Strengths-Based Filter for Families

The following chart shows what we used to think in the past was helpful for children, but we now know strengths-based messaging creates better results in crime prevention.

Strengths-based vs. Traditional Crime Prevention Messaging

Strengths – Based	Traditional
Audience is "At –Promise"	Audience is "At-Risk"
Elicits feelings of hope	Elicits feelings of fear
Solution focused	Problem focused
Language is positive and affirming	Language is deficit and warning
Focus on the responsible ethical majority	Focus on the ill-intended minority
Focus on capacity and intention	Focus on consequences
Focus on protective factors	Focus on risks
Challenges are opportunities for growth	Danger is a call to action
Individuals and communities are defined by their unique strengths and abilities	Individuals and communities are defined by their challenges and limitations
Focus on strengths and the capacity to meet challenges as they arise	Focus on threat and vigilance; looks for dangers, perils, warning signs

How do we distinguish what resources are best for our family?

As a family, when you're considering programs and resources for your children, you want to make sure your children are being supported in their development and that they will thrive in their environments.

The following questions might serve as a filter to determine whether the programs and resources you're considering are a fit for your family:

Program:

1) Does your child feel confident and capable while participating in the program?
2) Does the program promote how to be a team player, how to get along and be kind to each other?
3) Does the program ask for your children's input? Are your children's opinions heard and valued?
4) Does the program help children and youth to discover their own strengths, abilities and resources? If so, how?
5) Does participation build your children's knowledge and confidence to take action to contribute to the safety and well-being of their community? If so, what might those be?
6) Does the language used to name children and youth describe them as capable, responsible and ethical citizens? If so, how?
7) Does this program help children and youth find their own solutions by using their personal and collective strengths? If so, how?
8) Does the coach/teacher of the program use positive feedback when speaking with your children?
9) Does the coach/teacher of the program use positive language when speaking with your children?

Resources:

1) Do the resources focus on strengths of your children, building upon their gifts and abilities to develop new knowledge and skills?
2) Do the resources provide a positive perspective that promotes hope, change and possibility for your family (as opposed to fear and deficit thinking)?
3) Are the resources flexible and adaptable for your family, taking into account your unique family story?

References:

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