**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Recognizing the resiliency provided to youth from a strong positive parent child relationship and parental guidance, Strengthening Families Program was originally developed in the early 1980s 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 reducing substance use, it has since been replicated with similar results for families seeking to increase their ability to parent and develop children prepared to be successful and resist the incumbent challenges they will face in their communities, their families and their overall lives. SFP was designed to educate parents about the importance of positive parental behavior and their role in being the role model, guide and monitor of their child as the child develops their values and choose their behaviors and path in life. *SFP has been selected as the model family program by communities across the United States in their commitment to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risky behaviors facing youth and their parents, including delinquency, academic performance and child maltreatment.*

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

SFP is a 14-session resiliency-based family skills training program. What is different from most parenting programs is that parents and children attend sessions together and learn skills that they practice together before going home to implement them. It offers three age-specific developmentally appropriate curriculums for families with children ages 3-5, children ages 6-11 and youth ages 12-16. A typical weekly session includes a ½ hour family meal. Parents and children then meet for one hour in separate classes to learn parenting and social skills. The parent and children then rejoin for one hour to practice together the skills they learned in their separate sessions through fun and creative interactive activities. The skills taught include:

1. **Parent Skills Training Group:** Parents learn to build and increase positive time with children, manage stress, give clear directions, develop behavior change, hold family meetings, and use effective discipline.

2. **Children’s Social Skills Training Group:** Children learn communication skills, peer resistance, recognizing feelings, consequences of substance abuse and other risky behavior, anger management, problem solving and dealing with criticism.

3. **Family Skills Training Group:** Parents and children practice together new skills learned in their separate groups such as parent/child bonding, communication, family organization, family management and problem solving.

*SFP is recognized by the National Registry of Evidence-Based Practices (NREPP) as an evidence-based prevention program. Information available at: [www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org](http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org)*

**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 & Over 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 in a master set on CD to allow for easy, sustainable and cost effective implementation.
- SFP implementation materials and curriculum are designed for adaptation to the specificity and needs of the host community’s and families’ culture.
- Program developers are available for on-line, telephone and site technical assistance.
- Implementation at schools, community centers, substance abuse treatment, hospitals, public housing, residential, criminal justice and faith-based sites.
- Implemented in all 50 United States, Canada, Europe and Southeast Asia.
- Anticipated costs per cycle include: Compensation for 4 group leaders and site coordinator, small in-session incentives, graduation, photocopy costs for handouts, weekly family meal and childcare/transportation.
- Initial start-up costs include SFP certified Group Leader Training and purchase of curriculum CD.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

For further details and assistance in implementing and sponsoring SFP in your community contact:

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