

Family Strengths Tool

How to Use this Tool –

This family questionnaire has been created to offer opportunities for your family to talk about your family's strengths. It's a tool for reflection. Use this tool to think about what's important in your family – and talk about it as a family.

What are the things that are important to your family? Think about what makes your family unique, what makes your family special? How do you support each other? What types of things does each person in your family have to contribute to your family's happiness?

After you've had the chance to go through and answer the questions, there are resources for you to try with your family. Each section reflects the four areas designed as part of the Start Smart Stay Safe Framework. Explore how you can build upon the "Success, Service, Significance and Self (Family/System) Awareness" of your family by trying out some of the activities.

Before you begin –

As you go through the questionnaire, take note of the questions and how they make you feel. You will be asked later to list the top 5 questions that you feel are most important in your family. Answer the questions together as a family (see *attached questionnaire, and answer the questions now*).

Reflection Questions –

Now that you have completed the questionnaire, take a moment and answer the following questions:

- What makes a family strong? Do you think your family is a strong family? Why or why not?
- What questions stood out as important to your family?
 - How you could build upon or improve those qualities in your family?
 - Are there other areas you feel your family could grow stronger?

Go through the questionnaire again and have each member of your family choose the top 5 questions they feel are most important in the family. Have each person in the family describe why they feel the one's they have chosen are important.

Building Upon your Family Strengths –

Take the opportunity to use the resources listed here to help build upon your families' strengths. Each of the following sections has been outlined to align with each of the cornerstones. Use the resources as you see fit in your family.



Service

Service is linked with generosity, doing things for others, knowing that one has something to offer to one's family, friends, and community in general. Service is about knowing that you can be helpful and contribute with what you have to offer.

Here are just a few ideas you might try at home!

Donate Used Items: Ask your child to consider an old toy or item of clothing that they no longer play with or wear. Find a local charity that collects used items and ask your child if she would be willing to donate the item she

no longer needs. Take some time to explain how much the boy or girl who receives this item will benefit from having it given to her.

Be a Role Model: One of the best ways to teach your child about being respectful to others is to model this behaviour for him. Actions such as asking your child before moving or using an item that belongs to him or using manners when you speak to him will have a great impact in showing your child how to treat other people with respect for them and their belongings.

Contribute by Choice: Encourage your child to become involved in helping with household duties. Decide with your child a family chore he would like to assist with each week.

Offering choice empowers your child and he will be more likely to want to contribute



Showing Gratitude: Help your child write a "thank you" note to someone in your family or community. Talk about the importance of showing other people our appreciation.

Additional Activities to Try Found on the Start Smart Stay Safe (S4) Website

Family Activities:

<http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-activities/>

- Level 1, Service
- Level 2, Service
- Level 3, Service
- Level 4, Service

Family Videos:

<http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-videos/>

- Service

Family Engagement Manual:

<http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-engagement/>



Self (System/Family) Awareness

Self-Awareness is about being able to make choices that affect one's own life. Giving the power to make decisions, appropriate for stage and age, will help build self-discipline and acquire confidence to make choices. This helps build a value system and understand limitations.

Some Ideas to Try at Home!

Personal Preparation:

Discuss difficult situations when your child might need to say no, like peer pressure; solutions, consequences and practice dialogue; what could be said? Practice and role play will create awareness of values and expectations and how to be prepared in those situations.

Body Boosts: Talk to your child about some of the physical changes happening in the body at this stage. For more information check out:

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=122&id=1497>

Create Balance: Talk with your child about the importance of setting up boundaries to create balance in life (ie: playing on the computer, spending time with friends, spending time on homework). Children will do what you do, so model a healthy, balanced lifestyle. For more information on setting boundaries for tech-obsessed kids see:
www.parentfurther.com/blog/setting-boundaries-technology

Additional Activities to Try Found on the S4 Website

Helpful Hints: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/helpful-hints/>

Knowing Your Emotions, Healthy Communication,

Family Activities: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-activities/>

- Level 1, Self-Awareness
- Level 2, Self-Awareness
- Level 3, Self-Awareness
- Level 4, Self-Awareness

Family Videos: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-videos/>

- Self-Awareness



Success

Success is based on mastery, being able to set goals, and achieve them. The “how to” or the process is very important; it is where opportunities for learning, growing, and improving are present. Success is about achieving personal, family, or community goals rather than being better or superior to others.



Teach Problem Recognition: When a small, every day problem comes up, involve your child in the process of finding a solution. Help him identify possible steps and clearly lay out his options he has to choose from.

Plan Ahead: Help your child learn to anticipate future events by doing some simple planning together. Learning to plan ahead will help prepare your child for goal setting later on

Goal Setting: Help your child to set a goal that is easy for her to accomplish (i.e. picking her clothes for the next day, getting up in time to eat breakfast, brushing her teeth twice a day.) When she accomplishes the goal, even if you have to remind her, acknowledge her effort and talk about the process she used to accomplish it (how did she remember, what guidelines did she put in place etc.) and how does it feel to have completed the goal she set for herself.

Notice the Small Stuff: Let her know you have noticed hard work or change by telling your child she is doing a good job and congratulate her on a job well done. Noticing small improvements, changes, or effort at random times is an effective way to help your child feel a sense of success and motivates her to do more.



Some Other Start Smart Stay Safe Resources

Helpful Hints: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/helpful-hints/>

- Nurturing Strengths, Positive Challenges, Making Healthy Choices, Teaching Responsibility, Resilience

Family Activities: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-activities/>

- Level 1, Success
- Level 2, Success
- Level 3, Success
- Level 4, Success

Family Videos: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-videos/>



Significance

Significance comes from a sense of belonging, feeling that one matters and that one is loved. Feeling significant goes beyond basic needs, it explores emotions and feelings, which are a significant part of growing up healthy and balanced.

Significance is knowing that one is important, feeling that one is in the right place, that one fits in.

Trust Building: Talk to your child about the importance of honesty and how it affects him or herself as well as other people. Explain how honesty builds trust, which is a key aspect of healthy relationships.

Tell Your Children You Love Them: Make it a routine to tell your child that you love him at least three times a day. Make eye contact (if appropriate) and let him know that he is important.



Confidence Building: Remind your child of positive characteristics and contributions he brings to the family. Using examples can influence your bond with him/her and help design his self-image; your child will make better choices and reactions when he feels good about himself.

Creative Expression: Help your child create a collage to include important representations of her life and as part of your family. This could include magazine clippings, drawings, pictures, words, etc. Be creative!

Start Smart Stay Safe Family Resources To Check Out

Helpful Hints: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/helpful-hints/> Role Modelling,

Family Activities: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-activities/>

- Level 1, Significance
- Level 2, Significance
- Level 3, Significance
- Level 4, Significance

Family Videos: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/family-videos/>

- Significance

Community Supports: <http://startsmartstaysafe.ca/family-resources/community-supports/>