

# strengthening families G E O R G I A



Georgia Division of Family and  
Children Services  
Office of Prevention and Family Support



## STRONG FAMILIES

TIPS & RESOURCES FOR PARENTS WITH HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SMART KIDS

WINTER/SPRING 2018

### Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework Social Emotional Development in Children Information and Resources for Parents and Caregivers

#### What do strong families look like?

Strong families work together, respect each other, provide encouragement, help others, laugh together, are good role models and make healthy choices. To strengthen families in Georgia we all need to help our families have *protective factors* in place.

What are protective factors and how can you use them to strengthen your families, other families and the community?

**There are five protective factors that, when present, increase the overall well-being of children and families:**

#### Parental Resilience

The ability to cope and bounce back from challenges

#### Social Connections

Positive friends, family and communities who provide emotional support and assistance

#### Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to food, housing, health services, education, counseling, and other needed services

#### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Information about raising children and what children can do at different ages and stages

#### Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Children feel love, a sense of belonging, and get along with others

## Concrete Support in Times of Need – Meeting Needs Through Community Support and Resources Makes Your Family Strong!

All families - at one time or another - need help. Whether a joyous occasion like the birth of a child or a transition such as a job loss, or a serious illness, families need extra support. Families that know where to go for that support and ask for the right kind of help can handle life's changes and be stronger as a result.

Parents with access to concrete supports:

- Are able to spend more time helping their children.
- Have resources needed to handle high-stress situations.
- Are able to meet a child's basic needs.
- Are at reduced risk for child maltreatment and neglect.

When asked, parents have described this protective factor as:

- My family can access basic needs when they need it
- Concrete Supports in Time of Need = Freedom
- We all need help sometimes

Not knowing where to turn in a crisis or how to find help can be very stressful for families – and may cause trauma for children. When parents build this protective factor they know how to access services and be an advocate for their family.

All families need help sometimes. In times of need, families will often turn to other family members or friends. While these types of informal supports are important, some needs may require more concrete financial or material support. Concrete supports allow families to maintain their financial security and ensure that they are able to meet daily needs or unexpected costs. There are many state and local programs that provide concrete support to families who qualify.





### **When to Ask for Help**

Asking for help can be a very difficult thing to do and some parents may not be aware that they truly do need help. Families often do not know what is available to them through various programs and government agencies. They may feel they have to solve problems on their own. Being able to recognize the need for assistance and being willing to ask for help can greatly benefit families. If the health and well-being of your children and family are at risk because of a lack of resources such as money, food, and medical assistance, it is time to reach out for help.

### **What You Need to Know**

It is important to know where to go and what to do to receive assistance.

Accessing services requires families to:

- Recognize they need support
- Know what services are available
- Know how to access services
- Have some financial security
- Have basic needs met
- Be resourceful with what they have
- Be committed and persistent
- Advocate effectively for one's self, child, and/or other family members to receive necessary help

This is a lot for a family to do when things are going well!

**When in need of concrete support start with one step at a time.**

# Resources in Georgia

## Food and Nutrition

Georgia's **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program** provides nutrition, additional foods and education to low income families. The benefits are for women who are pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding. Children under the age of 5 are also eligible. <http://wic.ga.gov/>

**Child nutrition programs** provide free and low-cost food to child care organizations, afterschool programs, preschools and schools. School lunch and breakfast menus are working to improve nutrition for children. The income requirements vary. For current information go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/CACFP/aboutcacfp.htm>

**SNAP** helps to pay for the cost of food. It has a more complicated formula for eligibility than some of the other assistance programs in this list. There is an income requirement, but your rent or mortgage, utilities, medical care, child care, and child support payments are considered in your eligibility. [www.gateway.ga.gov](http://www.gateway.ga.gov)

**PLEASE NOTE:** The [www.gateway.ga.gov](http://www.gateway.ga.gov) website provides a quick and easy way for people who live in Georgia to find out if they may be able to get:

- Low or no-cost health care
- Help with buying prescription drugs
- Help with paying for child care
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

## Childcare and Early Education

**Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning: Bright from the Start** is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the Georgia Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, and manages Quality Rated, Georgia's community powered child care rating system. <http://dec.al.ga.gov/>

The **Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)** program assists no to low income families with the cost of child care. Currently, CAPS eligibility determination and on-going case management are available in all 159 counties in Georgia. Families may apply for subsidized child care at [Georgia Gateway](http://www.gateway.ga.gov).

**Quality Care for Children** is a great resource for parents to find quality care by calling their help line, 877-ALL-GA-KIDS. Parents using informal child care, are given tools to be educated about what makes a safe and nurturing setting for his or her child. Quality Care for Children's website has a great Family, Friend, and Neighbor checklist. Check it out for that and other great resources for Georgia parents. <http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org/>

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## Healthcare

**PeachCare for Kids™** is a broad health care program for uninsured children living in Georgia. The health benefits include primary, preventive, specialists, dental care and vision care. PeachCare for Kids also covers hospitalization, emergency room services, prescription medications and mental health care. Each child in the program has a [Georgia Families Care Management Organization \(CMO\)](#) who is responsible for coordinating the child's care.

You can apply for PeachCare for Kids™ online. <https://dch.georgia.gov/peachcare-kids>. You can also call the main office at **404-656-4507**.

**Medicaid** is a program that provides health care services to individuals who meet the requirements for income, resources, and citizenship. Cooperation with the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Child Support Services is a requirement of receiving certain types of Medicaid <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/what-do-i-need-apply-medicaid>

You may apply for Medicaid at any local Division of Family and Children Services office, by mail or by telephone, **1-877-423-4746**. In order to prepare for the application process it is recommended that you review [Medicaid Fact Sheets](#) and [What do I need to apply for Medicaid?](#) You can also visit [Georgia Gateway](#) to see if you may qualify for benefits.

**Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHB)** works to improve access to prenatal and preventive healthcare for thousands of women, children and families in Georgia through direct service, advocacy and community education. HMHB operates the Maternal and Child Health Referral Line for the Department of Public Health, and the Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Helpline, to provide callers with appropriate referrals and resources across the State. They are available Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. **1-800-300-9003**, [www.hmhbga.org](http://www.hmhbga.org)



## Behavioral Health

The single point of access for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and a source of excellent referrals is the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL). GCAL, <https://namiga.org/georgia-crisis-and-access-line/> 1-800-715-4225, is the 24/7 hotline for accessing mental health services in Georgia. DBHDD provides treatment and support services to people with mental illnesses and addictive diseases, and support to people with mental retardation and related developmental disabilities. For more information, go to the [Georgia DBHDD website](#).

**Babies Can't Wait (BCW)** serves children up until [their third birthday](#) regardless of family income. Developmental problems can be identified early and with a higher chance of lessening if not eliminating impact on a child's later life. BCW is an early intervention program so families don't have to wait until children enter school to assess a child's health and developmental progress.

Anyone can refer a child for an assessment, but a diagnosis of a specific mental or physical condition, including a developmental delay, is required for services beyond the assessment. The evaluation and service coordination to develop a plan are offered at no cost. The early intervention services are offered on a sliding scale. Federal mandates require that, as much as is possible and appropriate that these services be provided in the home and community settings. This helps to lessen barriers to access. <http://dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait>

**The Georgia Home Visiting Program**, [www.GreatStartGeorgia.org](http://www.GreatStartGeorgia.org), is a statewide effort, sponsored by the Georgia Department of Public Health and supported by communities, to ensure that every child in Georgia gets a "great start" in life. The Georgia Home Visiting Program is designed to create a community culture of care, encouragement, and support for all families before and after the birth of a child. Across hundreds of Georgia communities, services are available to ensure that these important early years are rich with opportunities for children to be educated, safe, and healthy. A free Information & Referral Center offers connections to local resources and information. This can be accessed by visiting <https://www.greatstartgeorgia.org/services> or by calling their toll free number at 1-855-707-8277.

**Better Brains for Babies (BBB)** is a collaboration of Georgia organizations that increase awareness about the science of early brain development, and educate adults about effective ways to support and promote healthy brain development. Learn more at: <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/>. Find suggested brain building activities for parents to promote brain development at <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/parentsActivities.php>

**Parent to Parent of Georgia's** goal is to provide innovative, supportive information and focuses on individual community support for children and families affected by disabilities or special health care needs. Resources and accurate information are just a click or phone call away. Make sure to check out the various sections on their website <http://p2pga.org/> to find a wealth of information, resources and support opportunities. You can also reach them at 800-229-2038.

## Financial Assistance

The **Earned Income Tax Credit**, EITC or EIC, is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if you do not owe any tax or are not required to file. EITC reduces the amount of tax you owe and may give you a refund.

To [qualify for EITC](#) you must have earned income from working for someone or from running or owning a business or farm and meet basic rules. There are additional rules for workers without a qualifying child or have a child that meets all the qualifying child rules for you.

Use the [EITC Assistant](#) to see if you qualify for tax years: 2015, 2014 and 2013. The EITC Assistant helps you find out your filing status, if your child is a qualifying child, if you are eligible and estimate the amount of the EITC you may get.

**For additional information visit:**

<https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit>



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## Other

**Prevent Child Abuse Georgia's 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline** (1-800- 244-5373, M-F, 8:00 am– 6:00 pm) is a statewide information and referral number for people who are concerned about the healthy development of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Callers can talk to a trained individual who cares and wants to help. The helpline is staffed by bilingual professionals who link people with parenting support, counseling, referrals for legal needs, grandparent support, community assistance, and resources for special needs children. More information about other services offered by Prevent Child Abuse Georgia can be found at: [www.preventchildabusega.org](http://www.preventchildabusega.org)

**Goodwill Industries International:** A job is just the first step! Goodwill offers a diverse range of services to help you maintain a strong family and stable finances. As you maintain your job and advance your career, you may need support to help stretch your dollars or save for the future, and to get assistance with things like childcare, transportation and housing. If your local Goodwill does not offer services in-house, they'll do their best to connect you with community partners that can help you achieve your goals. You can get information on your local Goodwill location on their homepage: <http://www.goodwill.org> or by calling **800-GOODWILL**.

**United Way:** United Way does not provide direct financial help to individuals, but they work with many community partners that do. The best way to find available resources in your area is by calling their **2-1-1** help number. It's a 3-digit number like 9-1-1, but for access to health and human services. Calling 2-1-1 will get you a trained resource and referral specialist, who will know what services are available in your area. Sometimes the 2-1-1 line can be a problem from a cell phone, or may not yet be available in your immediate area. If you can't get through on 2-1-1, you can go to [www.211.org](http://www.211.org) and type in your zip code. It will provide an alternate number where one is available. There are United Way locations throughout Georgia. To see a complete listing of locations visit <https://www.unitedway.org/local/united-states/georgia>

**Make sure to check out your libraries, health centers and community centers. In many cases there are "resource centers" that will let you know what's available in your community.**





# Who Are We?

Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) represents a multi-disciplinary partnership of nearly 50 national, state and local, and public and private organizations dedicated to embedding five research-based Protective Factors into services and supports for children and their families. SFG is funded by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DHS-DFCS) through the Federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program.

The Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children (GAEYC), state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), administers SFG and chairs the SFG Leadership Team and Partnership.

## OUR MISSION

To utilize the Strengthening Families assets-based framework of Protective Factors in all systems, programs, services and activities supporting families with young children as the approach to achieving the vision.

## OUR VISION

All families with children birth through age five in Georgia have the resources and support necessary for a meaningful and successful life.

For more information please contact us at [strengtheningfamiliesga@gmail.com](mailto:strengtheningfamiliesga@gmail.com).

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For more information & resources, go to  
[www.strengtheningfamiliesga.net](http://www.strengtheningfamiliesga.net)

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