

Handout 1: Areas of Family Strengths²

Overview

The strengths of the family are the elements most useful for helping families achieve their hopes for the future. As you develop partnerships with Head Start families, look for family strengths in the following areas:

- **Family interests and activities** - sources of family fun and recreation, what the family likes to do.
- **Extended family and friends** - sources of informal support, people the family can count on.
- **Religious, spiritual, or cultural beliefs** - what the family believes in, ways that the family shows its beliefs.
- **Family values and rules** - what is important to the family, such as always stick together or being nice to one another.
- **Employment and education** - what family members are best at in their work (including housework), favorite school subjects, special skills and talents.
- **Emotional/psychological well-being** - what makes the family feel happy, what helps the family feel better.
- **Physical health and nutrition** - the physical health of family members, preventive health care practices.
- **Shelter and safety** - adequate and safe living arrangements, home and neighborhood atmosphere.
- **Income/money management** - sources of family income, shopping practices.
- **Family interaction** - communication patterns, coping strategies, parenting skills.

²Adapted with permission from E. Mary Grealish, *Virginia Wrap Around Trainer Manual* (Community Partnership Group, 1994).