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Strengthening Families Program Statewide Outcomes

Program:

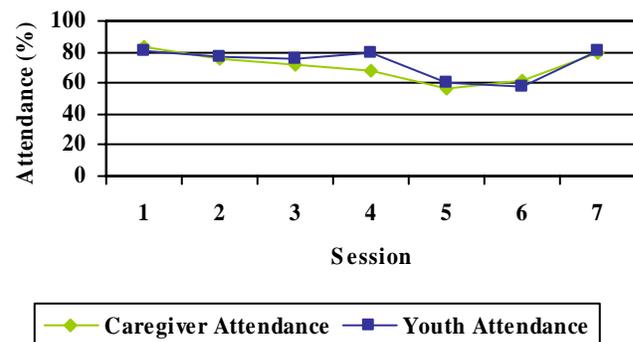
Strengthening Families is a parent, youth and family skills-building curriculum designed to prevent teen substance abuse and other behavior problems, strengthen parenting skills, and build family strengths developed by professionals at Iowa State University Extension¹.

The program is delivered in 7 two-hour sessions in which parents and youth meet separately for the first hour and then the families practice skills and have fun together during the second hour. Sessions are highly interactive and include role-playing, discussions, learning games, and family projects².

This report documents outcomes from eight sessions of the Strengthening Families Program offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension educators from January through November, 2007 across five counties and in New York City. The five counties offering the program are: Warren, Jefferson, Orange, Tompkins, and Albany—with Jefferson County hosting 3 sessions of the Program.

Statewide, attendees included 59 adults and 62 youth. Overall, attendance was very strong for both caregivers and youth throughout the first four sessions of the program. There was a slight decline for sessions 5 and 6, with attendance reaching 80% for the last session. Average attendance for parents/caregivers was 70.9%, and average attendance for youth was 73%.

Attendance

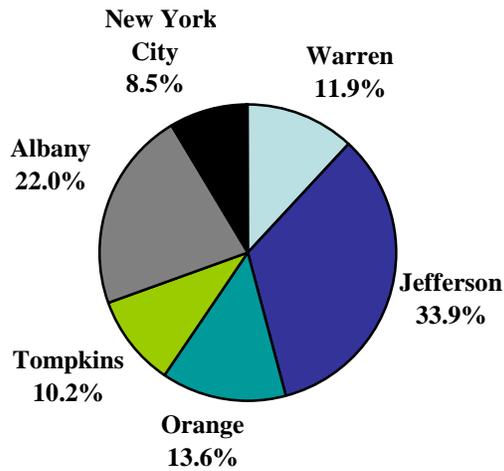


The following chart illustrates caregiver participation by county.

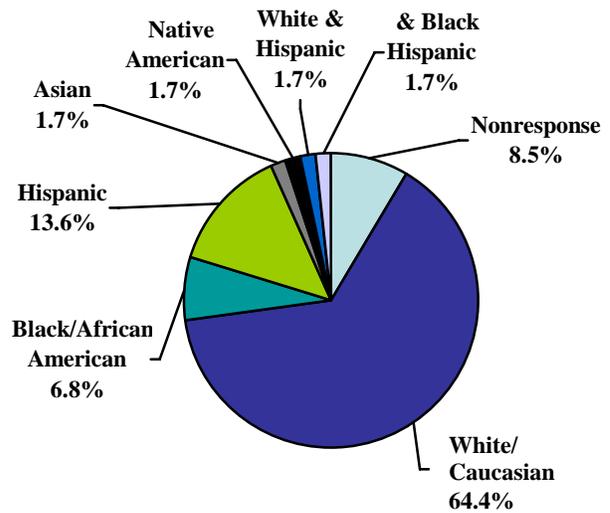
¹ <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp/>

² <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp/inside/curr.php>

Caregivers by County



Caregivers' Race

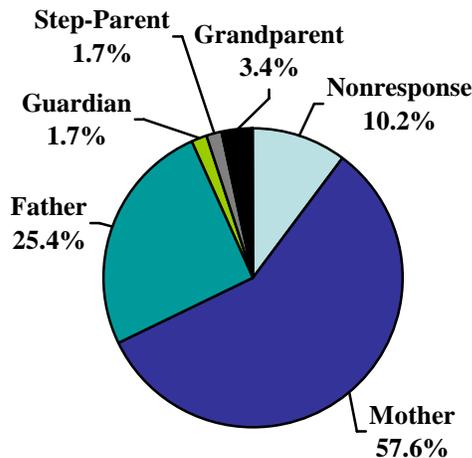


Caregiver Demographics:

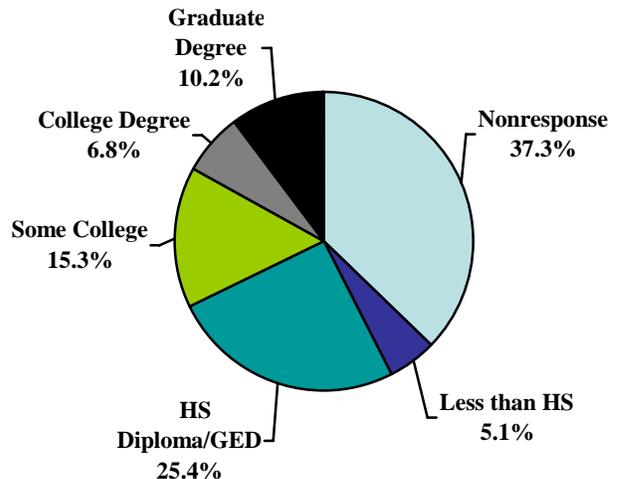
Statewide, caregivers attending the program consisted primarily of parents: mothers (57.6%) and fathers (25.4%). Other adults/caregivers attending the Program included grandparents, step-parents, and guardians.

Also diverse was caregiver education level, which ranged from less than high school (5.1%) to the earning of a graduate degree (10.2%).

Caregivers' Relation to Child



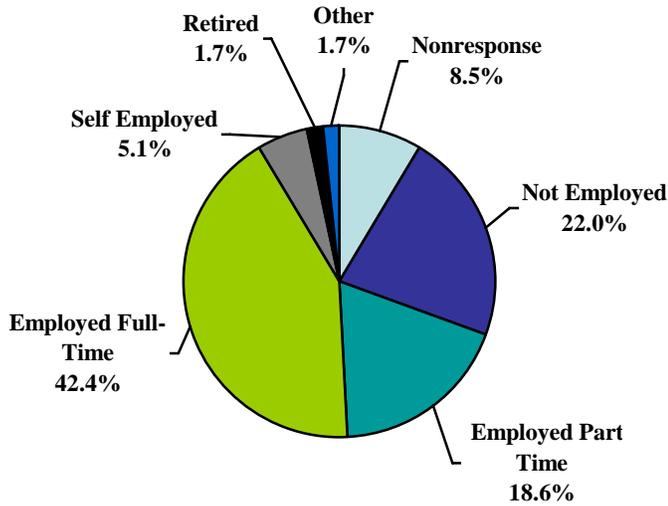
Caregivers' Educational Attainment



The average age of caregivers was 42.41 years. The majority of participants, 64.4%, were White/Caucasian, although racial representation was diverse among attendees.

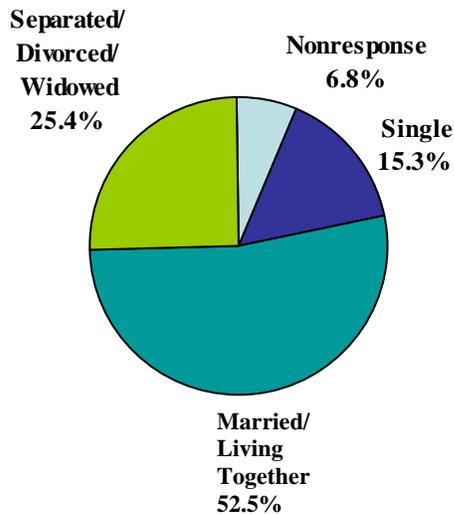
The majority of participants were employed in some capacity, with 42.4% of parents/caregivers reporting full-time employment status.

Caregivers' Employment Status



Marital status varied, and over half of participants reported that they were married or living with a partner (52.5%), while approximately 25% reported being separated, divorced, or widowed, and slightly more than 15% reported that they were single.

Caregivers' Marital Status



Caregivers reported an average number of 2.3 children living at home. Average age of the youngest child was 9.9 years and the average age of oldest child was 14.1 years.

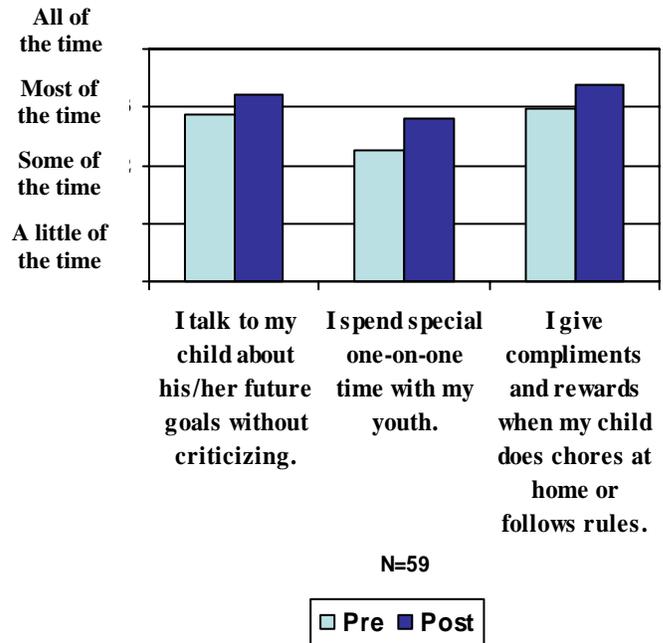
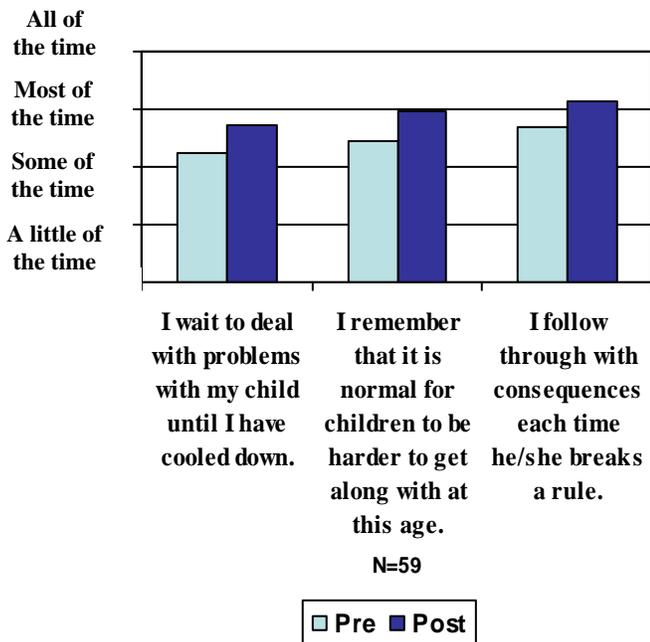
Caregiver Results:

This study used a pre- and post-test evaluation, in which participants are asked a series of questions at both the beginning of a program (pre-test) and then again at the program's completion (post-test). This design allows researchers to measure changes in participant knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors that may have resulted from participation in the program (although such a design cannot definitely point to the program itself as the cause of any change; it is possible that caregivers or youth would have experienced changes even if they had not participated in the program).

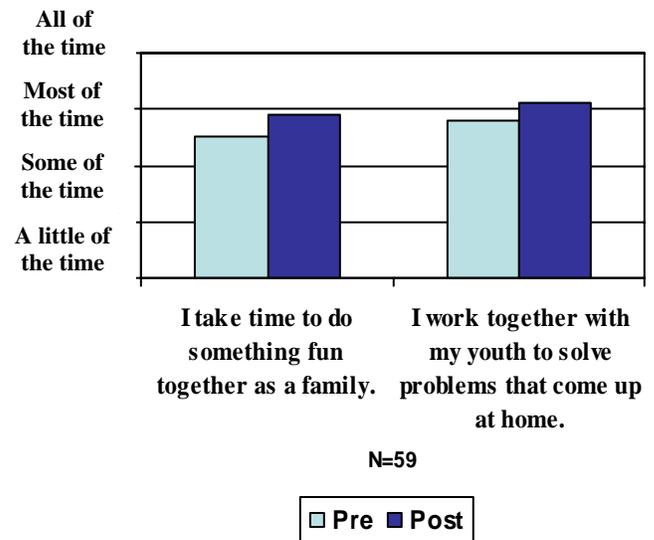
When looking at the results of the pre- and post-tests given to the caregivers, we see very positive results with statistically significant outcomes for 10 out of 20 questions asked of caregivers before participating in the Strengthening Families Program and again following Program completion. Caregivers indicated that the program was highly successful in helping them to speak to their teens in a more calm manner when dealing with problems, gaining a greater understanding of normal teenage development, following through with consequences when rules are broken, talking to their teens about their goals for the future and spending special one-on-one time together, and giving compliments and rewards when children follow rules.

Results for pre- and post-test surveys are determined by interpreting the p-value generated by a statistical procedure called a t-test. The p-value is a numerical estimate of the reliability of our assumption that the difference in means on pre and post surveys is real and not due to chance. In general, researchers say that a p-value of .10 or less is statistically significant, which means that we are 90% certain that the result we see is not due to chance. The following results for the Strengthening Families Program are reported at the p-value levels of .01, .05, and .10.

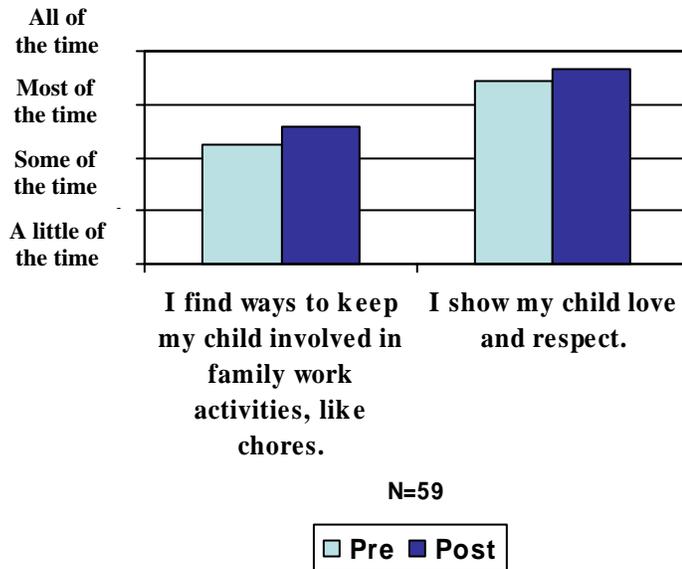
In comparing the caregiver pre- and post-test survey results, the following six questions showed significant *positive* changes at the 1% level, which means that we are 99% certain that the results are not due to chance.



In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following two questions showed significant *positive* changes at the 5% level, which means that we are 95% certain that the results are not due to chance.



In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following two questions showed significant *positive* changes at the 10% level, which means that we are 90% certain that the results are not due to chance.



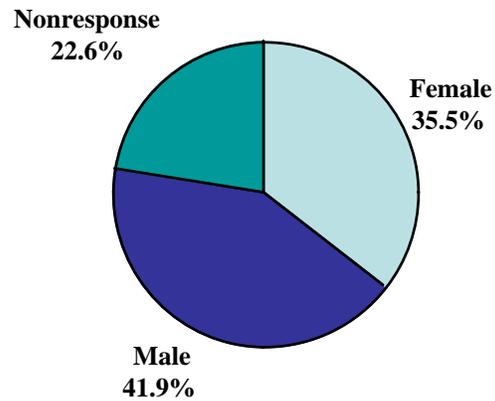
These results are highly encouraging as results from pre and post-tests of parents/caregivers showed significant overall positive changes on 10 of 20 questions.

Please refer to the Appendix for a complete list of Caregiver Questions.

Youth Demographics:

Both male and female youth participated in the program. An overall percentage for male and female youth attendees is difficult to determine, however, since almost a quarter of youth did not report their gender.

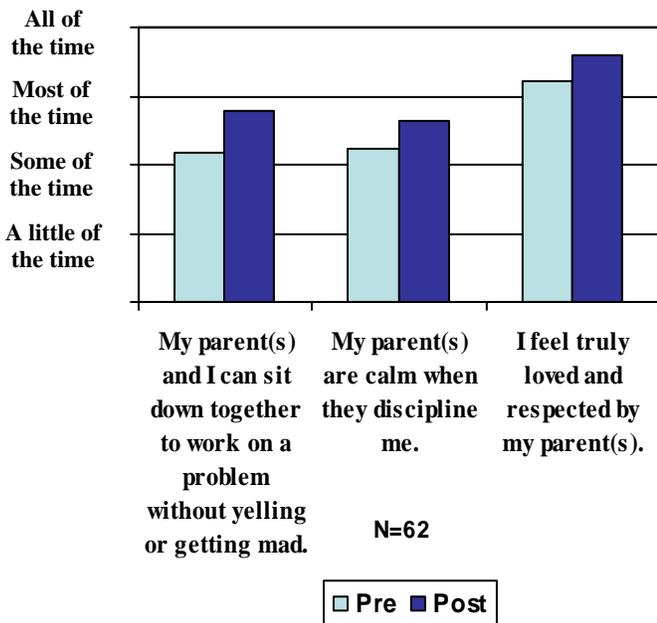
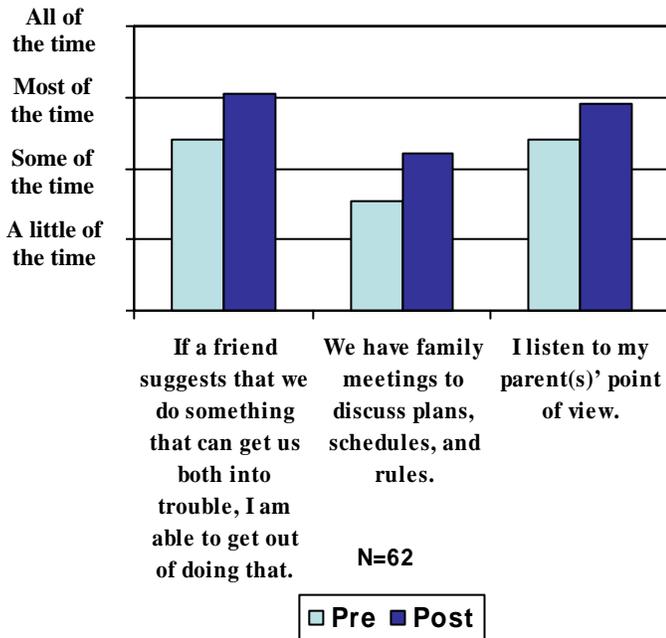
Youth Gender



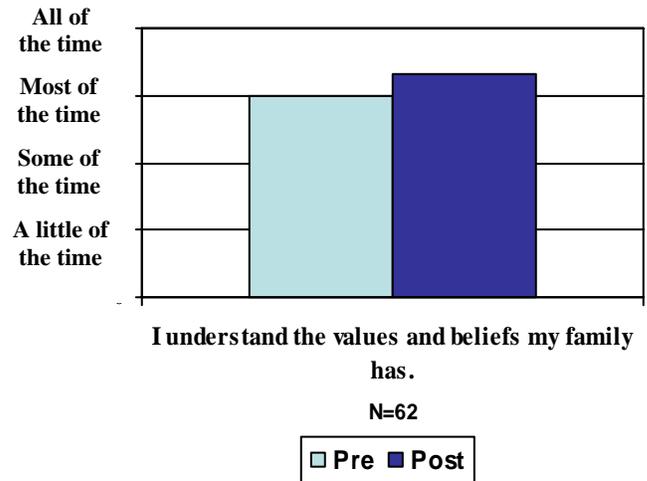
Youth Results:

Like those of the caregivers, youth results were very positive with statistically significant outcomes on more than half of the questions asked of youth before participating in the Strengthening Families Program and again following Program completion. Youth reported an increased ability to resist peer pressure, participating in family meetings, listening to their parent’s point of view, the ability to calmly discuss problems with parents, and feeling loved and respected by their parents.

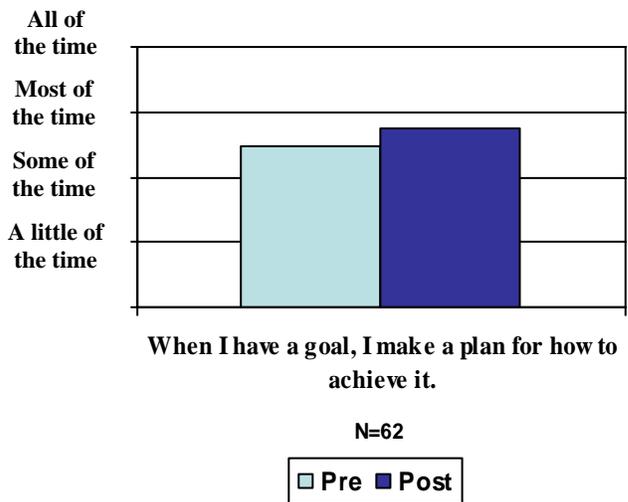
In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following six questions showed significant *positive* changes at the 1% level, indicating that results were highly significant.



In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following question showed significant *positive* changes at the 5% level.



In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following question showed significant *positive* changes at the 10% level.



These results are highly encouraging as results from pre and post-tests of youth showed significant overall positive changes on more than half of the 15 questions.

Please refer to the Appendix for a complete list of Youth Questions.

Conclusion:

The Strengthening Families Program successfully reached out to 59 adult caregivers and 62 youth during eight sessions held across New York State from January through November of 2007.

This highly successful Program continues to be offered in counties across New York State. During 2008, the Program will expand to additional counties as a new group of parent educators receives training in the Strengthening Families curriculum.

Visit the *Parenting in Context* project at:
<http://www.parenting.cit.cornell.edu>

This work was supported by a joint research and extension program funded by Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station (Hatch funds) and 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 publications are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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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)/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)/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.