



SFP Program & Curriculum Overview

Strengthening Families Program (Birth–3, 3–5, 6–11, 12–16)

■ Program description

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is an evidence-based, 14-week, in-person family skills training program developed by Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D. (Kumpfer & DeMarsh, 1983; 1985; Kumpfer, DeMarsh, & Child, 1989). SFP is designed to reduce environmental risk factors, improve protective factors and increase personal resilience in order to prevent or delay the onset of substance use and other risky behaviors in high-risk youth. Research confirms that SFP is also effective in reducing risk precursors for child maltreatment, mental disorders and juvenile delinquency.

There are four age versions of SFP: Birth–3, 3–5, 6–11 and 12–16. Each is a developmentally specific adaptation of a core curriculum and structural model, and each builds skills for both children and their parents. All curricula are available in English and Spanish. Multiple replications of SFP in randomized control trials with different ethnic groups by independent evaluators have found SFP effective in reducing multiple risk factors for later drug abuse, mental health problems and delinquency by increasing family strengths, children's social competencies and parents' parenting skills (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith, & Bellamy, 2002).

■ How a session works

SFP involves the whole family in three classes held on the same night once a week. Each session opens with a family meal. Parents or caregivers then attend the Parent Skills Training group for one hour while their children attend a Children's Skills Training group matched to their developmental age (or childcare for children under three). Families then come together for the Family Skills Training session to practice the skills learned in their separate groups. Skills are reinforced through weekly home practice. Each group is led by two trained Group Leaders, and a site coordinator organizes the program and assures the safety and well-being of participants. Typically eight to twelve families take part in each cycle.

■ Program components

- **Parent Skills Training** is based on a behavioral parenting model. It covers group building; physical, mental, social and emotional development and realistic expectations; promoting desired behaviors through attention and positive reinforcement; stress and anger management; communication; alcohol and drug education; problem solving; limit setting; and behavior programs for children.
- **Children's Social Skills Training** covers speaking and listening, peer skills and avoiding negative situations, communication, stress and anger management, family organization, alcohol and drug education, problem solving and following directions, in separate curricula for ages 3–5, 6–11 and 12–16.
- **Family Skills Training** gives parents and children the chance to practice skills together: bonding through play (the Child's Game), communication and family meetings, and giving directions and positive discipline (the Parent's Game).
- **SFP Birth–3** follows the same model: a family meal and song time, a one-hour Parent Skills Training group while children attend childcare, and a 30-minute Parent/Child Play Group where parents practice bonding, empathy, communication and positive discipline with their child.

■ Selecting the right curriculum

Because SFP is family skills training, the curriculum is selected based on the child's developmental age rather than chronological age. The Parent Skills Training curriculum is chosen to match the ages of the enrolled families' children, and each child attends the Children's Skills Training group designed for their developmental stage.

■ Why family skills training

In meta-analyses of prevention approaches, family-focused approaches averaged effect sizes about nine times larger than youth-only approaches ($d = .96$ versus $d = .10$), and family skills training showed a very large effect size in reducing substance abuse ($d = .82$) (Tobler & Stratton, 1997; Tobler & Kumpfer, 2001).

Ahearn Greene Associates, LLC is the sole authorized source for SFP (Birth–3, 3–5, 6–11, 12–16) training, curriculum, technical assistance, quality assurance and evaluation.

Session outlines: Parent Skills Training

SFP Birth–3	SFP 3–5 and 6–11	SFP 12–16
1. Introduction & Group Building	1. Introduction and Group Building	1. Introductions and Group Building
2. What Kids Can Do & Handling Stress	2. What Kids Can Do & How to Manage Stress	2. What Teens Can Do & How to Manage Stress
3. Attachment & Bonding	3. Rewards	3. Encouraging Good Behavior
4. Rewards	4. Goals and Objectives	4. Goals and Objectives
5. Goals & Objectives	5. Noticing and Ignoring & Charts and Spinners	5. Communication for Better Relationships
6. Communicating with Infants & Toddlers	6. Communication for Better Relationships I	6. Communication and Family Meetings
7. Empathy	7. Communication for Better Relationships II	7. Helping Your Teen Handle Peer Pressure
8. Alcohol, Drugs & Families	8. Alcohol, Drugs, and Families	8. Alcohol, Drugs and Families
9. Solving Problems	9. Solving Problems & Giving Directions	9. Solving Problems and Giving Directions
10. Giving Directions	10. Setting Limits I: Getting Kids Back on Track	10. Relationships, Love and Sexuality
11. Setting Limits for Infants & Toddlers	11. Setting Limits II: Practice Setting Limits	11. Setting Limits I
12. Disciplining Without Physical Punishment	12. Setting Limits III: Solving Behavior Problems	12. Setting Limits II
13. Making and Using Behavior Plans	13. Building and Using Behavior Programs	13. Contracts for Changing Behavior
14. Putting It All Together	14. Getting and Keeping Good Behavior & Graduation	14. Remembering All You Have Learned

Session outlines: Children's and Family Skills Training

Children: SFP 3–5 and 6–11	Teens: SFP 12–16	Family Skills: all ages
1. Hello and Rules	1. Getting Started	1. Introduction and Group Building
2. Social Skills I: Listening	2. Speaking and Listening	2. Child's Game
3. Social Skills II: Speaking	3. Staying Cool in Conflict	3. Child's Game: Rewards
4. Creating Good Behavior	4. Being Who You Want to Be	4. Goals and Objectives
5. How to Say "No" to Stay Out of Trouble	5. Speaking for Yourself	5. Differential Attention / Charts and Spinners
6. Communication for Better Relationships	6. Speaking Up in Your Family	6. Communication for Better Relationships I
7. Communication: Family Meetings	7. Handling Peer Pressure and Temptation	7. Communication for Better Relationships II
8. Alcohol and Drugs	8. Alcohol and Drugs	8. Learning From Parents: Parents' Discussion
9. Problem Solving	9. Problem Solving	9. Problem Solving, Giving Directions
10. Introduction to Parents' Game	10. Friends, Dating and Sexuality	10. Parents' Game
11. Coping Skills I: Recognizing Feelings	11. Managing Emotions	11. Parents' Game
12. Coping Skills II: Dealing With Criticism	12. Handling Criticism	12. Parents' Game
13. Coping Skills III: Coping With Anger	13. Coping With Anger	13. Overview of Concepts
14. Graduation, Resources, and Review	14. Graduation, Resources, and Review	14. Graduation