



Strengthening Families Program, 2012-2013 Orange County Cornell Cooperative Extension Middletown High School, Middletown, NY

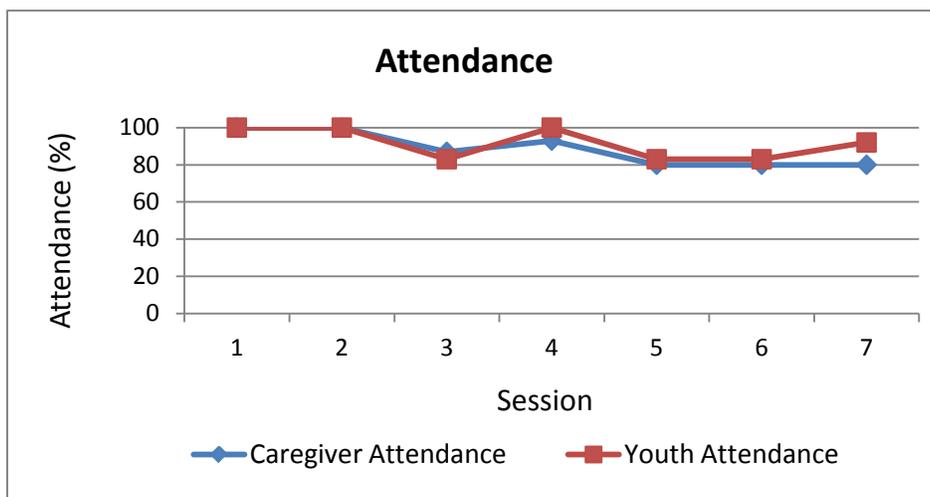
By Eliza Cook, Rachel Dunifon, and Kimberly Kopko

Strengthening Families is a parent, youth and family skills-building curriculum designed to prevent teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, strengthen parenting skills, and build family strengths. This program was developed by professionals at Iowa State University Extension.

The program is delivered in 7 two-hour sessions where parents and youth meet separately for the first hour and then families practice skills together during the second hour. Sessions are highly interactive and include role-playing, discussions, learning games,

and family projects. Each session contains a variety of activities.

Orange County Cornell Cooperative Extension conducted the Strengthening Families Program at Middletown High School in Middletown, NY. The program was co-sponsored by Orange County Cornell Cooperative Extension partnered with Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Council and Middletown High School through a 21st Century Grant obtained by the Middletown School District. This report includes results from a session that was conducted between October 3rd and December 5,

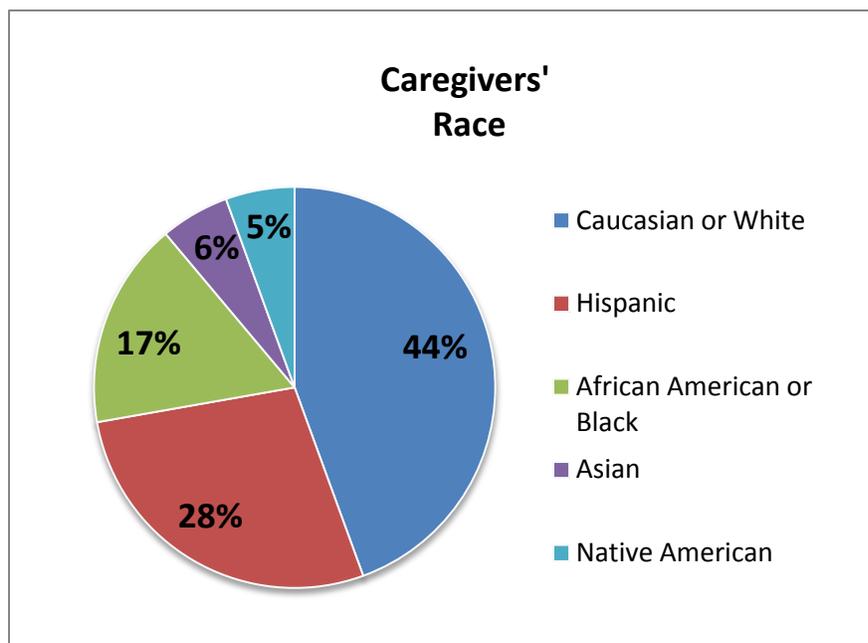
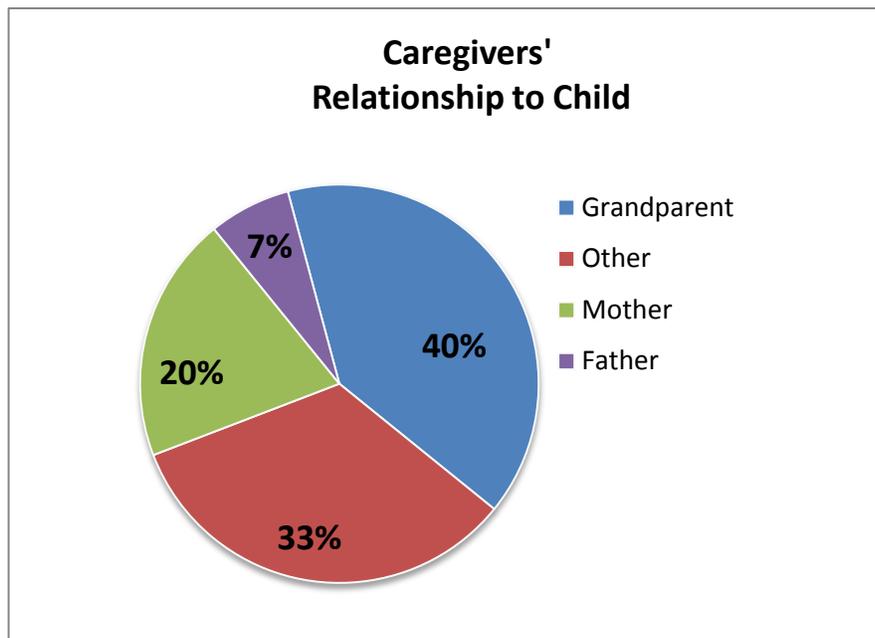


2012. Participants in the program consisted of 15 caregivers and 12 youth. Average attendance for caregivers was 89% while the average attendance for youth was 92%.

Caregiver Demographics:

The following summaries use data of the 15 caregivers who participated in

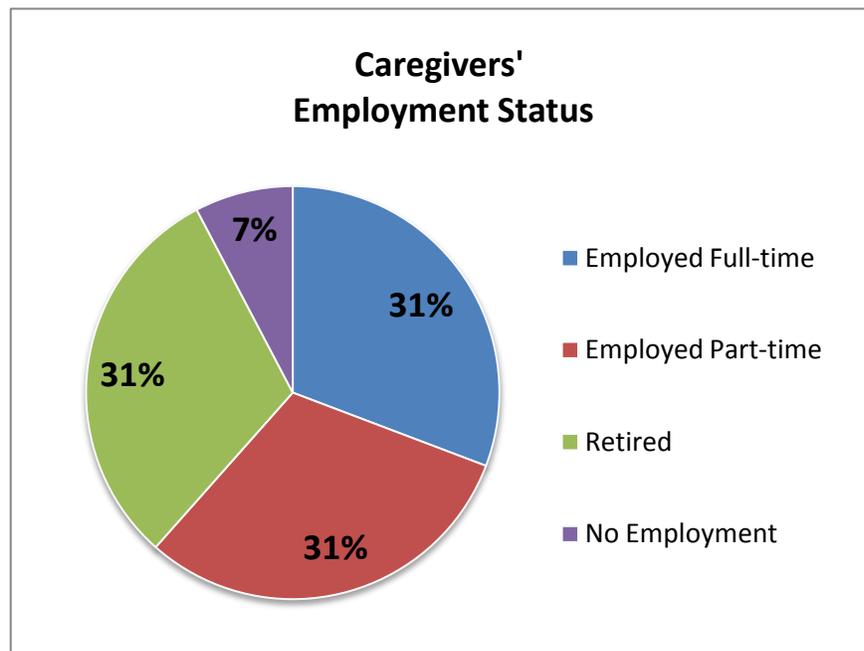
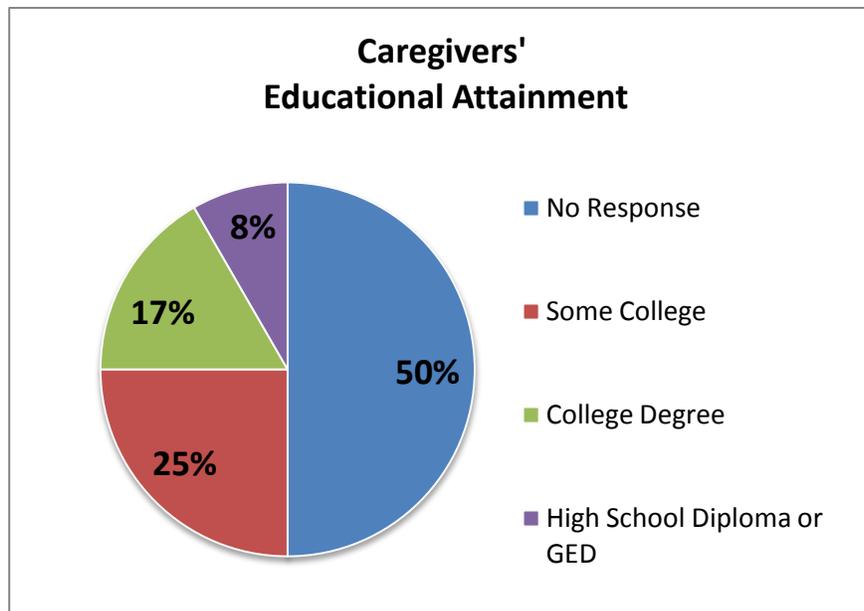
the program. The majority of participants were grandparents (40%) and the average age of caregivers was 48 years of age. In addition, most of caregivers who participated in the Middletown Strengthening Families program were Caucasian or White (44%) and Hispanic (28%).

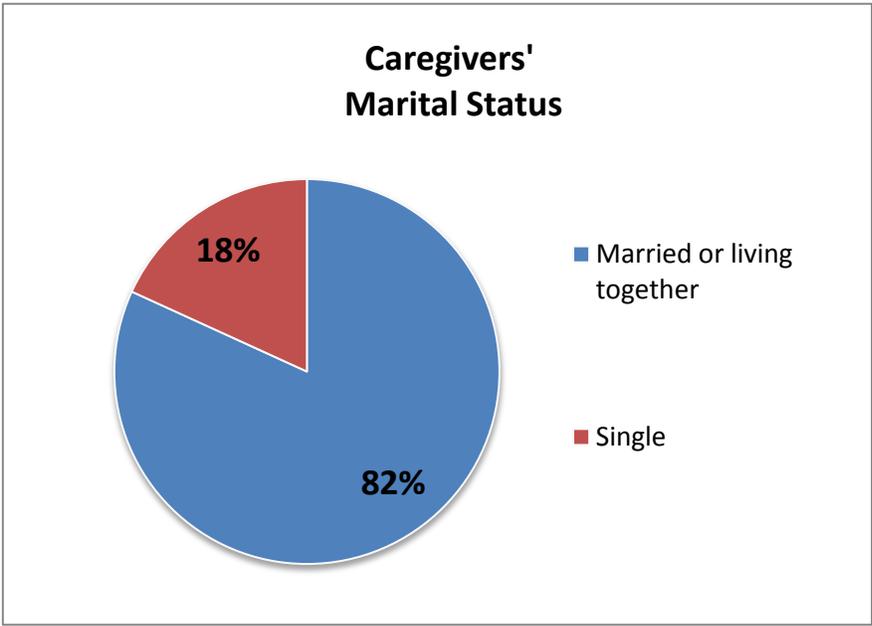


Educational attainment ranged from High School Diploma/GED to obtaining a Graduate Degree with 25% of the sample having some college experience. Employment status varied, but a majority of caregivers reported full-time employment (31%) or part-time employment (31%). A majority of the caregivers in the sample (82%)

reported being married or living together.

Caregivers reported an average number of 2.4 children living at home. The average age of the youngest child was 7 years while the average age of the oldest was 14 years. Children's ages ranged from 1 to 23 years.

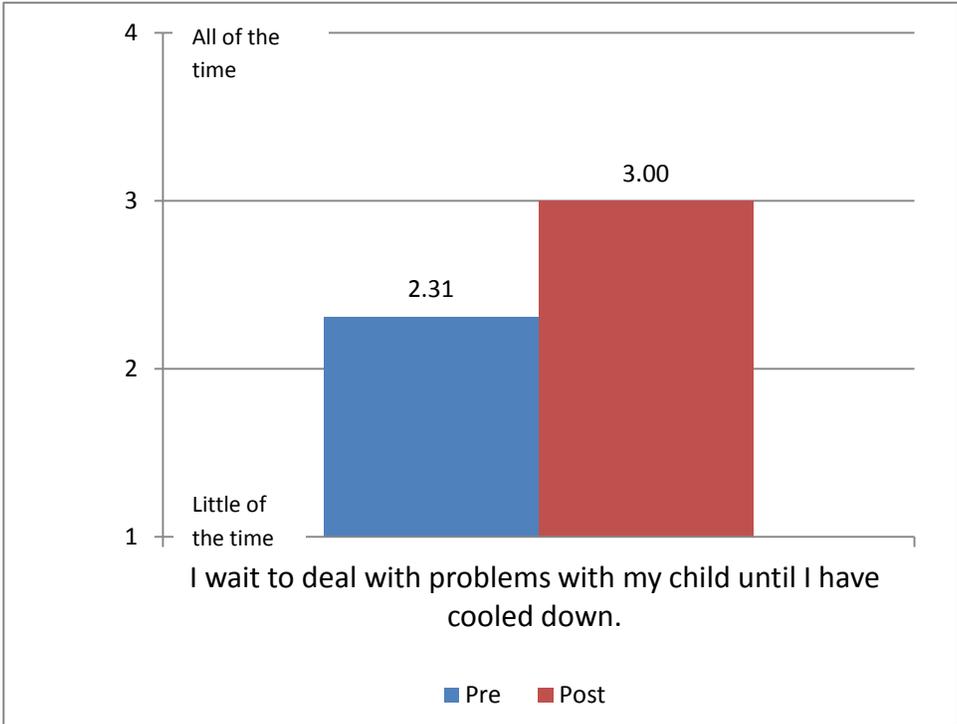




Caregiver Results:

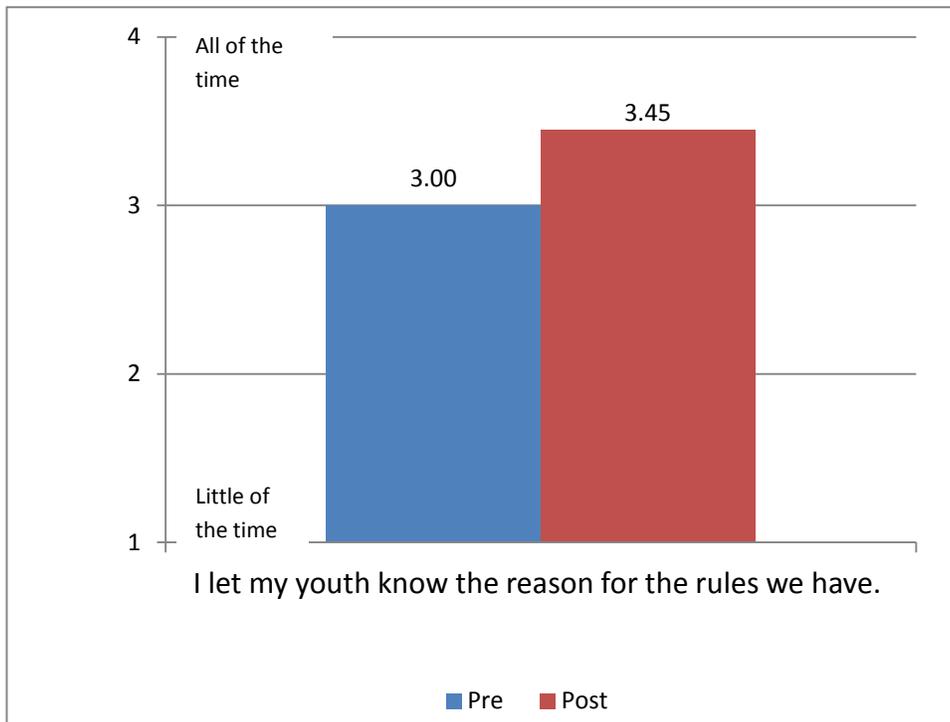
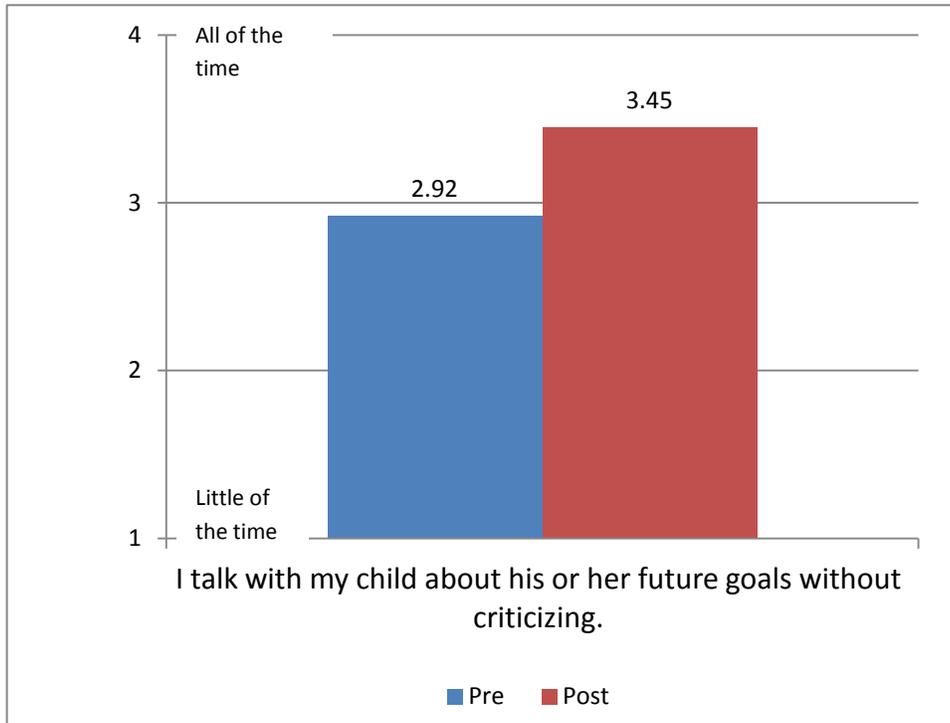
In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following question showed a significant *positive*

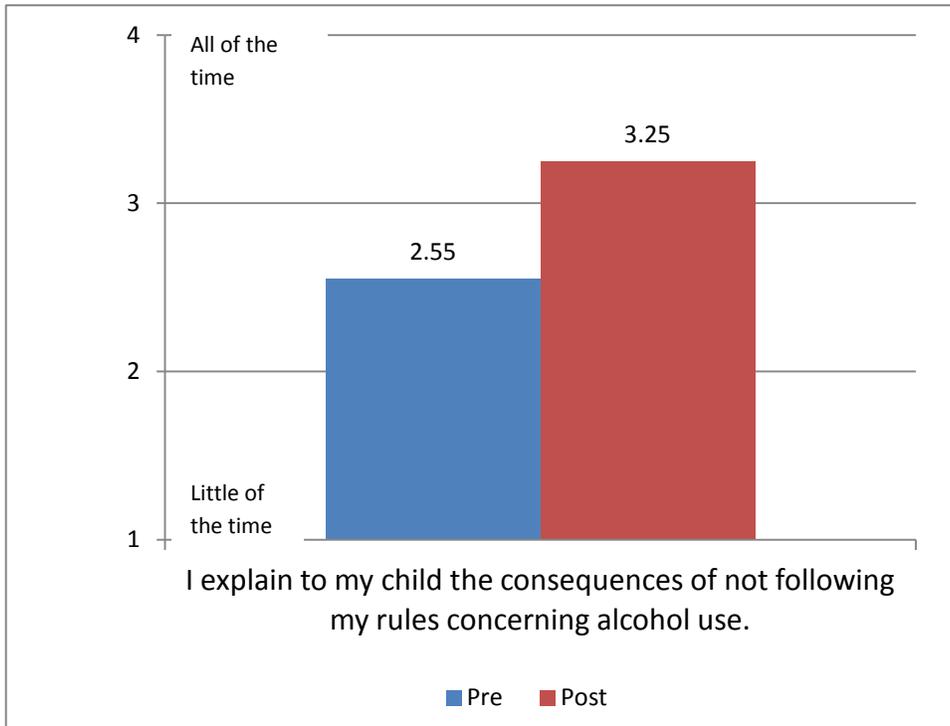
change at the 1% level, indicating a 99% certainty that the results are not due to chance.



In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following three questions showed significant *positive*

changes at the 5% level, indicating a 95% certainty that the results are not due to chance.





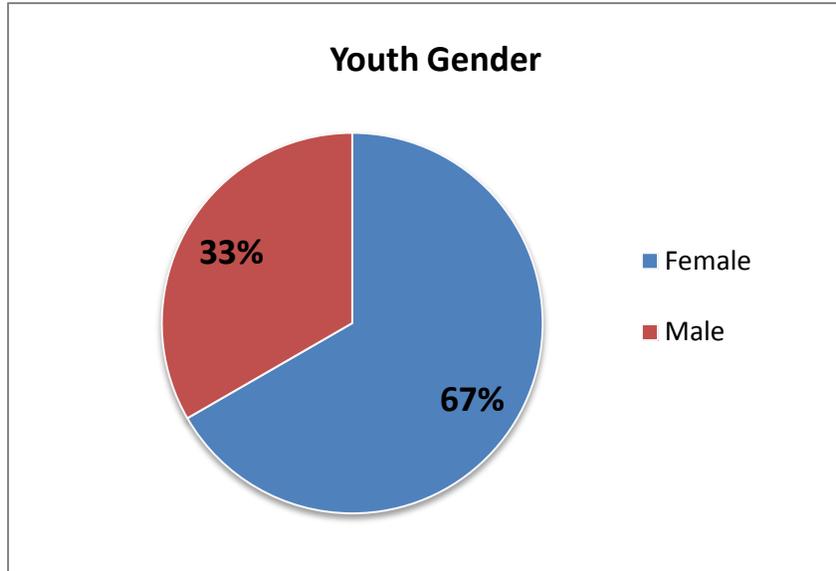
These results are highly encouraging for the Strengthening Families Program in Orange County with 4 out of 20 questions showing significant

positive changes for caregivers. Refer to Appendix for a complete list of Caregiver Questions.

Youth Demographics:

Of the 12 youth who participated in

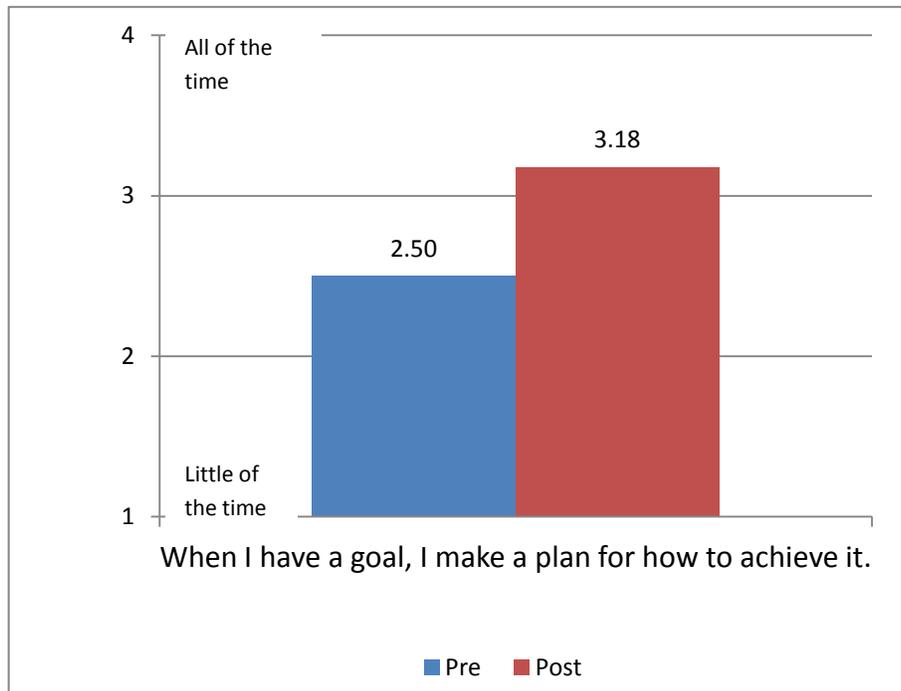
the program, 8 were females (67%) and 4 were males (33%).

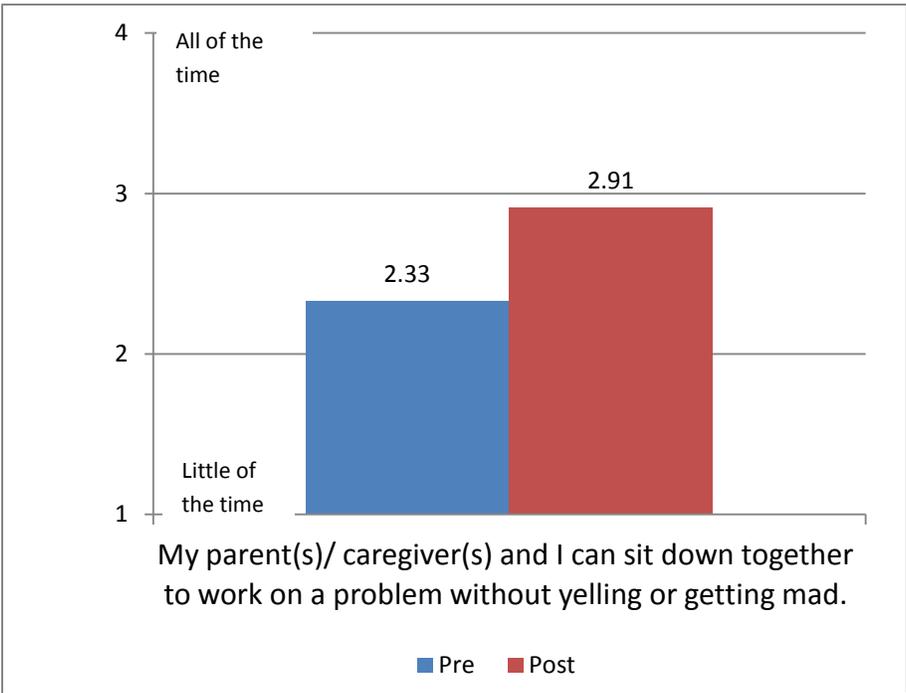
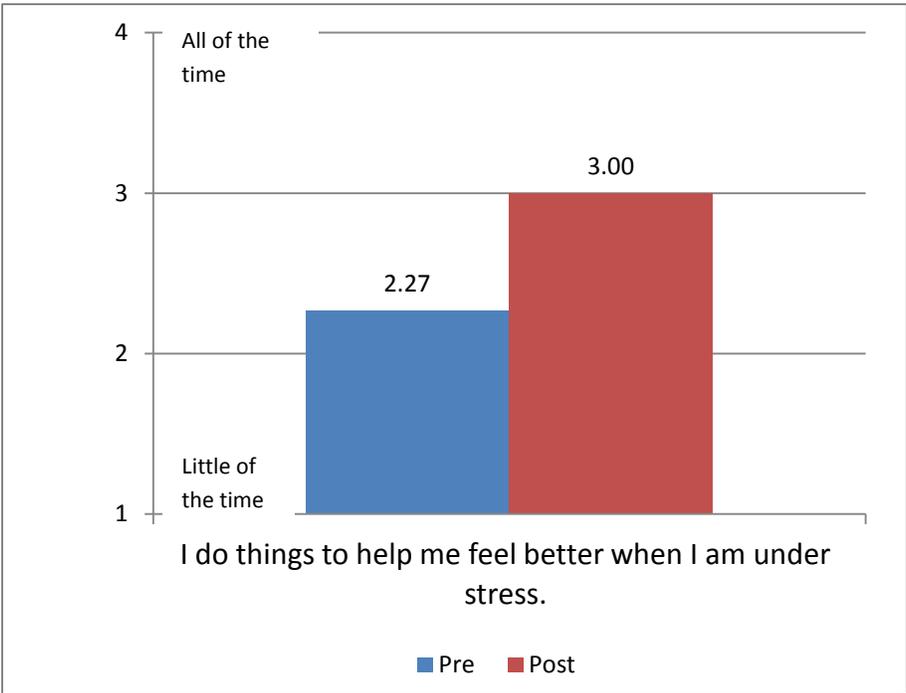


Youth Results:

In comparing the pre- and post program, survey results, the following three questions showed significant

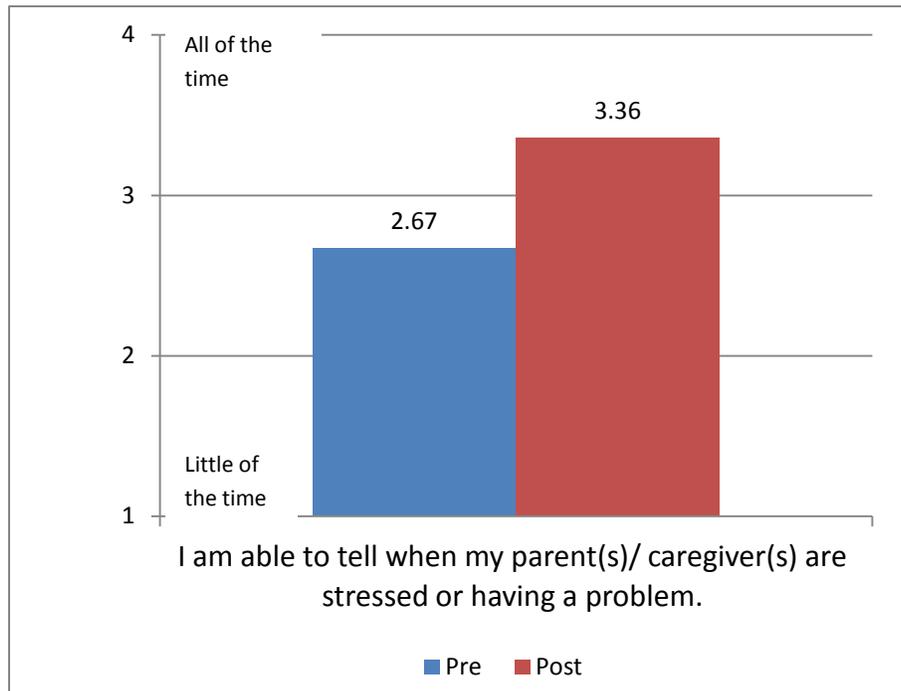
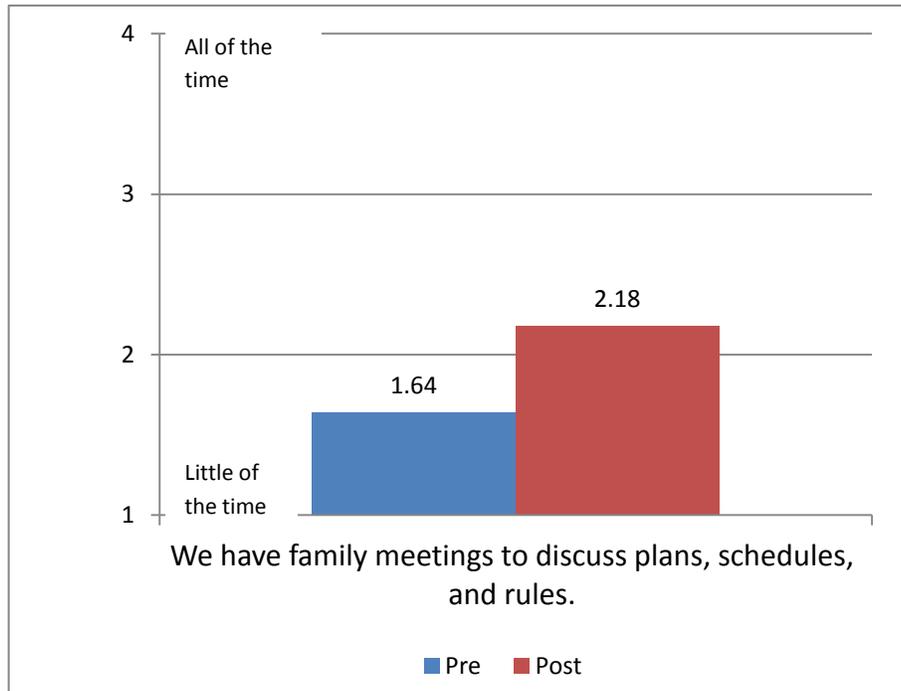
positive changes at the 5% level, indicating that results were highly significant with 95% certainty that the results are not due to chance.





In comparing the pre- and post program, survey results, the following two questions showed significant

positive changes at the 10% level, indicating that results were highly significant with 90% certainty that the results are not due to chance.



These results are highly encouraging for the Strengthening Families Program in Orange County with 5 out of 15 questions showing significant positive changes for youth. Refer to Appendix for a complete list of Youth Questions.

Conclusion:

During one series between October 2012 and December 2012, Cooperative Extension of Orange County co-sponsored the Strengthening Families Program with the Middletown School District. Fifteen caregivers and 12 youth participated in the program. Both caregivers and youth showed significant positive changes in their results.

Specifically, caregivers reported increased ability to: cool down before communicating with youth about problems, talk with youth about their future goals without criticizing, communicate reasons for rules to youth, and explain the consequences of not following through with rules concerning alcohol use.

As a result of participating in the Strengthening Families Program, youth reported increased ability to: make a plan to achieve goals, do things that help them feel better when they are stressed, sit down and with parent(s)/ caregiver(s) to work a problem without yelling or getting mad, have family meetings to discuss family issues and schedules, and tell when a parent/caregiver is stressed or having a problem.

These results from the Strengthening Families Program at Middletown High School, conducted in cooperation with Orange County Cooperative Extension indicate positive outcomes for both caregivers and youth.

Appendix

Caregiver Questions:

1. I wait to deal with problems with my child until I have cooled down.
2. I remember that it is normal for children to be harder to get along with at this age.
3. I help my youth understand what the family and house rules are.
4. I take time to do something fun together as a family.
5. I let my youth know what the consequences are for breaking rules.
6. I find ways to keep my children involved in family work activities, like chores.
7. I follow through with consequences each time he or she breaks a rule.
8. I talk with my child about his or her future goals without criticizing.
9. I often tell my child how I feel when he or she misbehaves.
10. I find ways to include my child in family decisions about fun and work activities.
11. I spend special time one-on-one with my youth.
12. I let my youth know the reason for the rules we have.

13. I listen to my youth when he or she is upset.

14. I set regular times for homework.

15. I work together with my youth to solve problems that come up.

16. I try to see things from my youth's point of view.

17. I talk with my child about ways to resist peer pressure.

18. I give compliments and rewards when my child does chores at home or learns to follow rules.

19. I show my child love and respect.

20. I explain to my child the consequences of not following my rules concerning alcohol use.

Youth Questions:

1. When I have a goal, I make a plan for how to achieve it.

2. I do things to help me feel better when I am under stress.

3. I appreciate the things my parent(s)/caregiver(s) do for me.

4. If a friend suggests that we do something that can get us both into trouble, I am able to get out of doing it.

5. We have family meetings to discuss plans, schedules, and rules.

6. I know how to tell when I am under stress.

7. I listen to my parent(s) or caregiver(s)' point of view.

8. I understand the values and beliefs my family has.

9. I know there are consequences when I don't follow a given rule.

10. My parent(s) or caregiver(s) and I can sit down together to work on a problem without yelling or getting mad.

11. I know the qualities that are important in a true friend.

12. I know what my parents/caregivers think I should do about drugs and alcohol.

13. My parent(s)/caregiver(s) are calm when they discipline me.

14. I feel truly loved and respected by my parent(s)/caregiver(s).

15. I am able to tell when my parent(s)/caregiver(s) are stressed or having a problem.

Visit the *Parenting in Context* project at:

<http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/parenting/>

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Eliza Lathrop Cook is a Masters of Public Administration Fellow in the Cornell Institute of Public Affairs at Cornell University.

Rachel Dunifon is an Associate Professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University.

Kimberly Kopko is a Senior Extension Associate in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University.



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