how early childhood programs help prevent child abuse and neglect

Excellent early care and education programs use common program strategies to build the protective factors known to reduce child abuse and neglect.

**QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

Program strategies that:

- Facilitate friendships and mutual support
- Strengthen parenting
- Respond to family crises
- Link families to services and opportunities
- Facilitate children’s social and emotional development
- Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect
- Value and support parents

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

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http://www.strengtheningFamilies.net.
Protective factors that quality child care can enhance:

1. Parental resilience
   • value and support parents/guardians, assist development of parental self-efficacy, link to community resources including mental health professionals when needed

2. Social connections
   • provide a place where parents/guardians may develop positive social interactions in a child-friendly environment

3. Parenting skills and knowledge about normal child development
   • model and teach positive, effective parenting/discipline techniques, educate parents/guardians about child development and appropriate expectations

4. Support structures in place during times of need
   • identify needs and connect families stressed or in crisis with center and/or community resources

5. Children’s social and emotional competence
   • provide children with a healthy, nurturing environment that encourages trust and attachment


Additional Resources: