

Concrete Supports for Parents

By: Bright Tomorrows Staff

We each have a role to play in creating healthy and hopeful families. We may have a family of our own in which to nurture healthy attachments and functioning or other family systems within our community that we find ourselves involved with.

Many factors affect a family's ability to care for their children. Families who can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation – and who know how to access essential services such as child care, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs – are better able to ensure their children's safety and well-being.

Some families may need assistance connecting to social service supports such as alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack health insurance, or suffer a family crisis such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent, their ability to care for their children may be at risk.

We have seen our community “step-up” to the plate and make a difference when disaster strikes. Just look at the Charlotte fire this summer and how the community supported and cared for the families who lost so much.

Financial insecurity is associated with greater rates of child abuse and neglect. Families living in poverty often benefit from specific concrete supports, such as help with housing, food, transportation, child care, clothing, furniture, and utilities.

As individuals and community groups and agencies partner with parents to identify and access these resources in the community, this may help to prevent stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Offering concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.

We all want children to grow up in healthy, supportive, and loving families, as a community there is so much we can do to encourage and link families to the help they need.

Information taken from www.childwelfare.gov/preventing