

IMPLEMENTING

Promoting First Relationships®

AT YOUR AGENCY

Getting Started

parent-child relationship programs at the Barnard Center

PROMOTING first RELATIONSHIPS®

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

pfrprogram.org

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Professional Development in Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health



What is Promoting First Relationships® (PFR)?

PFR is a brief, 10-week, evidence-based parenting program for caregivers and their children aged birth to five that uses attachment principles and strengths-based video feedback to help parents meet their child's social and emotional needs. PFR is an approved program for federal funding through MIECHV and Title IV-E Prevention Services.



What is the Evidence?

There are eight rigorous randomized control trials, five have been completed.
Click here for a Summary of Research.



How do I learn more?

Attend our Level 1 Foundational workshop held regularly in Seattle and virtually. Trainers are also available to travel to provide a workshop at your site.



I've been to the workshop and I want more!

For those who are interested in becoming a Certified PFR Provider (Level 2 training), we provide additional mentored online training. You will receive 15 weeks of mentored training and deliver PFR to one family to complete certification.



Train-the-Trainer?

We have a Train-the-Trainer (Level 3 training) model and a readiness assessment to help you decide, plan, and implement PFR.



PFR around the globe

PFR is disseminated internationally.
Contact us for more information.



Ready to get started?

For workshops, click here.
For level 2 or 3 training, email us at pfrinfo@uw.edu.

An Evidence-Based Program Supporting Parents and Young Children

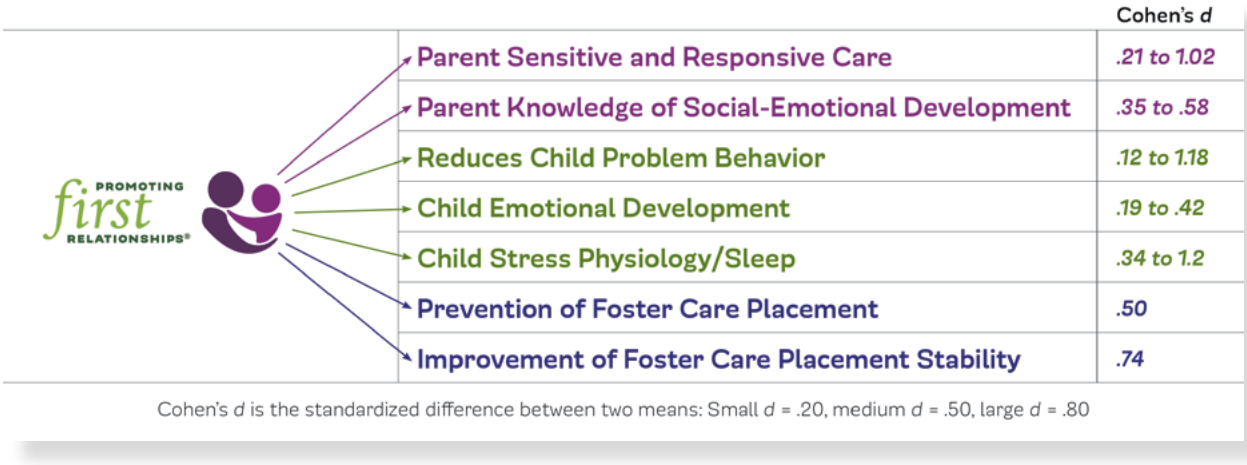
What Is Promoting First Relationships® (PFR)?

PFR is an evidence-based home visiting program for parents and caregivers of children from birth to five years old.

- **Relational, Strengths-Based** approach supporting unique parent-child relationships
- **Reflective Parenting Strategy** helps parents gain transformative insights about themselves and their child
- **Video Observation** provides feedback and enhances parents' observation skills

Rigorous Research Foundation

PFR has been evaluated through **Eight Randomized Controlled Trials** funded by the National Institutes of Health.



PFR is recognized by **Four Evidence-Based Clearinghouses:**

Federal Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE)—eligible for MIECHV funding	California Evidence Based Clearinghouse (CEBC), Level 2 Scientific Rating
Federal Prevention Services Clearinghouse—approved for Family First Prevention Services Act	Blueprints registry of scientifically proven interventions

> *"... it (PFR) helped me understand my son's cues and needs. I get it now! I get him! I want to think about him in a different way. It helped me to step back, take a breath, evaluate the situation and understand the situation, why is he acting this way? Is he scared? Is he stressed? Does he need me?"—Reunified Birth Parent Study, 2020*

Proven Effectiveness With:

- Foster care and kinship caregivers
- Child welfare-involved families
- Rural Native American communities
- Mothers with mental health needs (English and Spanish-speaking)
- Parents of children at risk for autism spectrum disorder

Key Outcomes

- Improved parent-child interactions
- Reduced child behavior problems
- Better sleep patterns and stress physiology

Impact on Child Welfare

- PFR prevents placement into foster care by **2.5 TIMES** compared to Resources and Referral
- PFR increases placement stability for children in foster and kin care by reducing change in placements up to two years post intervention

How Does PFR Work?

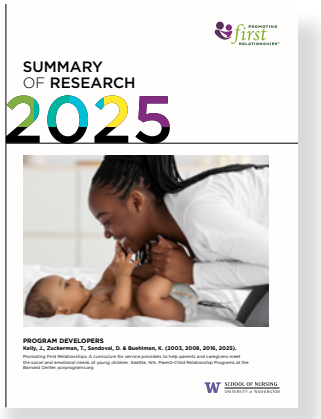
- 10 weekly sessions combining video feedback, reflective discussion, and educational handouts
- Focuses on strengthening the parent-child relationship
- Helps parents understand and respond to their child's needs

"I gained a whole new outlook on how to approach talking to families about social emotional development."—Provider

"The material made more sense and it came alive for me with the videos. Being able to see how I was actually doing the things talked about in the handouts and seeing how my son reacted to me really helped me."—Parent

LEARN MORE

TRAINING: pfrprogram.org or Jennifer Rees at rees@uw.edu
RESEARCH: Dr. Monica Oxford at mloxford@uw.edu
PUBLICATIONS: Parent-Child Relationship Programs at pcrp@uw.edu



LEVEL 1 TRAINING

Foundational Workshop

Promoting First Relationships®: A program for service providers to help parents and other caregivers nurture young children's social and emotional development.
By Kelly, Zuckerman, Sandoval Buehlman, and Rees, 2003, 2008, 2016, 2025

What is Promoting First Relationships?

- An evidence-based curriculum for service providers, to help parents and other caregivers meet the social and emotional needs of young children
- Video feedback approach grounded in attachment theory and reflective practice principles
- Gives professionals who work with caregivers and young children (0–5) the knowledge, tools and strategies to guide and support caregivers in building nurturing and responsive relationships with children

Who Should Use Promoting First Relationships?

Infant Mental Health Specialists, Child Welfare Providers, Social Workers, Therapists, Home Visitors, Early Interventionists, Family Service Workers, Early Learning Providers, Public Health Nurses

"I loved the video examples which really helped illustrate the principles."

"Straightforward and doable, lots of real life examples and opportunity to reflect in groups."

"I would highly recommend this training to anyone! Oh! What a gift it was. Since the PFR Training, the lessons and knowledge I have gained from it have now become a way of life/ communication for me all the time."

What Will be Covered During the Workshop?

Our Foundational Workshop provides 14 hours of training and is designed to give service providers knowledge about using Promoting First Relationships (PFR) within one's own practice. The workshop is taught by PFR Expert Trainers who use various learning approaches including video examples, case studies, and discussion. Participants receive curriculum, parent handouts, and training in the following:

- Elements of a Healthy Relationship
- Attachment Theory and Secure Relationships
- Reflective Capacity Building
- Development of Self for Infants through Preschoolers
- PFR Consultation Strategies
- Challenging Behaviors
- Intervention Planning Development

Schedule and Costs

- Workshops are held regularly throughout the year, in Seattle and virtually.
- Cost is $680 per person
- Agencies can arrange their own workshop if training a group of people

Contact

- Please contact pcrp@uw.edu to learn more

"I particularly liked the group discussions, latest research information and the handouts."

LEVEL 2 TRAINING

Become a Certified Promoting First Relationships® Provider

15 Contact Hours of Mentored Training in Evidence-Based Program

Participants receive 15 weeks of individualized, online mentoring with a Promoting First Relationships® (PFR) Expert Trainer to develop the skills to become certified in our evidence-based parenting model.

Training Process and Time Commitment

- **Phase 1:** During the first 5 weeks, learners increase their caregiver-child observation skills and understanding of PFR concepts. They view PFR intervention sessions with caregivers (parents and child care providers) and young children (infant, toddler, preschooler) and complete assigned reading in the PFR manual. Learners meet weekly in pair groups with their PFR trainer to reflect on the training videos, assigned reading, and the PFR infant mental health essentials. Time commitment: 4 hours per week
- **Phase 2:** During the next 10 weeks, learners gain experience in using the evidence-based 10-week outline with a family. Learners receive weekly, individual mentoring from their PFR trainer as they do the PFR program with a caregiver-child dyad at their own site. Training sessions include reflection on caregiver-child videos, discussion about how to implement the PFR concepts and consultation strategies and reflection on learners' videos of themselves during PFR sessions. Time commitment: 3 hours per week.
- **Certification Process:** Learner submits their PFR week 10 recording to be reviewed for model fidelity. Once fidelity criteria are met, provider is issued a Certified PFR Provider certificate. If fidelity criteria are not met, learner receives further mentoring and can resubmit to establish fidelity.
- **Total Time Commitment to Complete Level 2 Training:** 50 hours over approximately 4–5 months.

Readiness

- To assess provider and agency fit and readiness. please see p. 10–11.

Prerequisites

- PFR Level 1 Workshop
- Provides direct service to families with children birth to five
- Access to a computer and high speed internet
- Video recording and playback equipment

Post-Training

- 12-months of PFR group reflective consultation for skill building and model fidelity.
- Annual recertification: Provider submits yearly videos of a PFR session for fidelity

Costs

- $2,750 per person when training as part of a pair group. Includes the initial fidelity certification fee. ($3300 if trainee is not part of a pair group)
- $150 supplemental materials including BabyCues® video, cards, handout; social-emotional cards
- $600 Annual fee for monthly PFR group reflective consultation
- $175 annual recertification fee

Contact

Jennifer Rees, Director rees@uw.edu, pfrprogram.org

LEVEL 3 TRAINING

Become a Certified Promoting First Relationships® Agency Trainer

15 Contact Hours of Mentored Agency Trainer Training (By Invitation Only)

Training Process and Time Commitment

- **Phase 1:** During the first 3 weeks, participants grow their caregiver-child observation skills and knowledge of attachment theory, children's social-emotional development, reflective practice techniques and deepen their understanding of core PFR concepts. Learners view parent-child observation videos, complete assigned readings, and meet weekly with their PFR trainer. Time commitment: 3 hours per week.
- **Phase 2:** During the next 10 weeks, participants gain expertise in delivering the PFR model. They receive weekly individualized online mentoring as they do the PFR program with a 2nd caregiver/child dyad at their own site and grow their skills. Time commitment: 3 hours per week.
- **Phase 3:** Agency Trainers receive 2 sessions after completing their second family to prepare them to train others within their agency. Time commitment: 2 hours per week.
- **Certification Process:** Participants submit a recording of their full session 10 with their training family, to be reviewed for fidelity standards that meet Agency Trainer criteria. If criteria are met, they become a Certified PFR Agency Trainer. If criteria are not met, they continue working with their trainer for additional mentoring and can resubmit to meet fidelity.

Prerequisites

- Successful completion of Level 2 Certified Provider training, including high fidelity assessment score
- Agreement to PFR Agency Trainer Guidelines, outlined on following page.

Post-Training

- Participate in ongoing monthly PFR Agency Trainer consultation to receive support while training others at one's agency.
- Annual recertification: Submit a video of themselves doing a PFR session with a caregiver-child dyad or a session of themselves doing a training session with a learner.

Cost

- $2,750 per person. Includes initial Agency Trainer fidelity certification fee.
- $600 Annual fee for monthly PFR Agency Trainer group reflective consultation.
- $200 Annual Agency Trainer fee, includes recertification fee.

Contact

Jennifer Rees, Director rees@uw.edu | pfrprogram.org

"Learning PFR has changed my 'Way of Being'. I am more reflective since slowing down the process, and becoming more aware of relating and affirming."

Agency Trainer Guidelines & Costs

Guidelines

Agency Trainers are certified to train others at their agency at the Certified Provider Level 2.
Agency Trainers cannot offer the Promoting First Relationships® (PFR) Level 1 Workshop to any audience, including participants within their own agency.
Agency Trainers cannot develop products with the PFR materials.
Agency Trainers must agree to train using the outlined model, and their learners must attend the PFR Level 1 Workshop, facilitated by the University of Washington PFR program.
If an individual leaves their agency of employment, they are no longer certified as a PFR Agency Trainer unless authorized by the PFR program to remain certified and continue to train others at Level 2 at a different agency.

Training/Fidelity	Costs
In order to complete the initial phase of the Level 2 Certified Provider Training model, all PFR Agency Trainers and their learners must access the online PFR training videos and the training guide questions, available through the PFR virtual classroom.	$350 per learner
Each Agency Trainers' learners' initial fidelity check will be conducted by the University of Washington PFR Program, to certify that the provider is meeting fidelity. • Agency Trainers can maintain their learners' subsequent annual fidelity checks in-house.	$175 per fidelity check
The Agency Trainer must maintain fidelity to the model, which will be demonstrated through video recorded sessions submitted to the PFR Program every 12 months, as long as the Agency Trainer is training others in PFR. The recordings can be of a PFR session with a caregiver-child dyad or of a level 2 training session with their learner.	$200 per year per trainer* **includes the annual fidelity fee, as well as ongoing access to the PFR virtual classroom where the training videos and up-to-date PFR materials and outlines are hosted.*
Agency Trainers must continue to receive ongoing online monthly reflective consultation from a PFR Trainer with the University of Washington PFR Program, as long as the Agency Trainer is training others in PFR.	$600 annual fee for 12 months of group consultation

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Additional Support at Any Training Level

Technical Assistance and Reflective Consultation

Technical Assistance

Following the Promoting First Relationships® (PFR) Level 1 Workshop, we offer technical assistance sessions to support agencies and providers with implementing the PFR Program at their site. Technical Assistance is personalized to meet your needs and can include:

- Consultation with agency directors/supervisors to develop an implementation plan that fits the organization's needs.
- Consultation to providers in applying the PFR handouts and concepts with specific caregiver-child dyads that they are working with.
- Answering technical questions about using video feedback.
- Consultation on developing an evaluation strategy.
- Support with grant applications when agencies are seeking funding outside of their organization.
- General support and trouble shooting.

Cost

First session is complimentary. $150 per additional 90-minute session.

Contact

Jennifer Rees, rees@uw.edu, to schedule a session.

"If you are stuck, we can help you"

Reflective Consultation

PFR offers group and individual reflective consultation to support providers in their work. Reflective consultation allows providers protected time to explore their work with families in a safe, supportive space. It offers a time to think about one's own needs, and to think about the emotional needs of both parents and children. It also provides an opportunity to hear and learn other perspectives when participating in group consultation. In addition, PFR consultation helps providers grow in fidelity to the PFR model as they apply the PFR concepts to the families that they are working with and reflect on how they can utilize the consultation strategies to best support the caregiver-child relationship.

Cost

- Annual fee for 12 months of group reflective consultation is $600 per individual.
- Agencies can register for group consultation (for up to 6 providers per group) for $1,800 annual fee
- Individual reflective consultation is $125 per session.

Monthly Reflective Consultation

- Optional for Level 1 trained providers.
- 12 months minimum reflective consultation is required for Level 2 trained providers.
- Ongoing monthly reflective consultation is required for Level 3 trained providers.

Participants report feeling increased joy and competence in their work and increased empathy for the families they work with.

Planning for Level 2 and 3 Trained Providers

Media and Technology

PFR requires that providers have video recording and playback devices to take and show videos with families. Playback devices must have good sound quality and a screen size of 8 inches or more so that the caregiver can see and hear the video interaction well. Approved playback devices are laptops and tablets. Recording devices can be camcorders, phones or tablets.

During training, providers need to transfer caregiver-child interaction videos from the recording device to their computer prior to their training session to watch the videos with their trainer. Video files are too large to email so the provider will need to transfer the file using a cable or the agency's secure file sharing service.

Addressing barriers in advance is important. Agency supervisors and administrators should work with their IT department to advise of the above needs and ensure the proper permissions are granted and firewall issues are solved prior to starting level 2 or 3 training.

Training Families

Level 2 and 3 training require that the provider has at least one caregiver-child dyad recruited to work with during the 10-week program. Training families should be ready to start by the end of phase 1 of level 2 or 3 training.

When choosing a parent or caregiver to work with, think about caregivers on your caseload who may fit one or more of the areas below:

- The caregiver has an interest in learning about social-emotional development
- The caregiver has questions or concerns about the child's behavior;
- The caregiver is struggling with interacting or connecting with their child.

Other considerations for training families:

The caregiver must agree to be recorded, able to speak the same language as the provider, and have fairly consistent attendance.

Monthly Reflective Consultation

Certified Level 2 and 3 trained providers are required to attend monthly PFR consultation to support ongoing reflection and fidelity to the model. Level 2 trained providers participate in monthly consultation for at least one year after becoming certified as they apply the PFR concepts to additional families, watch caregiver-child interaction videos to observe attachment behaviors, and reflect on how they can utilize the consultation strategies to best support the caregiver-child relationship. Level 3 trained providers participate in ongoing monthly reflection for as long as they train others within their agency to get direct support from the PFR program.

Cost

Annual fee for 12 months of group reflective consultation is $600 per individual.

Agencies can register for group consultation (for up to 6 providers per group) for $1,800 annual fee.

Annual Recertification Requirement

Level 2 and 3 trained providers must submit an annual recording to demonstrate model fidelity and maintain an active certification status.

Cost

$175 for Level 2 recertification fee

$200 for Level 3 recertificaion fee

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Readiness Assessment

Agency Readiness

Thank you for considering implementing Promoting First Relationships® (PFR) in your agency programming. PFR is an evidenced-based parenting curriculum that has set fidelity standards that providers must achieve to be considered "Certified". Because of this, we want to ensure your agency understands the level of commitment that is required at both the provider level and agency level to make this a successful experience for everyone. We find that when agencies and providers have all of the information they need to know prior to beginning PFR training, it makes the training process more predictable for everyone involved. Below you will find a checklist of what is important to consider in planning to implement PFR training in your agency:

1. **Agency serves:** birth to five families and feels confident that they will be able to enroll families in the PFR program.
2. **Provider Time to complete PFR Workshop (Level 1 training):** Release time for provider to attend 2-day in-person training or 4 half days of virtual training.
3. **Provider Time to complete Phase I of Level 2 training:** Approximately 4 hours per week. Includes about 3 hours per week to read manual and watch training videos and 1 hour to meet on-line meeting with PFR Trainer. This phase is 5 weeks; total of 20 hours of training time.
4. **Agency will assure:** that provider has a training family with a birth to five age child by the start of phase 2 of level 2 training.
5. **Provider Time to complete Phase 2 of Level 2 training:** Approximately 3 hours per week. Includes 10 weekly 1-hour home visits plus travel time (training family can be on provider's current caseload); about 30 to 45 minutes of preparation time prior to each home visit, and a weekly 1-hour on-line meeting with PFR Trainer. This phase takes approximately 3 months to complete and 30 hours training time.
6. **Device(s) to Record Parent-Child Videos and Show Video the following week:** A vital component of PFR is video recordings of parents interacting with their children. Providers need access to a HIPAA compliant recording device and a system for storing the recording for a minimum of 1 week, and the ability to watch the recording with the parent. Examples of recording devices are: cell phone or tablet that has password protections or camcorder; and either laptop or tablet for video watching.
7. **Access to a computer with strong internet capacity with video and sound capability:** PFR training is conducted through an on-line meeting platform called "ZOOM". This platform is HIPAA compliant which allows providers to share their videos of families in a secure way with their learners. At the end of training, providers will upload a video of themselves at their final visit with the family to a HIPAA compliant UW dropbox account. This video is then scored to determine if the provider passes fidelity to be considered a "PFR Certified Provider".*
8. **Agency will provide:** IT support for provider during training to trouble shoot technical barriers including firewall issues, difficulties transferring video files from recording device to computer, screen sharing difficulties, uploading certification video to secure UW Dropbox account, etc.
9. **Plan for on-going Reflective Support:** By engaging in PFR training, providers will gain an increase in their reflective capacity—their ability to reflect on the experiences of the families, as well as on what they themselves bring into the work. In order for their reflective capacity to continue to grow/be sustained, it is vital for your agency to invest in ongoing reflective supervision/consultation to support PFR trained staff and provide them the necessary release time.

**Certification status lasts for one year. An annual submission of a fidelity video is required to maintain certification status—fee applies*

Considerations for Staff Selection for Certified Provider Level 2 Training

Thoughtful consideration is necessary to effectively identify individuals who are best suited to successfully learn and implement Promoting First Relationships at the Certified Provider level.

1. Work Experience/Education with children aged birth to five. Minimum 2 years work experience recommended. BA level or higher recommended.
2. Currently providing direct service to families with birth-five aged children.
3. Does provider have a strengths-based philosophy?
4. Is provider comfortable taking a non-expert stance? PFR requires that providers work in a collaborative, relationship-based way with parents. Providers should feel comfortable working with parents using the PFR Ways of Being: Being accepting, non-directive, and reflective.
5. Is provider able to work in a reflective way? PFR uses a reflective, rather than a behavioral modification approach, when helping parents look at their children's behavior. PFR focuses on exploring the feelings and needs of both the parent and child, and helps the parent gain a better understanding of how these feelings/needs influence their caregiving and their child's behaviors.
6. Does provider possess good engagement and clinical skills? PFR requires the ability to establish trusting relationships with parents, and an ability to listen to a parents' challenging and/or strong feelings without the need to instantly fix, dismiss, or appease.
7. Becoming Certified in Promoting First Relationships is a time intensive process that takes about 4 to 5 months. Has the provider demonstrated a commitment to the agency and a desire to learn and implement the PFR Program?
8. Provider is willing to video record caregiver-child interactions and themselves during the training and certification process.
9. Does provider want to do the PFR program?

"In my nine years of working with families experiencing homelessness, the Promoting First Relationships program has been the most relevant technique I have learned to help parents promote their child's development."—Provider

"I think that the Promoting First Relationships training is very, very valuable. I think that whether or not you specialize in seeing families with children 0-5 years, it's valuable for any clinician to do home based work that's really strengths based and has a great foundation based on attachment. I think that the families I've seen have benefited from this immensely."—Provider

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Onboarding the Evidence-Based Promoting First Relationships® Program at Your Agency

Does Promoting First Relationships (PFR) Seem Like the Right Fit for Your Organization?

If yes or if you have questions, let's schedule an exploration meeting where we can discuss:

- What services/programming does your agency currently offer?, How does your agency plan to use PFR?—will PFR be part of a longer term, comprehensive home visiting program or will PFR be a stand alone service?
- Selecting the Implementation Model that best fits your agency's needs. Organizations planning to train a smaller number of providers will likely choose the Level 2 training model in which University of Washington trainers provide the training directly to staff. Organizations planning to train a larger number of providers will likely select a Level 3 Agency Trainer model where in-house staff provide level 2 training to colleagues, as a sustainable way to grow the PFR workforce within the agency.
- Questions about agency readiness criteria including technology needed for video recording/playback, device selection, planning for IT support during training and implementation, etc.
- Staff selection, discussing providers who will have the best likelihood for success with PFR.
- Timeline for starting training and beginning the scheduling process.

What to Expect During Early Implementation

Training timeline

- New providers with less than one year experience will need additional time to prepare for their sessions as they build their competency and skills. They will need a reduced caseload size during this time.
- As providers gain experience and confidence in the model, which typically happens about a year into regular implementation, they are able to manage a full caseload size.
- Recommended caseload size for providers solely implementing PFR is 12–15 families depending on other work duties, travel distance, etc.

Ways to Fund Promoting First Relationships

- **Federal funding**. PFR is an approved model on the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) clearinghouse and eligible for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding. We are also listed on the Prevention Services clearinghouse for the Family First Prevention Services Act and eligible for funding associated with this program.
- **Medicaid**. Programs can typically bill Medicaid for Promoting First Relationships services, in the same way that they bill for family treatment and/or infant mental health services. For example, Washington state's Health Care Authority has developed a billing guide for evidence-based treatment with specific codes that programs can use in Washington, https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/ebp-reporting-guides.pdf
- **Local Grants and Philanthropic funders**. Many PFR home visiting services are funded at the local level through county grants, specific population grants, and philanthropic funders interested in community investment. We can help you with your grant writing by providing language templates and other technical support.

Logic Model

Theory & Design

Promoting First Relationships (PFR)

- **PFR** is a relationship based program that uses attachment theory
- **PFR** focuses on the quality of the dyadic caregiver-child interaction
- **PFR** uses a reflective, strengths-based approach
- **PFR** is a 10-week program that utilizes video feedback and parent handouts
- **PFR** is designed for any caregiver of a child birth to five including childcare professionals

Process & Training

Increase caregivers' confidence and competence

PFR is strengths based, we train providers how to do strengths based work via the consultative stance

Increase caregivers' observation skills

PFR uses video feedback and lessons on baby's non-verbal language to improve caregivers' ability to 'read' their baby's communication

Increase caregivers' reflective functioning

PFR trains providers to use reflection to help the caregiver enter the 'mind' of the child to better understand their needs

Increase caregivers' understanding that child's behavior represents unmet social and emotional needs

PFR Caregivers learn to identify their, and their child's unmet emotional needs, as well as how to regulate big feelings



Outcomes

Outcomes

- **IMPROVED DYADIC INTERACTION** between caregiver and child.
- **IMPROVED CAREGIVER UNDERSTANDING** of social and emotional needs of young children.
- **REDUCED PLACEMENT** into foster care (2.5 times).
- **INCREASED STABILITY** in foster care.
- **REDUCTION IN** child externalizing behavior
- **IMPROVED CHILD STRESS** physiology
- **INCREASED CHILD COMPETENCE**
- Works **BETTER FOR HIGHER NEED CAREGIVERS** (those who were physically abused as children; reunified birth parents; or those with mental health issues).

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