



Program Spotlight: Strengthening Families & Relatives as Parents Program Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County

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The 2Gen Initiative Program Spotlight Series is intended to bring attention to parent education programs across the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) system that incorporate a two-generational (2Gen) or whole-family approach to parent education. This Program Spotlight focuses on **The Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP 10-14)** and the **Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)** in CCE Orange County and highlights impressions from CCE parent Educators who have implemented the programs.

Strengthening Families: For Parents and Youth 10-14

Program Background & Description

SFP 10-14 is an evidence-based program developed by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach that brings together parents or caregivers and their youth between the ages of 10-14. SFP 10-14 has been implemented in CCE Orange County for approximately 10 years. The program begins with a shared family-style dinner that includes all participants and program facilitators. Following the dinner, adults and youth participate in separate sessions. Youth learn about setting goals, steps to achieve them, factors that can get in the way, tools for effective conversations with the grown-ups in their lives, how to resist peer pressure, and friendship-building skills. Adults learn about ways to support their pre-teens and teens, how to set limits, effective communication skills, and how to maintain a healthy relationship with their children as they become more independent. In the family session, parents and youth come together and play meaningful games, practice what they discussed in their respective sessions, and explore their values, strengths and unique family attributes. For the past four years, CCE Orange County has offered this program in collaboration with the Youth Bureau and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, which allows for participating families to experience other resources and support available in the community.

Educator Impressions

Educators who have implemented SFP 10-14 share how it has impacted parents, grandparents, and children involved:

“SFP 10-14 brings families together! Often times, parents or caregivers sign up their families and the youth really don’t want to attend. When asked ‘why are you here?’ they usually answer ‘my caregiver made me.’ However, after the first session, the ice is almost always broken and the youth can’t wait to come back. Since the program includes a lot of games and ways to show how well families know each other, the participants have a lot of fun together, which often reminds them of the qualities they enjoy about each other. We have had families who were on “screaming-terms” with each other and by the end of the program they have come closer, learned to communicate with one another and most importantly, solve problems without engaging in big power struggles. Families generally end up being closer to each other as a result of their participation. It’s a wonderful process to witness over and over again!” -Julika von Stackelberg

Relatives as Parents Program

Program Background & Description

RAPP is an educational and support program for caregivers and youth that utilizes a 2Gen approach to navigate the dynamics of kinship families. Participants come together for monthly support groups as well as educational programming on various topics related to kinship care. CCE Orange County has been implementing RAPP since 1998. A monthly support group and youth and caregiver components allow both youth and adults the opportunity to establish relationships with and gain support from their peers. Additionally, RAPP offers intergenerational programming based on the needs identified by participating families. For example, CCE Orange County offered a series on ambiguous loss, helping both youth and caregivers work on communication around loss, understanding emotions, identifying triggers and intentional creation of their new family arrangement. The intergenerational programming is very powerful for families and they often integrate the experience and the strategies into their lives.

Educator Impressions

Educators who have implemented RAPP share how it has impacted parents, grandparents, and children involved:

“[Helping participants understand] that becoming a kinship family has profound implications for both youth and caregivers; with a 2Gen approach, we are making a smarter investment to supporting a safe and nurturing environment for all.” – Suzy McCormack

Visit the *Parenting Project* website at:

<https://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/engagement/parenting/home>

This work was supported by Cornell Cooperative Extension (Smith Lever funds) received from Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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