



## Families in Recovery: Strengthening Connections One Day at a Time Pilots Statewide Fall of 2018!

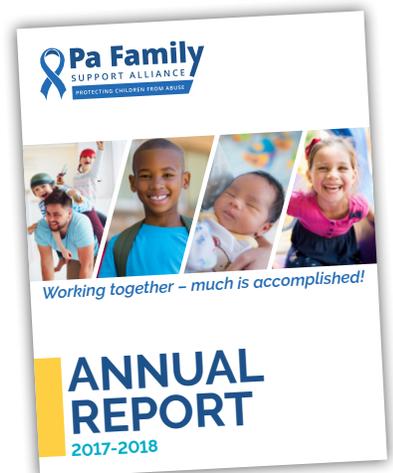
Pa Family Support Alliance will collaborate with twelve Family Centers across the Commonwealth to implement a seven week, strengths-based, holistic program for parents in recovery from substance use disorder. In the face of the opioid use epidemic, parents in the early stages of recovery are often faced with unexpected, unique challenges and a demand to balance the role of parenting with the newly established experience of recovery.

This comprehensive experiential and educational program attends to a variety of challenges and experiences common to parents in recovery, including: identifying strengths, needs, and resiliencies; exploring healthy parenting in balance with recovery needs, understanding the person-focused and family-centered change process; promoting healthy parenting and communication styles; developing healthy coping skills and modeling self-care; coping with guilt, shame, and stigma; and developing a personalized family blueprint for holistic wellness.

The program incorporates recovery-oriented rhetoric within the framework, is informed

by The Strengthening Families Protective Factors™, is trauma informed, and can be flexibly implemented in group and individual settings.

PFSA would like to extend a big thank you to PA Department of Human Services Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Centers for Schools and Communities for their ongoing support, and the twelve Family Centers across the state who will implement and facilitate this program. Without your commitment and contributions, this work would not be possible!



## Working together, much is accomplished!

We are happy to announce the release of our annual report, a reflection on a year's work of collaboration and commitment to making Pennsylvania a safe place for kids.

Please visit our website at [www.pa-fsa.org](http://www.pa-fsa.org) to access the full report.

## Prevention: October is National Bullying Prevention Month

Roughly 1 in 3 students in the United States experiences bullying while engaged in the education systems grades k-12. It goes without mentioning that the numbers are likely much higher due to the role technology plays in the lives of young people as well as the emergence of cyber and phone-based bullying and harassment. Individuals who have been bullied in childhood are known to subsequently struggle with trust, relationship dynamics, self-esteem, and possess a greater vulnerability to substance abuse and process addictions.

Supporting kids who are bullied begins by fostering safe spaces and climates that encourage trust and unconditional positive regard for every child. Children want to be heard. Promoting a culture of availability and compassion leads to a greater likelihood that a child will confide in an adult. It is the role of the adult to listen to and learn about what the child has been experiencing. Be prepared and familiar with resources to help advocate and build specialized supports around children who are being bullied. Maintain a collaborative perspective to work effectively with parents, teachers, and providers. It is imperative to personalize and individualize for all children. What works for some children, may not work for others.

Show children they are a priority. Follow up and follow through. If you tell a child they can come to you, never delay them when they do. Check in with all involved parties on the well-being, status, and needs of the child.

It is important also to consider those who demonstrate bullying behavior, and those children and young adults who are bystanders and witnesses to such abuses. Everyone has a role to play when there is an awareness of abuse and mistreatment. Educate young people that bullying behavior is destructive, abusive, and unacceptable. Hold those demonstrating bullying behavior accountable. This shouldn't be done punitively. Initiate conversations to tell the child that bullying results in consequences. Enforce and reinforce these consequences to teach children accountability and responsibility. Promote emotional regulation and pro-social behaviors by helping children and young people to understand the impact of bullying behaviors.

For information and support visit [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov). Reach out to teachers, school counselors, principals and superintendents for help and intervention. If bullying is not being appropriately addressed in your school community, reach out to the US Department of Education Civil Rights Hotline at 1-800-421-3481.

## Awareness: October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

The average lifetime costs per child impacted by exposure to domestic violence is \$50,500. More than 10 million individuals in the United States are physically abused by a current or former partner every year.

Twenty-five percent of children in the United States will witness domestic violence before the age of 18. Children subjected to domestic violence have an increased likelihood of developing trauma related responses such as: behavioral, mental health, cognitive, and social as well as an impact to physical health and well-being.

Domestic violence can be physical (hitting, kicking, slapping), sexual (forced sex or unwanted sexual acts), economic (no access to money or credit cards), or emotional (threats, control, disrespect). Anyone - no matter their gender, race, religion, occupation, educational level, sexual orientation, or ethnic identification - can be a victim of domestic violence.

Many victims of domestic violence blame themselves for the abuse. Remember that only the abuser is responsible for his/her behavior and only he/she can make it stop. Provide the chance and a safe, non-judgmental space for victims to talk.

Remain empathetic and understanding to the feelings of adults and children, reassure both parties that the abuse is not their fault, and establish a code word or signal to know when to act on safety plans or to call for help.

For information and support, contact the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV). For anonymous, confidential help 24/7, please call the NCADV hotline at 1800-799-7233 (SAFE) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY). Visit [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org).

For all local programs in PA, visit PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence at [www.pcadv.org](http://www.pcadv.org).