

Strive Overview:

Partners for Our Children (P4C) at the University of Washington has been working in close collaboration, since 2014, with the Washington State Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), and over 100 stakeholders to develop and test the *Strive* Supervised Family Time 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 family time 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 family time. Parents are connected with a “*Strive Navigator*” (family time supervisor trained in *Strive*) who meets with them weekly during the program to cover session content and to support them during their family time to “try out” new knowledge and skills.

For the five weeks of *Strive*, parents work with the same *Strive 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 *Strive Navigator* then provides a supported, supervised visit and c) they then have a 15 minute, one-on-one debrief with the *Strive 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 *Strive Navigator* (SN) 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 SN 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 family time space for safety hazards for their child;
- 4) **Communication Counts** in which the SN 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 family time 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**
- said there was **mutual respect** between them and their *Strive Navigator*
- 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

Since 2019, through Washington State legislative funding, *Strive* is being expanded throughout Region 1 of Washington State.

Adaptation for Native Families

Funded from October, 2018 through December 2021 through a King County Best Starts for Kids grant, Partners for our Children and Cowlitz Tribal Health Seattle have been working together to create and pilot test a culturally adapted version of the *Strive* program that is delivered by native *Strive* Family Time Partners to native parents visiting with their children from birth to five years of age.

Strive Online

The *Strive* team has received a University of Washington CoMotion Innovation grant to explore the feasibility of converting the *Strive* training to an online, e-learning format for providers and parents. An initial E-learning module of the training on Trauma-Informed Family Time Services has been developed and is undergoing feasibility testing while further work on customer discovery and business development strategies is underway.

Supportive Virtual Family Time

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Strive* team created the Supportive Virtual Family Time program, a free, online training that created structure, guidance, and training for those supervising virtual parent-child visits, with the goal of helping them facilitate positive remote supervised visits between parents and their children in out-of-home care. <https://allianceforchildwelfare.org/content/family-time-supportive-virtual-family-time-program-and-training-elearning>

Family Treatment Court – King County, Washington

The *Strive* team is partnering with King County's Family Treatment Court and Amara to pilot *Strive* with Family Treatment Court clients.

San Francisco County, California

The *Strive* team has partnered since 2018 with the San Francisco County Human Services Agency, Seneca Family of Agencies, and Family Resource Centers who were trained to deliver the *Strive* Supervised Visitation Program. The San Francisco County Human Services Agency translated the *Strive* curriculum and materials into both Spanish and Chinese to expand the reach of the program.

New South Wales, Australia

The *Strive* team has partnered since 2017 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.

References:

Strive is listed as a "Promising Practice" with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2020): https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1727/Wsipp_Updated-Inventory-of-Evidence-Based-Research-Based-and-Promising-Practices-For-Prevention-and-Intervention-Services-for-Children-and-Juveniles-in-the-Child-Welfare-Juvenile-Justice-and-Mental-Health-Systems_Report.pdf

Orlando LJ, Barkan SE, Brennan K. Creating an Evidence Informed Intervention to Enhance the Quality of Supervised Parent Child Visits. *Children and Youth Services Review* 2019; 105: (104429). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104429>