

Help Me Grow Educations Series

Here is a recap of the workshops taking place:

1. MAY-Nurturing and Attachment – We love Each Other

Facilitator: FAP- Nurse Kay

Date: May 16th

Strong early bonds with caregivers build healthy brains. Nurturing and attachment with caring adults in early life is associated with better grades, healthier behaviors, stronger friendships, and an increased ability to cope with stress later in life. Nurturing is important at all ages. Parents nurture their children as they grow by making time to listen to them, being involved and interested in their child's school and other activities, staying aware of their interests and friends, and being willing to advocate for their children and youth when necessary.

Trauma and stress can interfere with parents' ability to nurture their children. Daily or acute stressors, such as financial stress, family or community violence, past traumas, or caring for a child with special needs, can make taking time to focus on nurturing more challenging for some parents. They may need extra reassurance that showing their children love and affection makes a difference.

It is important to explore and acknowledge differences in how families show affection.

2. JUNE-Knowledge of Parenting – I can choose what works best for my children.

Facilitator: Youth and Family Services

Date: June 27th

Knowledge of parenting and child development is an important protective factor. Parents who understand the usual course of child development are more likely to provide their children with developmentally appropriate limits, consistent rules and expectations, and opportunities that promote independence.

No parent can be an expert on all aspects of child development or on the most effective ways to support a child at every age. As children grow, parents will need to continue to learn and respond to children's emerging needs.

Parenting styles need to be adjusted for each child's unique temperament and circumstances. Parents of children with special needs may benefit from additional coaching and support.

3. JULY-Parental Resilience – I deserve self-care.

Facilitator: Military Family Life Counselors

Date: July 18th

Resilience is the flexibility and inner strength to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are better able to protect their children from stress and can help children learn critical self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

All parents have strengths and resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication, problem-solving, caring relationships, or the ability to identify and access needed services.

Self-care is important, but it is only part of the picture. Families experiencing multiple life stressors—such as a history of trauma, health concerns, marital conflict, substance use, or community violence—and financial stressors—such as unemployment, financial insecurity, or homelessness—face more challenges coping effectively with typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

Addressing stressors in the family, community, and society will ultimately create stronger, more resilient families.

4. AUGUST- Social Connections – We are connected

Facilitator: Early Childhood Connections

Date: August 15th

All parents need emotional support. Social connections (supportive friends, family, neighbors, and community groups) help parents care for their children and themselves.

Social connections support children in multiple ways. A parent's positive relationships give children access to other caring adults, model important relational skills, and increase the likelihood that children will benefit from involvement in positive activities.

Building positive relationships may require extra effort for some families—including those who are new to a community, recently divorced, or first-time parents. Additionally, some parents may need to develop self-confidence and social skills before they can expand their social networks.

5. SEPTEMBER-Concrete Support – I can find help for my family

Facilitator: Military and Family Readiness Center

Date: September 19th

Caregivers whose concrete needs are met have more time and energy to devote to their children's safety and well-being. When families do not have steady financial resources, lack a stable living situation, or cannot afford food or health care, their ability to support their children's healthy development may be at risk. Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community helps them protect and care for their children.

Caregivers may need more than just a phone number. Consider providing support during initial calls, introducing them directly to a personal contact, or otherwise offering a warm hand-off to a fellow service provider. Be sure to refer families to providers who speak their language, are culturally competent, and are committed to equity.

6. OCTOBER-Social/ Emotional Competence – I help my child learn social skills.

Facilitator: Military Family Life Counselors

Date: October 17th

Children who exhibit social and emotional competence are likely to have better relationships and greater resilience to stress as adults. Social and emotional competence refers to children's ability to form bonds and interact positively with others, self-regulate their emotions and behavior, communicate their feelings, and solve problems effectively.

Helping children to develop these skills can result in stronger parent-child relationships that are mutually rewarding. Parents grow more responsive to children's needs—and less likely to feel stressed or frustrated—as children learn to say what they need, rather than "acting out" difficult feelings.

Children's delays in social-emotional development can create extra stress for families. It is important to identify any such concerns as early as possible and to provide services to children and their parents that facilitate healthy development.

If you have any other questions, please contact one of the M&FRC Facilitators, MFLC Counselors, or School Liaison Jo Anne Mulholland at 605-385-4157