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** 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.

- **Behavioral protective capacity**: Actions and performance that result in protection against danger.
- **Cognitive protective capacity**: Knowledge, understanding, and perceptions that result in protection against danger.
- **Emotional protective capacity**: Feelings, attitudes, and identification with a child that result in protection against danger.

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

**Protective factors** 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.

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

### 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.