

# Using a Strength-Based Approach

This publication introduces key principles and benefits of a strength-based approach.

By emphasizing collaboration, respect, and education, a strength-based approach supports licensees in meeting standards while fostering positive relationships that strongly benefit children, families, and entire communities.



## What is a Strength-Based Approach?

A strength-based approach emphasizes abilities, knowledge, strengths, and capacities rather than deficits, or shortcomings. This approach recognizes that all individuals within the DCYF community — licensees, licensors, and families — are resilient and capable of growth, learning, and change.

## Key Principles of a Strength-Based Approach

### 1. Reducing Bias

- By becoming aware of personal biases such as compliance history, personality differences, or assumptions, we can help reduce their influence on our decision-making.
- Checking biases helps build fairness and equity in licensing practices, resulting in more positive working relationships.

### 2. Recognizing Strengths

- Acknowledge and value what licensees are already doing to meet standards.
- Be mindful of licensee's resiliency and capability to learn, grow, and change.
- Respect the licensee's expertise and knowledge to meet the needs of their children, youth, families, and facilities.

### 3. Fostering Understanding

- Support licensees in understanding the purpose and intent behind rules to promote safe, thriving environments for children and youth.
- Approach areas of noncompliance with curiosity and open-ended questions to help gain more information and insight.

### 4. Achieving Collaborative Compliance

- Honor cultural differences and diverse perspectives in meeting compliance.
- Maintain a growth mindset and openness to different methods of achieving compliance.
- When encountering new or unfamiliar situations, engage licensees in discussions to learn more about their practices for meeting compliance.
- Offer technical assistance to help educate licensees about the intent of rules, especially when there appears to be a misunderstanding of the intent.



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## Benefits of Using a Strength-Based Approach

- **Increased consistency:** Having a strength-based approach to achieving collaborative compliance for licensing improves the quality and effectiveness of licensing services so that licensees can have a comparable experience, regardless of facility type or location.
- **Increased engagement:** Utilizing a relational approach to collaboration between licensees and licensors builds trust and encourages collaboration on problem solving minor situations before they become major concerns.
- **Increased confidence:** Using shared problem-solving allows licensees and licensors to feel confident in their shared understanding of WAC intent and the plan for compliance, leading to increased compliance.
- **Increased flexibility:** Collaborating based on a shared understanding allows for personalized compliance strategies, leading to more culturally and developmentally appropriate experiences for children and youth in care.

