**Getting to Know the 6 Protective Factors**

The ways that parents interact with their children and the skills that parents use when parenting are central to keeping children safe. When the following six factors are present in the family, the risk for child maltreatment and child abuse are significantly reduced.

1. **Nurturing & Attachment**

Nurturing children and developing attachment with children is the process of a parent bonding emotionally with his or her child through kind, supportive, age-appropriate behavior. In this process, the child learns to trust and feel secure with the parent. Nurturing and attachment are keys for developing bonds between parent and child.

1. **Knowledge of Child Developmental Stages**

Knowledge about child development is gained when the parent learns about how the child grows emotionally, physically, and mentally, and the needs that accompany these changes. This knowledge allows parents to have realistic expectations of a child’s behavior and abilities, as well as to be able to fulfill the child’s needs.

1. **Parental Resilience**

Parental resilience is defined as parents’ own inner resources and coping skills that help them handle stress and crises. Resilient coping skills allow a parent to be able to solve problems, keep calm when upset, and make it through challenging times. When parents are resilient, they are better able to build strong and resilient families

1. **Supportive Social Connections**

The presence of supportive family members, friends, and neighbors helps keep families emotionally healthy and encourages positive parenting practices. When parents have supportive social connections, they are better able to cope with the many challenges of parenting.

1. **Access to Concrete Community Supports**

When a family is struggling to meet basic needs, this stress can lead to family dysfunction. Concrete community supports are social services that provide basic resources such as food, water, shelter, safety, health care, and mental health care. Other services that can act as built-in community supports include: childcare, domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment, employment assistance, housing, transportation, and financial literacy.

1. **Social and Emotional Competence of Children**

Emotional competence can be defined as a child’s ability to identify and express his or her feelings. Social competence refers to a child’s ability to interact with other people. Emotional competence and social competence go hand-in-hand, as both involve skill sets that help to express, define, and interpret emotions. Emotional and social competencies also allow children to relate and respond to the feelings of others, as well as to communicate their needs.

*Institute for Family Violence Studies (2015)*

*The Protective Factors: An E-Book Series for Supervised Visitation Programs.*