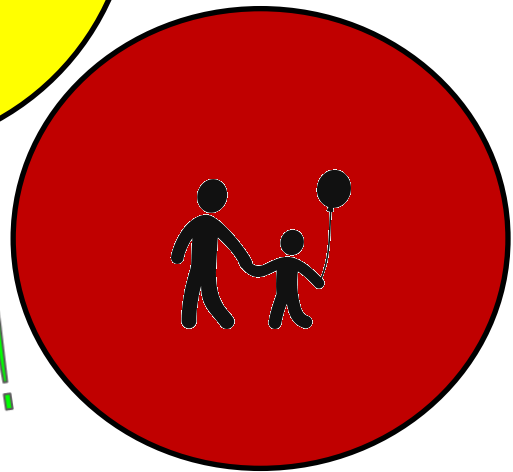
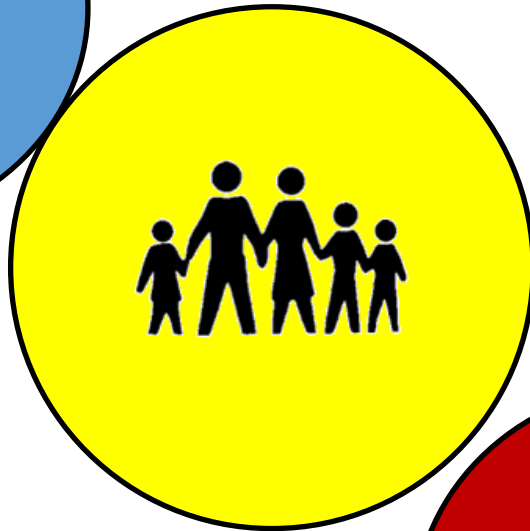
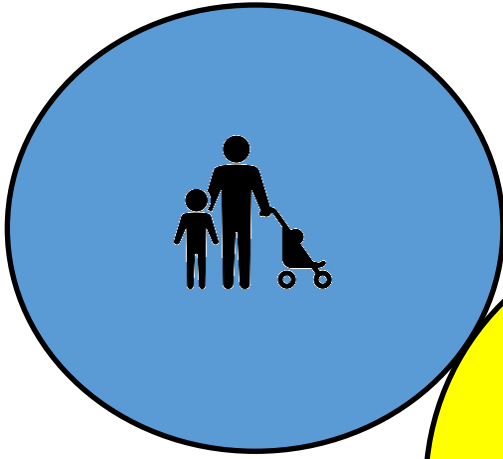


PARENT AND GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



#YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



What makes your family **STRONG?**

The reality is...hard times, adversity, misfortune, bad breaks, difficulties, tough luck...whatever you call it - your family is sure to face it one time or another.

The good news is...the risks you and your children face do not define your family - protective factors do! When these **FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS** are well established, family strength & optimal child development emerge.

Parental Resilience

The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened and transformed by those experiences.

Social Connections

The ability and opportunity to develop positive relationships that lessen stress and isolation and help to build a supportive network.

Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

The ability to exercise effective parenting strategies to guide and know what to expect as children develop (physically, cognitively, socially & emotionally).

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to supports and services that reduce stress and make families stronger.

Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize & regulate their emotions, and establish & maintain relationships.

“Be the adult you needed when you were a child”

The Raymond Coalition For Youth empowers the community to promote positive youth development and reduce youth substance use and suicide risk.

Parents, we always want to hear what is concerning to you or how we can help.

To learn more, get involved, or be a part of RCFY, please visit rcfy.org, check us out on social media, join our newsletter (send email to info@rcfy.org) or join us a meeting or event.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

One of our Goals is to increase resources and supports. Please use the QR code or visit www.rcfy.org for information on where to go for support, who can help, events and meetings, and information on talking with your child about suicide risk, drug and alcohol use.

Unite Us—if you are looking for food, housing, transportation, peer support, or other services visit <https://uniteus.com/networks/new-hampshire/get-help/> or our rcfy.org—resource page.

Mental health or substance misuse crisis -, you can call and speak to trained and caring people who want to help **1.833.710.6477** or visit NH988.com



Parenting can be tough—don't forget to breathe!

Support for yourself - parenting can be an adventure and sometimes a challenge. it is important to talk with other parents or community supports and remember, all parents go through this.. Talking with others is not only a great support and lightens your load to share.

Self Care! It is important to take care of yourself so you can take care of your kids.

“You can't pour from an empty cup” By taking care of yourself you are filling your cup up to be the adult your child needs.

Take a break, breathe, relax, or maybe enjoy some fresh air— take a walk, bike ride or a hike.

Some favorite outside spots in our area include Riverside Park (Disc Golf Park, Dog Park, Playground and Trails), Pawtuckaway State Park (beach, trails, hiking), our local seacoast, the rail trail that runs through town for biking, walking and running.

These are great family and individual places to enjoy the great outdoors and all nature offers.


Self Care Plan

 **Mind**

- Read
- Be Creative
- Take Breaks
- Learn new things

breathe **Body**

- Deep breaths
- Relaxation
- Drink water
- Eat healthy
- Exercise

Spirit 

- Time in nature
- Help others
- Mindfulness
- Dance
- Sing

Heart 

- Pet an animal
- Spend time with friends, family
- Laugh
- Have fun

Here are some positive parenting practices to help promote your child's health and well-being.



Start early – It's never too early to encourage healthy attitudes, emotions and behaviors in your children. This creates a foundation to help them learn, grow be kind and adapt.

Be a good role model – Children watch what their parents do and learn how to interact with others, respond to challenges, and take care of themselves. You are your child's primary role model, and they're watching what you do even more than they're listening to what you say. That doesn't mean you have to be perfect. Even your flaws and slip-ups can demonstrate effective coping and social skills, including how to apologize and forgive. They learn when they see you being honest about your shortcomings and how you bounce back.

Tip Model taking care of your own health and well-being. (proper diet, exercise, what do you do fun, if you drink alcohol, do it in moderation or not around your kids, etc.)

Tip When facing your own challenges, demonstrate effective coping and relationship skills. How to pause, take a breathe and make a plan to address the challenge.

Communicate openly and honestly – Have open conversations with your children. This allows your child to feel safe coming to you with questions or problems, and confident that what you tell them will be true and honest. This builds a strong social support system for your child, a key ingredient for raising resilient kids. Without mutual trust, they may not develop a strong sense of security or know where to go when they need support.

Use positive reinforcement – Give positive feedback when your child shows an effort to help around the house, completes a task, uses their manners or are well behaved. You give children confidence and increase their self esteem when you acknowledge them, instead of pointing out what is not going well or mistakes.

Tip A “thank you” and “good job” can be an attitude changer.

Protective Factors and Risk Factors— know how to provide your child with the things that make a difference

Tip Get information from sources you trust: friends and relatives, your children's health care provider, teacher, and child development experts, like the Raymond Coalition For Youth www.rcfy.org and operationparent.org.



Have clear rules and expectations - Believe it or not kids love rules! It helps them to know how you want them to behave, gives their life structure and provides them with a sense of safety. Have a clear understanding of the consequences for breaking your rules and follow through if or when this happens, because they are kids and it is their job in some cases to push the limit.

Tip If it is clear that your expectations are based in love and concern rather than a “because I said so,” they will know that you truly care about their health and safety. They will, in fact, strive to meet your expectations and respect your rules.



Punishment is not always the answer – It’s highly unlikely that your child will behave poorly just for the fun of it; there’s usually a reason for their bad mood or outbursts. Take the time to find out what is going on and why they are behaving the way they are.

Tip You are their safe space and if they are acting out they usually need someone to stop, breathe, ask and listen.



Monitor your child - Part of parenting is protecting your kids from harm as they develop into healthy and fulfilled adults. This includes knowing where your children are, what they’re doing, and who they’re doing it with. This includes keeping an eye on your children’s screen time and social media use. Too much time spent on screens and social media can lead to poor mental and physical health. For adults too.

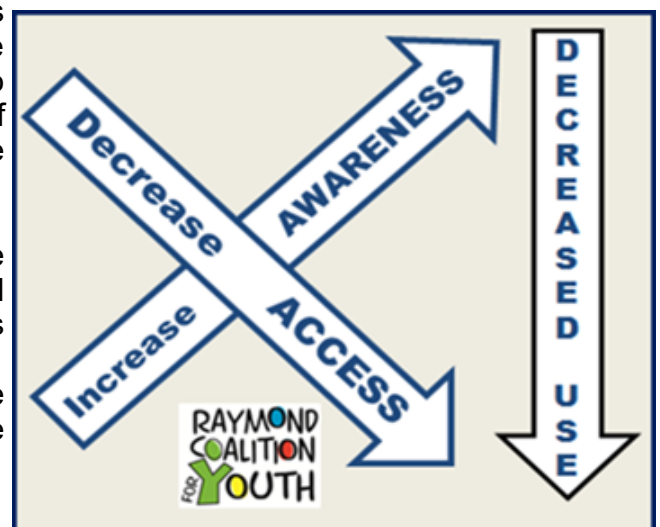
Schedules— A daily schedule helps your child plan for their day, much like adults. Knowing about appointments, expectations and the usual bedtime, dinner and homework make a difference.

Get involved in your child's life—Know their friends, know their friends parents, know their teachers and stay in touch with the school to know how they are doing. Attend their activities sporting events, recitals, school events. When you show them you care and take time for them, they know they are important to you and want to make you proud.

Tip Spending quality time together, asking lots of questions, and really listening to their answers will help know when or if your children might be have something that is bothering them or if there are signs of risk.

Know your children’s risk level and respond accordingly –Know whether your children are susceptible to mental or physical health issues or substance use, be vigilant for and responsive to signs of risk, and know when and how to seek help for them – and for yourself – if needed. A list of risk and protective factors are on the next page to help.

Substance misuse prevention can be as simple as reducing access to medications and alcohol and keeping it out of reach of curious toddlers and teens. The second step is providing awareness to the dangers and risks of use. . Use the tips on the next page for this.



How to talk to your child about drugs and alcohol - information you want them to have should come from you, not an internet search or friends who might be guessing or sharing what they learned on the internet themselves.

It's never too early to start —protecting your child from the harms of substance misuse can start when they are toddlers and you teach them not to touch medications. Practice medication safety for all ages—only take medication prescribed by a doctor and from a pharmacy and they can only take it from a parent or trusted adult. Keep it stored in a safe place and dispose of medication at medication take back events or police disposal box.

Do your homework but know that you do not need to know everything, and it is okay to “find out and get back to them.” This also leaves the door open for a future conversation.

Pick a good time and location- Mealtimes or driving in the car are good times. It may help to talk about the subject when it comes up watching TV, a movie, or in the news.

Tip If direct eye contact is difficult or awkward. it could be easier talking in a side-by-side location such as washing up together, driving in the car or preparing food.

Let them know your values - It's important for your children to know where you stand on alcohol and drug use. Be clear about your reasons why. The law is you need to be 21 to drink., you might have a family member who struggles with addiction, substance misuse might have negatively impacted you or your family, or addiction could run in your family?

Avoid scare tactics –Kids don't want to hear they will die if they try something but today's fake prescription drugs are a real concern for this. Just be clear about the dangers of drug and alcohol use, such as the impact on brain development, health concerns and safety (fights, unwanted sexual experiences or pregnancy, driving accidents)



Let them know you're always there to listen and not judge. Kids have a lot going on,. If they open up to you, listen and let them know you are there to support them.

Once is not enough—Each time you talk about the importance of not using alcohol and other drugs you are building trust and giving them information. Even if they don't act like it, they are listening.

Give them a plan to get out of a bad situation—Talk about how they can get out of an uncomfortable situation with friends. “My mom needs me to get home.” “My dad has so many rules, he'd be really upset”, “My parents are so ridiculous they have a drug test I need to take when I get home.” or have a code they can text you that tells you they are in a bad situation.

Lastly, it is okay to enlist another trusted adult to help. Sometimes kids listen better to other adults. It doesn't matter who helps them, only that they have a trusted adult they can go to.

Technology

Helpful and a headache at the same time.
The key is to have rules to help guide you and your child and avoid the potholes, dangers and pitfalls.

The first step is to remember that your child is always watching and learning from your actions, more so than your words. They will use the healthy habits you model.

~ THINK ABOUT IT ~



Are you always on your phone? Do you text and drive? What apps are you on?
Are you careful about what you post online? If you post pictures of your kids do you make sure they are okay with them first? (Do you respect their boundaries?)

Set some family ground rules for tech use

All digital devices are charged in a parents or guardians bedroom at night

No gaming after 9:00 pm No cell phones at the dinner table

Video chatting must be done within a parents view

Cellphones

A cell phone is a mini device that provides access to a world of information, and only one swipes away from dangerous content, predators and pictures you may not want your child to see.

Always know your child's password to access the phone, be sure they understand to NEVER share personal information, including their password, and they understand they need to let you know if anyone ever reaches out to them or makes them feel uncomfortable.

Social Media

The recommended age for most sites is 13 and it is important to note that not all sites have privacy settings - meaning you have no control over who sees your child's site and information.

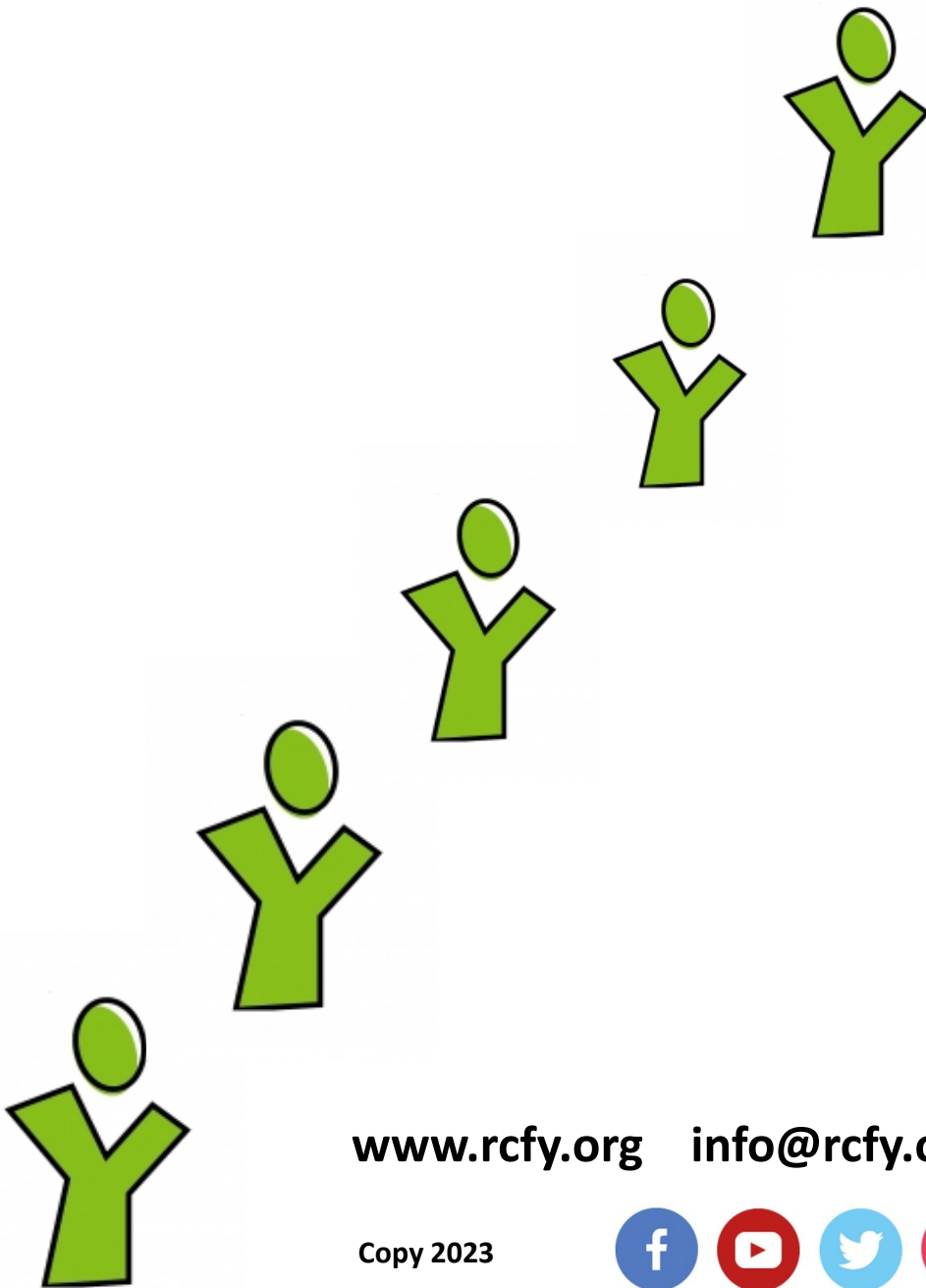
Make sure your child has rules and follows them. They can never share personal information, always have to know who they are connected to, and know that anything they say or post will be out there "forever."

Gaming

Know the games your child is playing and what they will be teaching your child. The ratings can be very helpful with this.

Your child could be exposed to other gamers and inappropriate language, sexual content, and bullying behavior, no matter the rating.

Video game addiction is a real thing so it is important to have, and enforce, limits of what, when and for how long, a child can play. Operationparent.org has some great information on this.



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