



Strengthening Families Program

The original evidence-based family skills training program

● Birth–3

● 3–5

● 6–11

● 12–16

■ BACKGROUND

Recognizing the resiliency a strong, positive parent–child relationship and parental guidance provide to youth, the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) was originally developed in the early 1980s by Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D., as a family skills training program for families with children at risk because of substance-abusing parents. Found effective on the original NIDA grant in improving family relations, child behaviors and parenting skills and in reducing substance use, SFP has since been replicated with similar results for families seeking to strengthen their parenting and prepare their children to succeed and resist the challenges they will face. SFP now includes four developmentally appropriate variants for families with children Birth–3, 3–5, 6–11 and 12–16. Communities and funders across the United States and around the globe have selected SFP as a proven intervention to prevent and reduce risky behaviors facing youth and their parents, including substance abuse, criminal involvement, delinquency, barriers to academic performance and child maltreatment.

■ PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

SFP is a 14-session, resiliency-based family skills training program. Unlike most parenting programs, parents and children attend sessions together and learn skills they practice together before going home to use them. A typical weekly session opens with a ½-hour family meal. Parents and children then meet for one hour in separate groups (or childcare), and rejoin for 30 minutes to practice together through fun, interactive activities. Each variant is matched to the child's developmental age rather than chronological age. All curricula are available in English and Spanish.

Parent Skills Training

Build positive time with children, manage stress, give clear directions, develop behavior change, hold family meetings and use effective discipline.

Children's Social Skills Training

Children 3–16 learn bonding, communication, peer resistance, recognizing feelings, consequences of substance use and other risky behavior, anger management, problem solving and handling criticism.

Family Skills Training

Parents and children practice together: bonding, communication, family organization, family management and problem solving.

■ PROVEN EFFECTIVENESS

In multiple replications, SFP reports significant positive outcomes including:

- Increased positive parenting
- Increased parental supervision
- Increased parental involvement
- Decreased parental substance abuse or misuse
- Decreased parental & child depression
- Increased child social skills
- Reduced child covert & overt aggression
- Reduced child concentration problems
- Reduced child hyperactivity
- Increased family cohesion
- Reduced family conflict
- Increased family organization and order
- Increased family communication skills
- Increased overall family strengths & resilience

■ SPONSORING & IMPLEMENTING SFP

- Materials are distributed as a master set through a digital download for easy, sustainable and cost-effective implementation.
- Curriculum and implementation materials are designed for adaptation to the needs and culture of the host community and its families.
- Online, telephone and on-site technical assistance is available to assure quality and fidelity.
- SFP is implemented in schools, community centers, substance abuse treatment, hospitals, public housing, residential, criminal justice and faith-based sites.
- SFP has been implemented in all 50 states, Canada, Europe and Southeast Asia.
- Anticipated costs per cycle include compensation for four group leaders and a site coordinator, small in-session incentives, graduation, handout copies, the weekly family meal, and childcare and transportation.
- Initial start-up costs include SFP Certified Group Leader Training and purchase of the curriculum.
- **Recognized by** CrimeSolutions (National Institute of Justice), SAMHSA's NREPP, the Administration for Children and Families, UNODC, the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse, CSAP, NIDA, OJJDP and the U.S. Department of Education.