



Blueprints Promising Programs FACT SHEET

FS-BPP18

1999 (Updated 10/2006)

Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14

The Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP), formerly the Iowa Strengthening Families Program, is a universal, family-based intervention which enhances parents' general child management skills, parent-child affective relationships, and family communication. Based on a developmental model, SFP assumes that increasing the family's protective processes while decreasing its potential risk factors can alter a child's future, so that problem behaviors can be reduced or avoided. In addition, the program seeks to delay the onset of adolescent alcohol and substance use by improving family practices.

Program Targets

SFP is designed for use with all sixth-grade students and their families. It has been successfully implemented in 33 rural, Midwestern schools in which most of the program families were white and middle-class and most parents had obtained at least a high school education.

Program Content

The seven-week intervention utilizes a biopsychosocial model in which parents and children learn individual skills, then are brought together to improve family communication and practices.

- During the parent training sessions, held in groups with an average of eight families, parents are taught to clarify expectations of children's behavior, especially regarding substance use; utilize appropriate and consistent discipline techniques; manage strong emotions concerning their children; and use effective communication.
- In the child sessions, adolescents learn similar skills, as well as peer resistance and refusal techniques; personal and social interaction skills; and stress and emotion management.
- In the combined parent and children classes, families practice conflict resolution and communication skills, and engage in activities designed to increase family cohesiveness.

Program Outcomes

Both post-test evaluations of family processes and follow-up studies of individual substance use have demonstrated positive effects for SFP families and adolescents, compared to control groups. At post-test, SFP participants showed:

- Improved child management practices, including monitoring, discipline, and standard setting;
- Increased parent-child communication;
- More child involvement in family activities and decisions; and
- Strengthened family affective quality.

One- and two-year follow-up analyses revealed that participating adolescents had:

- Lower rates of alcohol initiation at both years; and
- 30-60% relative reductions in alcohol use, using without parents' permission, and being drunk.

References

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Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP)

Iowa State University Extension to Families

2625 North Loop Drive

Ames, IA 50011-1260

Phone: (515) 294-1426

Fax: (515) 294-3613

Email: cwebb@iastate.edu

Website: www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp