

# REACH

*Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis • Intervention • Hope*

*Aspiranet and Kern County Adoption Support Program*



## Happy New Year, REACH families!

The year 2020 was a challenging one, for many reasons, with COVID-19, political divisiveness, and more. It was a year to remember, or forget, depending on your perspective. Here at REACH, we are hopeful that the New Year is a bit less interesting than 2020!

In reflecting on the past year, the REACH team is proud of the services we continued to provide, despite in-person contact limitations due to COVID-19. Almost everyone has had to develop skills in video conferencing, for school or work, and this platform has allowed us to continue providing individual services to families as well as hosting our support groups and trainings. REACH has also started a new online support group, Parent Café, which meets every month starting February ([see page 5 for details on our support groups and trainings](#)).

REACH is excited to announce upcoming trainings which will be held virtually on January 6th and January 7th, 2021. The speaker on January 6th, which is for youth only (ages 13-20), will be MelRo Potter, an internationally recognized speaker who was in foster care and overcame many odds to discover her strength and purpose. The speaker on January 7th, which is for parents and professionals, will be Jamole Callahan. He, too, was in foster care and will share his story. At the end of this session, parents will have the opportunity to hear from our dynamic youth! REACH is offering another Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) training as well, on February 12th ([see page 5 for details on these events](#)).

Over the course of 2020, the REACH newsletter provided information on Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®), the therapeutic caregiving model for children who have experienced trauma. Over the course of 2021 and into 2022, the REACH newsletter will focus on the Five Protective Factors. This issue of our newsletter is an introduction to these protective factors and the next five issues will further explore each of the factors.

We hope you have a wonderful start to your New Year and that you enjoy learning about the Five Protective Factors!

Sincerely,

The REACH team

Kern County  
Winter 2021

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## Implementing the Five Protective Factors

By Patti Kasper, MA, MTh

The REACH program at Aspiranet, and all our programs, are committed to strengthening families through the five protective factors, as detailed in the next article. As you have all discovered, the struggles our children have experienced by coming to us from hard places do not magically go away when the gavel rings at the close of an adoption hearing. Trauma in all its forms continues to influence the way children respond to stress and the world around them. Trauma can include such things as abuse and neglect, as well as changes in a child's brain from prenatal exposure to toxic substances, and the loss of birth families. Sadly, our love is not enough to "fix" it all. So as professionals and caregivers alike, we learn all we can about these effects and strive to be the healing agent for our children through healthy attachments. Helping them to learn how to self-regulate by modeling self-regulation to them, and using our trauma-informed parenting skills. But, by now you have realized that this is hard work, and at times our entire family is affected.



The five protective factors of Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Concrete Support in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Social and Emotional Competence of Children all play a role in keeping our families moving on a path toward healing and strength. This issue of our newsletter is

an introduction to these five protective factors. The next five issues will further explore each of these five protective factors in turn. But! You won't need to wait until all those issues are in your hands (or inbox) before you have a grasp of what these are and how they can help you!



Aspiranet has trained staff at all of our offices to host and facilitate a specialized support group, called Parent Cafés, to enhance these five protective factors in a very practical way. The REACH Parent Cafés were recently launched, on October 5th, and the feedback we received was fabulous! Comments included: "It was great!" "It was a very pleasant experience connecting with other parents," and "I'm looking forward to attending the next time!" We even had two parents who are now connecting and providing support to one another outside of the group. And that was just our first one! Our Parent Cafés will meet the first Thursday from 3-5 PM, every other month, and we hope you will join us on February 4th!

Each Café will be attended by adoptive families in all of our REACH offices across California. Each Café will provide an opportunity for small group discussions, called Café Conversations, around two of the five factors, enabling everyone to learn from each other and support one another's journey. There is also an opportunity to share with the larger group any insights gained which you may wish to share. As with our traditional adoption support groups, it is our hope that you will form friendships with one another, as it is always so helpful to talk with folks who "get it," who understand the challenges of parenting children from hard places and who are also on a journey of helping our children to heal.

**What We Know: Families thrive when protective factors are robust in their lives and communities.**

Using the Strengthening Families Approach, more than 30 states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states and counties also use the Protective Factors Framework to align services for children and families, strengthen families in the child welfare system and work in partnership with families and communities to build protective factors. For more information and many tools and options for implementation, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net).

Nationally, Strengthening Families is coordinated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and supported by national partner organizations including:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- The Finance Project
- FRIENDS National Resource Center
- The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
- Parents As Teachers
- United Way Worldwide
- ZERO TO THREE

## The Protective Factors Framework

Five Protective Factors are the foundation of the Strengthening Families Approach: parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children. 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 are also "promotive" factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

### Parental Resilience

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

### Social Connections

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.

### Concrete Support in Times of Need

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and surfing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

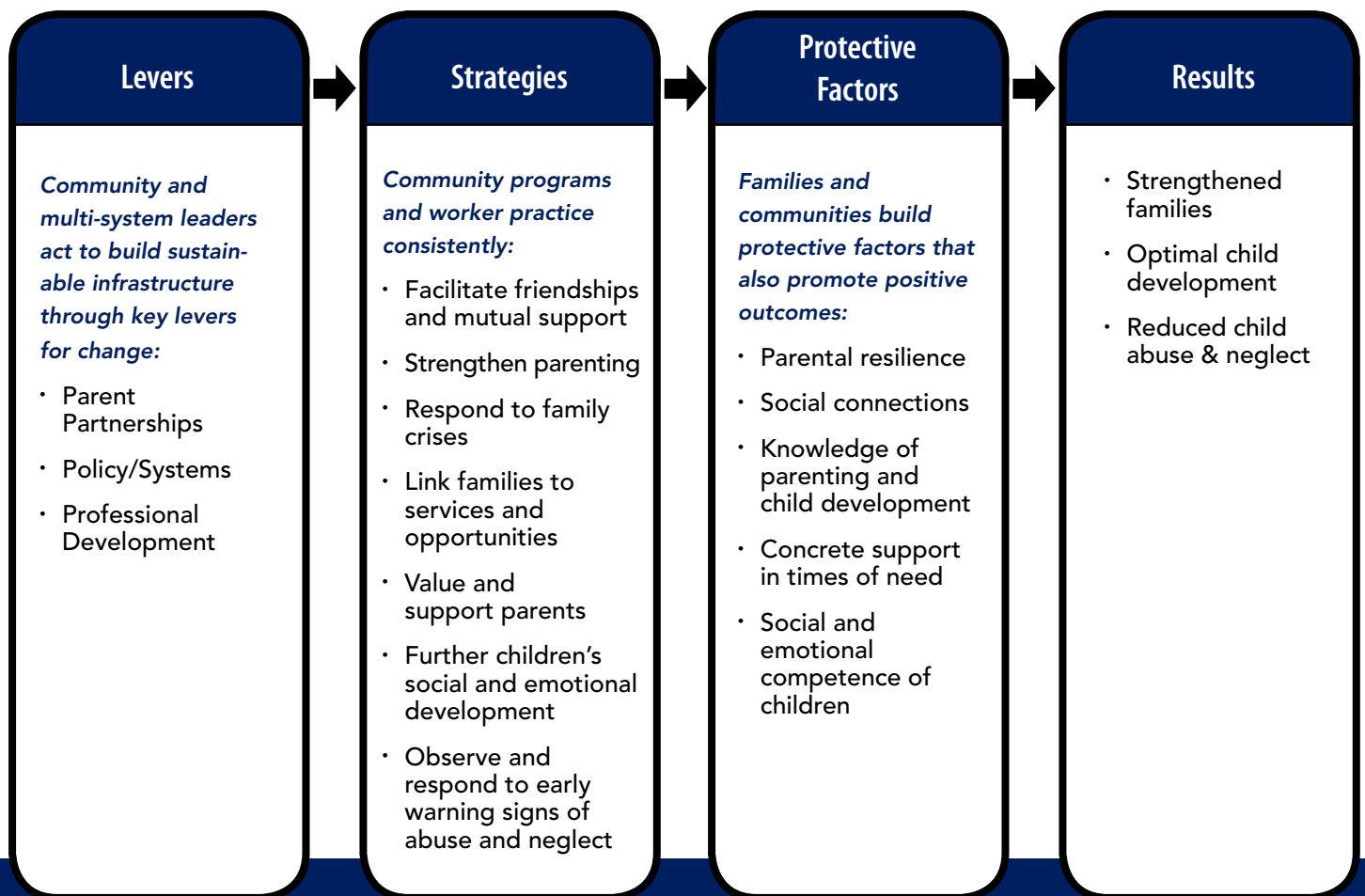
### Social and Emotional Competence of Children

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Mobilizing partners, communities and families  
to build family strengths, promote optimal  
development and reduce child abuse and neglect

## The Strengthening Families Approach

- Benefits ALL families
- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk, and promotes better outcomes
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions
- Builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities
- Is grounded in research, practice and implementation knowledge



### A New Vision

Families and communities, service systems and organizations:

- Focus on building protective and promotive factors to reduce risk and create optimal outcomes for all children, youth and families
- Recognize and support parents as decision-makers and leaders
- Value the culture and unique assets of each family
- Are mutually responsible for better outcomes for children, youth and families

# Support Groups & Events

Please note that our monthly support group has changed from the 3rd Tuesday of the month to the 4th Tuesday of the month, effective January 2021. The time of our groups has changed as well, to 6:00-7:30pm

## January

### 26 Five Protective Factors

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

## February

### 23 Is Our Love Enough to Heal our Children?

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

## March

### 23 The 4 Leaf Clover Approach to Healing our Children

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

## Youth and Parent/Professional Events

### Shame Is Not My Name

January 6th, 3:00 to 5:00 pm via Zoom- for youth and young adults only, ages 13-20

During this workshop, youth will have the chance to participate in the #iwillrise project, an opportunity to share their voice in the community. You won't want to miss this empowering event! To register, sign up at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/journey-to-hope-youth-symposium-tickets-129606457403>

### Compassionate Parenting: Trauma, Shame, and Resiliency

January 7th, 5:30-8:00pm via Zoom- for parents and professionals.

To register, sign up at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/compassionate-parenting-trauma-shame-and-resiliency-tickets-129369161645>

### Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) – Correcting Principles

Friday, February 12th, 9:00am-4:00pm via Zoom

This module is designed to help participants learn skills that can be used to manage children's behavior. Activities are structured so that participants will be invited to look at several behavioral episodes through a 'TBRI® lens.' The goal for this training module is to help participants understand how children learned 'survival behaviors' (fight, flight, freeze) and how they can disarm those behaviors, teaching them adaptive, new skills for life. To register, contact the FKCE registration line at (661) 319-1836 or register through the [KFCE website](#)

Due to the impact of COVID-19, REACH Kern County continues to identify creative ways of bringing services to REACH families. We will continue to keep you informed of our services and provide information on trainings and events.

## REACH Adoption Support Group for Parents

REACH Parent Support Groups are designed for adults thinking about adoption, families awaiting adoptive placement, and new and experienced resource parents interested in adoption. Please join us to share your family's challenges and triumphs. Suggestions for topics are welcome. **Due to restrictions on gatherings, support group will be held virtually.**

To register for the virtual support groups, email Patti at [pkasper@aspiranet.org](mailto:pkasper@aspiranet.org) or Yaneth Arceo at [yarceo@aspiranet.org](mailto:yarceo@aspiranet.org) and a link to the meeting will be emailed to you.

## Parent Café

The REACH program now has an additional online parent group called **Parent Café**, offered the **first Thursday of each month, 3:00-5:00 pm**. Parent Café is based on the Five Protective Factors and provides an opportunity for parents to explore their strengths and learn from each other's experiences.

The next Parent Café will be **February 4, 2021- 3:00-5:00 pm**. To register for Parent Café, email Patti at [pkasper@aspiranet.org](mailto:pkasper@aspiranet.org) or Yaneth Arceo at [yarceo@aspiranet.org](mailto:yarceo@aspiranet.org) and a link to the meeting will be emailed to you. We hope to see you there!

## Bakersfield College Foster & Kinship Care Program

Bakersfield College Foster and Kinship Care Program offers training of interest to foster and adoptive parents at no charge.

For a complete list of classes, visit the FKCE website at

<https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/FKCE/schedules#rfat>

Register for classes by calling the registration line

661-319-1836 or BC Program Manager at 661-395-4737



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### REACH and Kern County Adoption Support Services

**Resource:** We provide 1) telephone support and referral to local services 2) referral to local adoption related community trainings 3) linkage to local therapists with experience working with adoptive families 4) lending library and website access 5) quarterly newsletter which includes book reviews, and relevant adoption related information.

**Education:** Educational support groups and meetings are regularly held and offer a variety of topics pertinent to adoption. In addition, access to the lending library and website offer many opportunities to learn more about adoption and the impact of adoption on all members of the adoption constellation (adoptive parents, adoptees and birth family).

**Advocacy:** We are here to help navigate common issues facing adoptive families. We assist adoptive parents with advocating for the assistance needed in working with educational, legislative and community partners to best meet their children's needs.

**Crisis Intervention/Case Management:** Participants are eligible to receive short-term therapeutic services, free of charge, by master's level social workers who are trained and experienced in adoption-related issues. Families are also eligible to receive in-home case management services as needed.

**Hope:** We utilize our agency values of Respect, Integrity, Courage and Hope (RICH) to guide our work with adoptive families. Our goal is to promote safe, healthy and stable adoptive families through access to our services.