)

Objectives	Service Outputs/ Measures	Target(s)
System Improvements/ Capacity Building	• Number of community members education trained	14
	• Improved skills and knowledge that promotes health and nurturing caregiver child relationships.	100%
	• Increased skills to train other staff in their Agency to deliver the PFR intervention.	100%