

# strengthening families

THROUGH EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

## knowledge of parenting and child development

fact sheet for early care & education program staff

### COMPONENTS OF KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Parents who understand normal child development are less likely to be abusive and more likely to nurture their children's healthy development. Observing other children helps parents understand their own children in context.
- Parents often need timely help from someone they trust in order to address their children's problem behaviors, such as biting or hitting, without resorting to harsh discipline techniques.
- People who model alternative discipline techniques, males who serve in nurturing roles, and programs with a norm of non-violence demonstrate alternatives for parents
- Parents of children with developmental or behavior problems or special needs require support and coaching in their parenting roles to reduce frustration and provide the help their children need.

### HOW EARLY CARE & EDUCATION PROGRAMS BUILD IT

- Informal daily interactions between parents and program staff, including coaching on issues such as sharing toys, biting, and bullying
- Parenting education classes that use various approaches, including presenting information on developmental stages, teaching parents, with children in the same age group, etc.
- Observation space where parents can watch their child interact with others and learn new techniques from observing staff



“parenting is part natural, part learned”<sup>1</sup>



### QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM STAFF

- How do you currently build knowledge of parenting and child development in your work with children and families?
- What new strategies might you try to build knowledge of parenting and child development?
- What organizational changes would support your capacity to build knowledge of parenting and child development in your work?

Strengthening Families Illinois, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. *Love is Not Enough to Keep Your Family Strong Campaign*. <http://www.keepyourfamilystrong.org>