

Strive Overview:

Partners for Our Children (POC) at the University of Washington has been working in close collaboration, since 2014, with the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), and numerous stakeholders to develop and test the *Strive* Supervised Visitation program. *Strive* is a parent education and support program that aims to engage parents in the visitation process, assist parents in preparing for high quality visits with their children, and promote child safety. *Strive* uses a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach to help parents create a positive environment for nurturing their relationship with their child(ren) within the context of supervised visitation. Parents are connected with a “Visit Navigator” (visit supervisor trained in *Strive*) who meets with them weekly during the program to cover session content and to support them in visits to “try out” new knowledge and skills.

For the five weeks of *Strive*, parents work with the same Visit Navigator; a) meeting with them one-on-one, before their visit, for a one hour session for information and support regarding their visit, b) after the session, their Visit Navigator then provides a supported, supervised visit and c) they then have a 15 minute, one-on-one debrief with the Visit Navigator after the visit to discuss what went well and areas the parent wants to focus on in subsequent visits. The five sessions comprising *Strive* are:

- 1) **Getting Started** which is focused on building the relationship between the parent and Visit Navigator (VN) and deciding how to work together, identifying the importance of visits and, orienting parents to visitation rules and expectations;
- 2) **Connect and Reassure** provides parents with strategies for connecting with and reassuring their children and addressing feelings their children may be having in visits. The parent learns to create and use a visit routine to provide structure for the visit;
- 3) **Creating a Safe and Health Visit Environment** in which the VN provides the parent with age appropriate information on child safety in visits, and how to monitor, distract, and redirect their children and supports the parent in scanning the visit space for safety hazards for their child;
- 4) **Communication Counts** in which the VN supports the parents in practicing a strategy called Communicating Using Feelings and Needs to communicate with their children, as well as adults involved in their case;
- 5) **Child Directed Play** covers the benefits of parents spending time during the visit following their child’s lead in play and the parent learns about and practices the elements of child directed play (Join, Watch, Describe, Follow, Copy, Praise).

In addition, infused throughout the curriculum, are opportunities for the parent to learn and practice brief, **stress reduction** techniques to help them to: take in new information from the *Strive* sessions, be present for their visit with their children and, have self-calming strategies that can help them handle stressful situations that may arise.

To date, the *Strive* program has been piloted with approximately 100 parents on both the east and west sides of Washington State. Analysis of Pilot 2 data is still underway but in Pilot 1, parents receiving *Strive* had a **lower rate of missed visits** compared to a propensity score matched comparison group (7% vs 16%) and parents involved in *Strive*:

- were **more prepared** for their visits
- reported that their feeling tense and anxious coming to visits decreased significantly
- increased their use of stress reduction strategies to help them tune in better to their child’s needs
- felt the *Strive* visit routine helped with saying goodbye to their children at the end of the visit
- were **satisfied** with the *Strive* program saying it **helped** them in visits and covered most of what **was needed**
- there was **mutual respect** between them and their Visit Navigator
- they planned to **continue to use what they learned** (stress management and communication techniques as well as maintaining a visit routine)
- would **recommend** *Strive* to other parents in a similar situation

***Strive* Expansion and Adaptation Work:**

Washington State - Region 1

The Washington State legislature authorized funds to expand *Strive* throughout Region 1 over the 2019-2021 biennium. Visitation providers supervising Family Time visits of parents served by all nine DCYF offices in Region 1 will be trained to deliver *Strive*. The DCYF offices and visitation providers will be phased in through six *Strive* Visit Navigator trainings taking place over two years. The goal for this expansion of *Strive* is to serve 500+ parents, to estimate program benefits and costs, and to inform DCYF's decision regarding whether to take on *Strive* more broadly and integrate it into Family Time services across the state.

San Francisco County, California

In February, 2019, 22 staff from San Francisco County Human Services Agency, Seneca Family of Agencies, and Family Resource Centers were trained to deliver the *Strive* Supervised Visitation Program as *Strive* Visit Navigators. Six additional staff were trained to become trainers of other Visit Navigators. The first day of the *Strive* training also included a broader orientation for 50 staff on the *Strive* program and strategies for generally supporting parents in their visits with their children. San Francisco County Human Services Agency is translating the *Strive* curriculum and materials into both Spanish and Chinese which will greatly expand the reach of the program.

New South Wales, Australia

The *Strive* team is partnering with Uniting, an NGO serving the Australian state of New South Wales to adapt and deliver *Strive* as part of their Permanency Support and Family Support Programs. During late October and early November 2018, 24 staff were trained as "Contact Partners," the equivalent to "Visit Navigators," and 14 of whom were also trained to train other Contact Partners. The partnership will continue for at least throughout June of 2021 and includes support from Australia for a portion of the cost of developing a version of *Strive* for older children.

Adaptation for Native Families

Funded from October, 2018 through December 2020 through a King County's Best Starts for Kids grant, Partners for our Children and Cowlitz Tribal Health Seattle are working together to build capacity to improve parent-child visits and maintain parent-child-community bonds by: a) adapting the *Strive* Supervised Visitation Program to provide culturally tailored parent support and education to Native parents visiting with their children from birth to five years of age; b) planning for and expanding Cowlitz Tribal Health Seattle's organizational capacity to provide visitation services; c) training staff; and, d) delivering the adapted *Strive* curriculum to Native parents. We will evaluate process and outcome measures associated with the cultural adaptation, planning and implementation efforts and the usefulness of the approach in addressing disproportionality in King County.