What are Strengths?

- What people have learned about themselves, others and their world
- Personal qualities, traits and virtues
- What people know about the world around them
- The talents people have
- Cultural and personal stories and lore
- Pride
- The community

Types of Strengths

**Mitigating Strengths** are strengths that serve as protective capacities to protect children from threats to safety. They can be persons, environmental factors, or other interventions that serve as a protective barrier between a safety threat and the child, such as a non-offending caregiver who has the intent, commitment and capability to keep the perpetrator away from a child.

**Risk-Reducing Strengths** are strengths that serve to reduce the likelihood of maltreatment in the future. They can include a client’s positive experience in treatment in the past; personal qualities, attitudes or values; family and community resources that have a positive impact on the resolution of problems.

**Well-Being Related Strengths** are strengths that are neither mitigating nor risk-reducing, but serve to enhance or support the family’s overall quality of life. They include employment; health and access to health care; housing; transportation; etc.

**Neutral Strengths**: positive qualities or conditions in the family that do not directly act to mitigate safety threats, reduce risks, or enhance well-being.

Why Adopt a Strength-Based Approach to Casework Practice?

- Consistent with professional social work values; CFSR goal of a stronger collaborative relationship with clients; and the Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice
- Greater use of inherent family strengths and less reliance on outside resources
- Improved outcomes for children and families
- Increased worker satisfaction from use of skills and development of a helping relationship with clients
- Increased client satisfaction