

# Protective Capacities and Protective Factors: Common Ground for Protecting Children and Strengthening Families

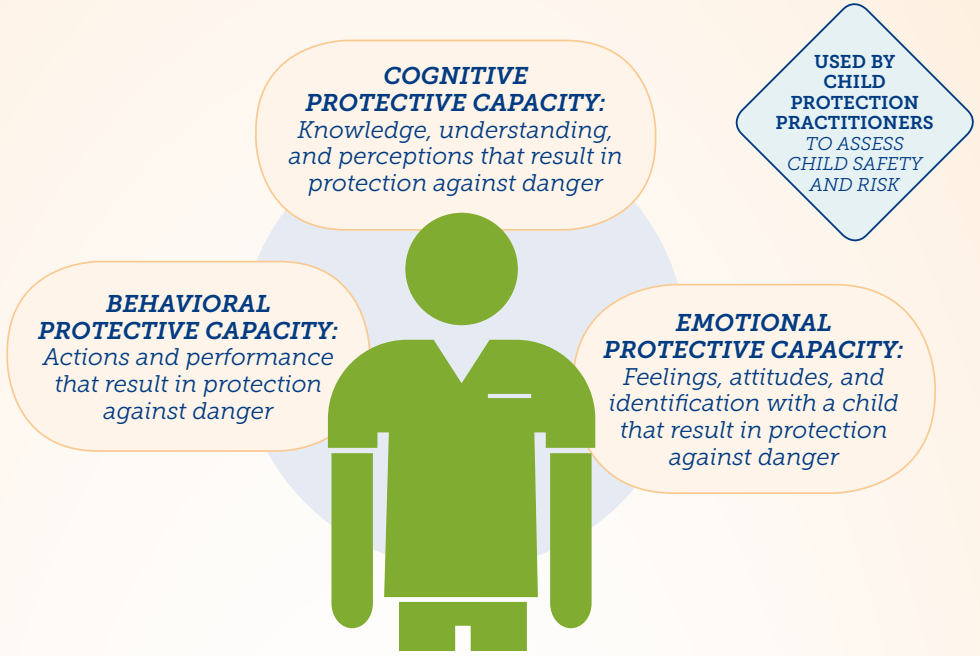


Capacity Building  
CENTER FOR STATES

Child welfare practitioners use varied but complementary frameworks for assessing child safety and working with families. A shared understanding of definitions and common ground can help strengthen consistency in services for families.

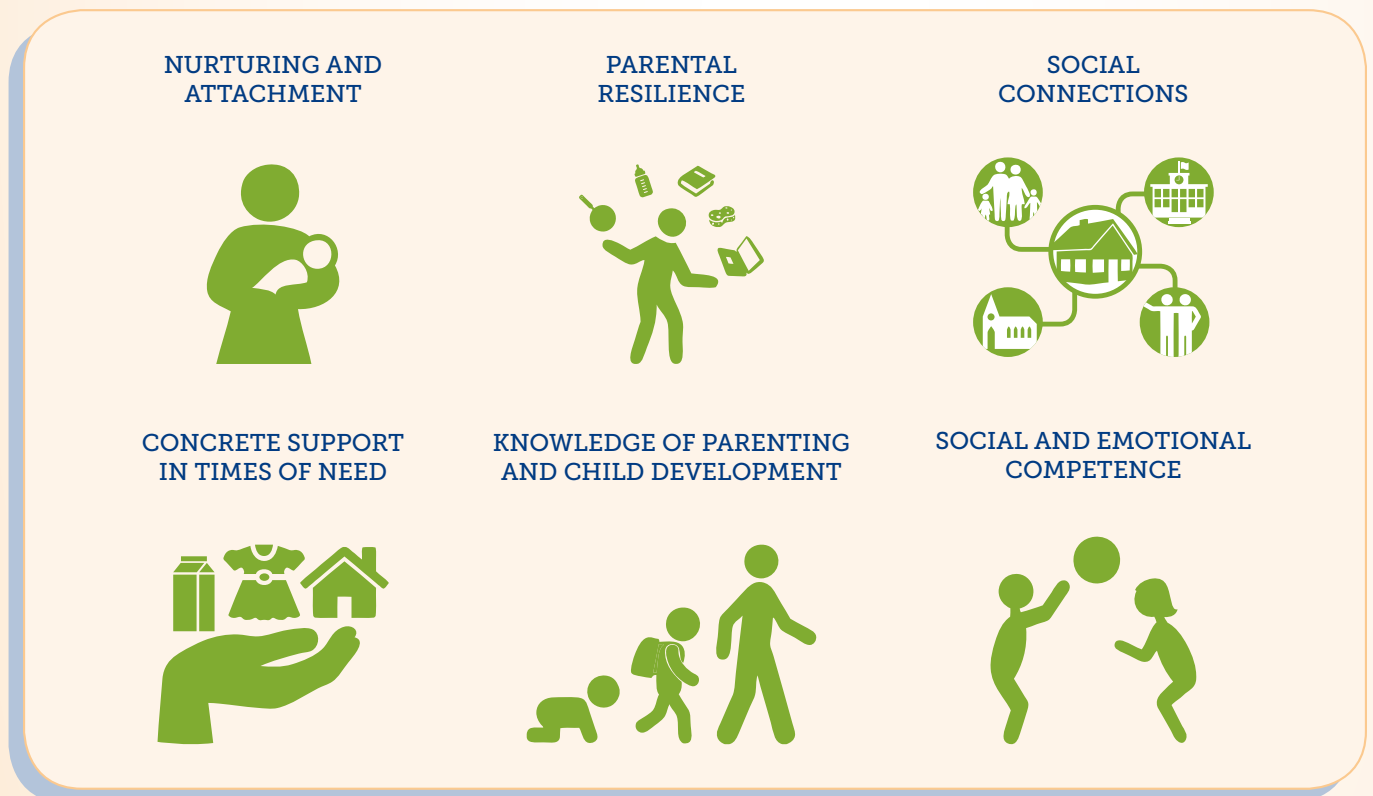
## PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES FRAMEWORK

**Protective capacities<sup>1</sup>** are caregiver characteristics directly related to child safety. A caregiver with these characteristics ensures the safety of his or her child and responds to threats in ways that keep the child safe from harm. Building protective capacities contributes to a reduction in risk.



## PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

**Protective factors<sup>2</sup>** are conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that reduce risk and promote healthy development and well-being of children and families, today and in the future.



## THE COMMON GROUND

Both frameworks are strength-based approaches to assess, intervene, and serve families. By promoting both protective capacities (at the individual level) and protective factors (at the individual, family, and community levels), we can best ensure child safety and promote child and family well-being.



Access more information through the Capacity Building Center for States at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states> and Child Welfare Information Gateway at <https://www.childwelfare.gov>.

<sup>1</sup> ACTION for Child Protection conceptualized and developed the Caregiver Protective Capacities as a component of a comprehensive safety practice model called SAFE (Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation).

<sup>2</sup> The Children's Bureau uses a protective factors framework adapted from the Strengthening Families framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, with the addition of a sixth factor: nurturing and attachment.