DON’T FORGET THE FAMILIES
Tapping the Power of Parent-Child Relationships

POLL

What are you most interested in taking away from this webinar?

A. Learn about the framework of developmental relationships.
B. Understand the new research on relationships in U.S. families.
C. Gain insights to strengthen relationships in my own family.
D. Gain insights for strengthening my work with families.

Something else? Post it in the comments box.
More that 5 million youth surveyed across 25 years
A PERSISTENT FINDING
Relationships are at the heart of how kids grow, learn, and thrive
“Almost without exception, theories of psychological well-being include positive relationships with others as a core element of mental health and well-being.”

(Ress & Gabie, 2003)

“Every kid needs at least one adult who is crazy about him or her.”

(Bronfenbrenner, 1970)

“Relationships are the oxygen of human development.”

(Benson, 2008)

“Whether the burdens come from the hardships of poverty, the challenges of parental substance abuse or serious mental illness, the stresses of war, the threats of recurrent violence or chronic neglect, or a combination of factors, the single most common finding is that children who end up doing well have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.”

We know relationships matter. But ...

Input → BLACK BOX → Output

Investigating Relationships

Focus Groups

Theory & Literature Review

Secondary Analysis

Surveys
Developmental Relationships

Close connections

through which young people
discover who they are,
Gain abilities to shape their own lives,
and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them.

Five Essential Actions

Express Care  Challenge Growth  Provide Support

Share Power  Expand Possibility
### Pilot Studies Underway (2014-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Families with Children</th>
<th>Families with Teenagers</th>
<th>Youth on Teacher Relationships</th>
<th>Peer Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National (online)</td>
<td>2 communities</td>
<td>1 community</td>
<td>6 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(rural, small city;</td>
<td>(small town;</td>
<td>(Southwest, West,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Midwest &amp; South)</td>
<td>Northwest)</td>
<td>Midwest, Northeast)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,085 parents of 3 to 13 year olds</td>
<td>633 parent-youth matched pairs (youth ages 10-18)</td>
<td>610 students in grades 6 to 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### JUST RELEASED!

**DON’T FORGET THE FAMILIES**

The Missing Piece in America’s Effort to Help All Children Succeed

Download full and summary reports from [www.search-institute.org/dff](http://www.search-institute.org/dff)

(Technical tables are also available)
Sample Characteristics

1,085 U.S. parenting adults with 3- to 13-year-old

- 86% Birth or adoptive parent
- 65% Female
- 62% Married/civil union
- 55% Less than college degree
- 31% People of color
- 8% LGBT parents

Annual Family Income

- >100K; 10%
- $75K - 99K; 12%
- $50K - 74K; 22%
- $35K - 49K; 18%
- <$35K; 38%

Developmental Relationships Framework

5 Essential Actions

20 Action Steps
Essential Actions

Parents with Children, 3-13

- Express Care: 83%
- Challenge Growth: 72%
- Provide Support: 75%
- Share Power: 41%
- Expand Possibility: 36%

4 Most Common Action Steps

- Encourage: Provide Support (91%)
- Be Dependable: Express Care (89%)
- Show Interest: Express Care (86%)
- Expect: Challenge Growth (84%)
4 Least Common Action Steps

- Respond: Share Power 46%
- Explore: Expand Possibility 35%
- Negotiate: Share Power 35%
- Connect: Expand Possibility 29%

Demographics Are Not Destiny

Essential Actions by Race and Ethnicity
THE POWER OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS IN FAMILIES

Developmental Relationships in Families

- Express Care
- Challenge Growth
- Provide Support
- Share Power
- Expand Possibility

Powerfully associated with

Character Strengths (composite measure)

- Concern for others
- Hopeful purpose
- Positive outlook
- Goal orientation
- Sparks
- Openness to challenges
- Transcendent awareness
**Association with Character Strengths**

The quality of parent-child relationships is 10 times more powerful than demographics* in predicting whether children are developing critical character strengths they need for success in life.

* Includes age, gender, race-ethnicity, immigration status, and financial strain

**Contributors to Character Strengths**

Variance Explained by Developmental Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Strengths Composite</th>
<th>Motivation to Learn</th>
<th>Personal Responsibility</th>
<th>Emotional Competence</th>
<th>Prosocial Behavior</th>
<th>Effortful Control</th>
<th>Conduct Problems</th>
<th>Impulsivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographics explained <5% of variance in each character strength or risk behavior.
### What Developmental Relationships Predict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental relationships and character strengths and risk behaviors</th>
<th>Character Strengths</th>
<th>Motivation to Learn</th>
<th>Personal Responsibility</th>
<th>Emotional Competence</th>
<th>Prosocial Behavior</th>
<th>Effortful Control</th>
<th>Conduct Problems</th>
<th>Impulsivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express Care</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge Growth</td>
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<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand Possibility</td>
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↑ = Significant positive predictor (p < .05)  ↓ = Significant negative predictor (p < .05)

### Relationships and Resilience

- **Stress or Trauma**
- **Youth Well-Being and Strengths**
- **Developmental Relationships**

?
Stressful Life Events

- Separation or divorce
- Unemployment
- Serious accident or illness
- Disability or handicap
- Military deployment
- Victim of a crime
- Victim of violence
- Arrest or imprisonment
- Substance abuse
- Natural disaster
- Death of a family member
- Death of a grandparent
- Death of a friend

Levels of Stressful Life Events

High-Stressed Families

31% (n = 176)
INFORMAL HELPING

MASTERY MOTIVATION

Relationships & Resilience

21x

19x
Relationships and Resilience

Stress or Trauma

Youth Well-Being and Strengths

Developmental Relationships

Takeaways

1. All families (and others)

2. Character strengths

3. Resilience

4. Power & Possibility
Which of these four key takeaways do you believe is the most important for you in your work or family?

A. All families can build developmental relationships
B. Relationships are stronger than demographics in predicting character strengths
C. Relationships contribute to resilience
D. Share power and expand possibility are potentially fruitful areas for focus

Feel free to send comments in the chat box

STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
Starting Points for Action
Tips and Everyday Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Builder Activity</th>
<th>Tried It</th>
<th>How Did It Go?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unplug and focus</td>
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<td>2. Say they matter most</td>
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<td>3. Surface strengths</td>
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<td>4. What’s valuable to you?</td>
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<td>5. Letters to the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Listing limits</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ready or not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Who has gone before?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Proudest moment</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Help reach a goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Do what’s right</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Listen first</td>
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</table>

Based on Developmental Relationships

Download from www.search-institute.org/dff

www.ParentFurther.com
Quiz: Share Power

This 15-question quiz explores how you do and don’t share power in your relationship with your child. Sharing power is more than who makes what decision. It focuses on the ways everyone has a say and each person influences the other.

As you complete the quiz, focus on your experiences in the past two weeks. If you have more than one child, think about one of them while you’re taking the quiz. You might then repeat it for your other child or children.

Collaborate

SECTION 1

1. How often do you work with your child to do the following?

Challenge Growth: Learn About It

What Does It Mean to Challenge Growth?

As parents, we naturally take risks and compete with each other. We also like to be physically and mentally stimulated. It’s how we have survived. In other words, “Challenging ourselves and each other is a part of human nature.”

Parenting relationships also challenge our kids to grow, learn, and improve. We hold them accountable and guide them in positive directions. We do this by setting appropriate boundaries, rules, and limits. Offers, our kids also challenge us.

Challenging growth involves these four actions:

- Empower: Help me see future possibilities for myself.
- Expect: Help me live up to my potential.
- Encourage: Help me see my unique possibilities.
- Expect: Help me see my unique possibilities.

A Parent’s Perspective

“Being willing to kind of push them beyond what they even believe they can do. That’s kind of how we operate in our house.”

What Does It Mean to Share Power?
TALK ABOUT IT

LEARN ABOUT IT

THINK ABOUT IT

Quiz: Share Power
Challenge Growth: Learn About It
Expand Possibilities: Talk About It

What Worlds Can You Open Up?
It can be exciting and stimulating for family members to help each other expand their horizons and explore new possibilities. Talk together about how people have opened up possibilities for you—and other horizons you’d love to explore together.

Discussion Starters with Your Kids
1. What is one thing you really enjoy doing as a family? What foods do you like?

Try It

TALK ABOUT IT

LEARN ABOUT IT

THINK ABOUT IT

Challenge Growth: Try It

Practical Ways to Challenge Growth
Relationships are stronger when family members challenge each other to learn and grow. Experiencing this challenge in your family is a particularly important part of growing up well, but the value of being challenged to learn and grow continues throughout our lives. Through these activities, your family can explore the ways you inspire, expect, and stretch each other to press toward goals that matter for you.

TRY IT
Express Care

OVERALL 83%
Listen 82%
Be Warm 80%
Invest 82%
Show Interest 86%
Be Dependable 89%

TALK ABOUT IT
What sacrifices have others made for you or your family? How have those sacrifices or investments affected your life?

Challenge Growth

OVERALL 72%
Inspire 57%
Expect 84%
Stretch 62%
Limit 82%

TRY IT
The Ups and Downs of Expectations
Examine the balance of expectations in your family
Plot expectations in your family about these areas:
1. Appreciation for your culture
2. Chores and household responsibilities
3. Health, diet, and exercise
4. Religious or spiritual commitment
5. School achievement
6. Screen time (computer, phone, video games, TV)
7. Shared family meals, curfews, or other routines
8. Treating people who are different from your family
9. Tobacco or alcohol use
10. Values such as honesty, integrity, and caring
11. Community or political involvement
12. __________________
13. __________________

Provide Support

Think about a recent time you were struggling with a challenge. What are some ways people in the family did (or didn’t) encourage you or advocate for you? How did their response affect you?
Share Power

Teach Something
Ask your child to teach you how to do something that you currently do not know how to do. Pay close attention while your child does the teaching and ask your child questions that allow him or her to show expertise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRY IT

Expand Possibility

What is one thing you really enjoy (such as music, ideas, foods) that someone else in the family introduced you to? Tell the story of how they introduced you to it?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigate</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five (or More) Beyond the Family

Number of non-parent adults who youth can turn to for advice and support.

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or Four
- Five or More

Care for Others

- 41%
- 62%
- 78%

Optimism for Future

- 0
- 5+

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Expand Possibility

Getting Comfortable Meeting New People

Practice conversation starters together that can make it easier to get to know new people.

ParentFurther

10 Tips for Talking with People You Don’t Know

Try these when you’re having a conversation with someone you don’t know.

1. **Think ahead.** Prepare some questions in advance that you might ask. These could include her or his job, interests, hobbies, family, or places he or she has visited. Stay away from controversial topics when you’re just getting started.

2. **Introduce yourself.** Smile, and maintain good eye contact. Focus more on the conversation than worrying about how you’re being perceived.

3. **Start small.** Don’t get too personal too quickly. Start with “small talk,” or a non-controversial topic. It could be about the place or event where you’re meeting, the weather, a current topic, or people you both know.

4. **Show interest.** If you’re curious about other people, you’ll have better conversation. Really listen to what they say about themselves. Ask follow-up questions, such as “Say more about that,” or “I’m not familiar with that. Can you tell me more about something?”

5. **Let go of preconceptions.** Almost everyone is embarrassed, nervous, or lead to a tip you can experience. Every conversation new—whether you’re first.
Five Essential Actions

- Express Care
- Challenge Growth
- Provide Support
- Share Power
- Expand Possibility

REFRAMING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Six Critical Shifts
Refocusing Family Engagement

From a Primary Focus on... | Toward an Emphasis on...
---|---
- Messaging to parents | - Listening to families
- Provide programs | - Build relationships
- Reinforce stereotypes | - Highlight family strengths

Perceptions about Decline

Compared to when I was growing up, American family life is . . .

- Declining 64%
- Holding Steady 28%
- Improving 8%

And yet . . .

Pew Research Center (2,691 U.S. adults):

76% My family is the most important element of my life.

75% I am very satisfied with my family.


Change ≠ Decline

“Families still matter greatly, and families can and do tend to perform well those functions that are particularly relevant to the lives of children, even in Different social and historical contexts, household arrangements, and living conditions.”

Bengston, Biblarz, & Roberts (2002)
### Refocusing Family Engagement

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>• Experiment with practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parenting as techniques</td>
<td>• Parenting as a relationship</td>
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</table>

### Where do we put our energy?

- **Emphasis on Techniques**
- **Experiment with Practices**

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**Books**:
- *The Secret of Parenting*
- *Battle Hymn for a Tiger Mother*
- *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk*
Refocusing Family Engagement

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal systems focus</td>
<td>• Engage families as partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who’s Really “Hard to Reach”

“[There is a] fundamental disconnect between what is designed and offered and what families want and need. . . . In other words, it is our institutions and the programs, practices, and policies that school personnel design that are ‘hard to reach,’ not the families.”

Question

What’s **ONE THING** you are taking away from today’s webinar?

  . . . Something you’ll think more about
  . . . Something you’ll try
  . . . Something you’ll talk to others about

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

From Search Institute
From Search Institute

WEBSITE ParentFurther

WORKSHOPS
- Discover Your Family’s Strengths: A Workshop for Parenting Adults
- Engaging the New American Family: A Relationship-Based Approach

IN DEVELOPMENT (available Fall 2016)
- Developmental Relationships in Families surveys
- Keep Connected: Building Relationships to Help Your Child Thrive Through Adolescence
DON’T FORGET THE FAMILIES

• Complete report
• 4-page summary
• Activities booklet
• Technical appendix

Available at
www.search-institute.org/dff

PASS IT ON!