



## Outcomes of Participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension Strengthening Families Program, Statewide Report 2013-2014

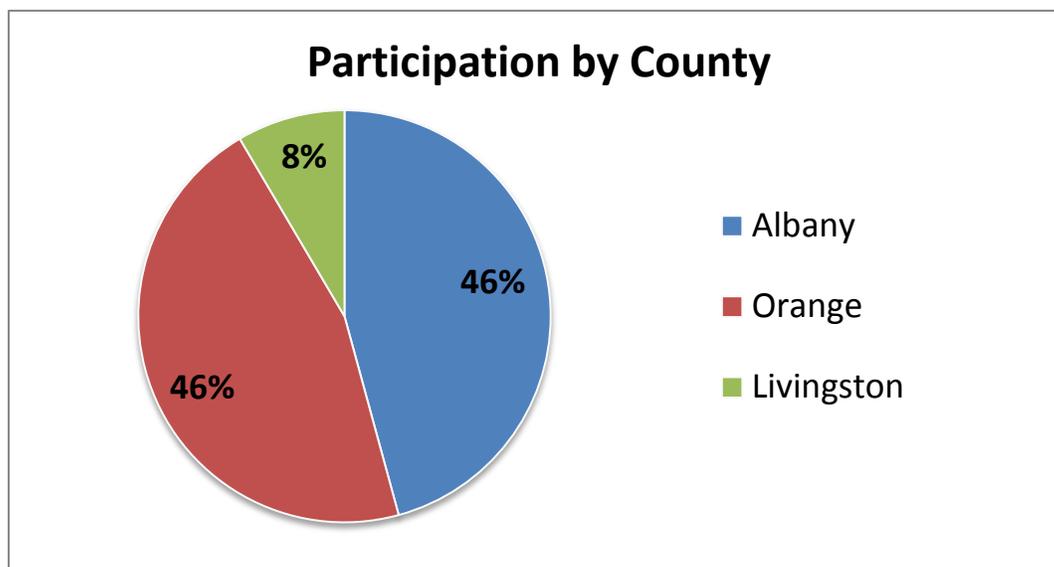
By Eliza Lathrop Cook & Kimberly Kopko

Strengthening Families is a parent, youth and family skills-building curriculum designed to prevent teen substance use 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,

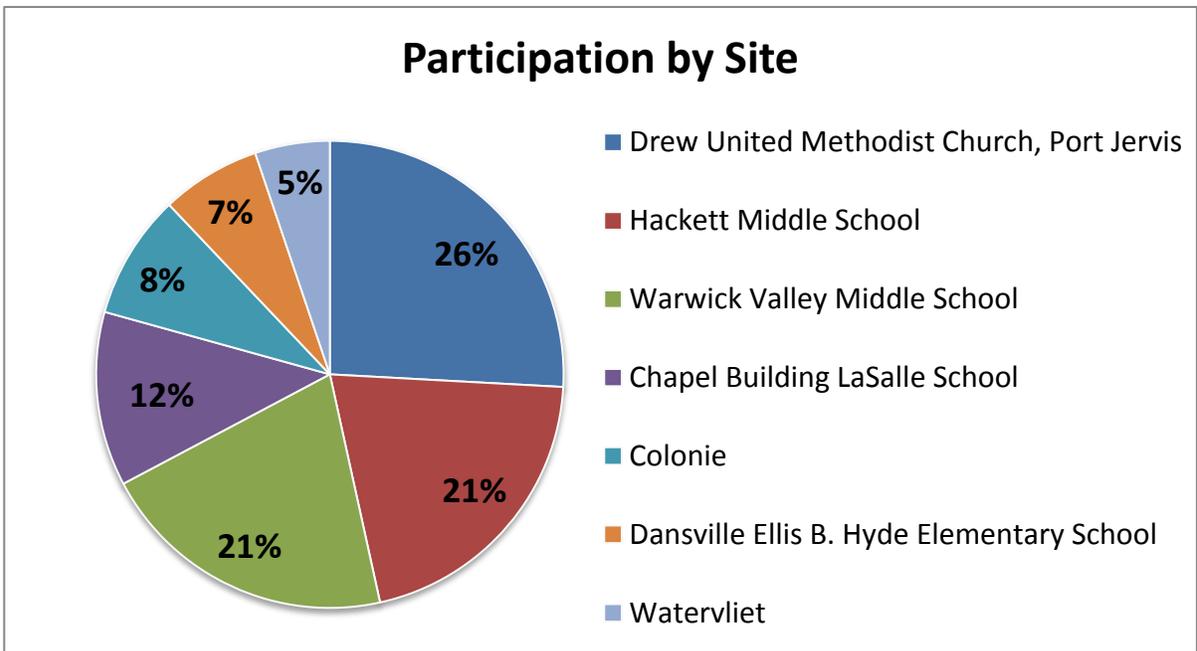
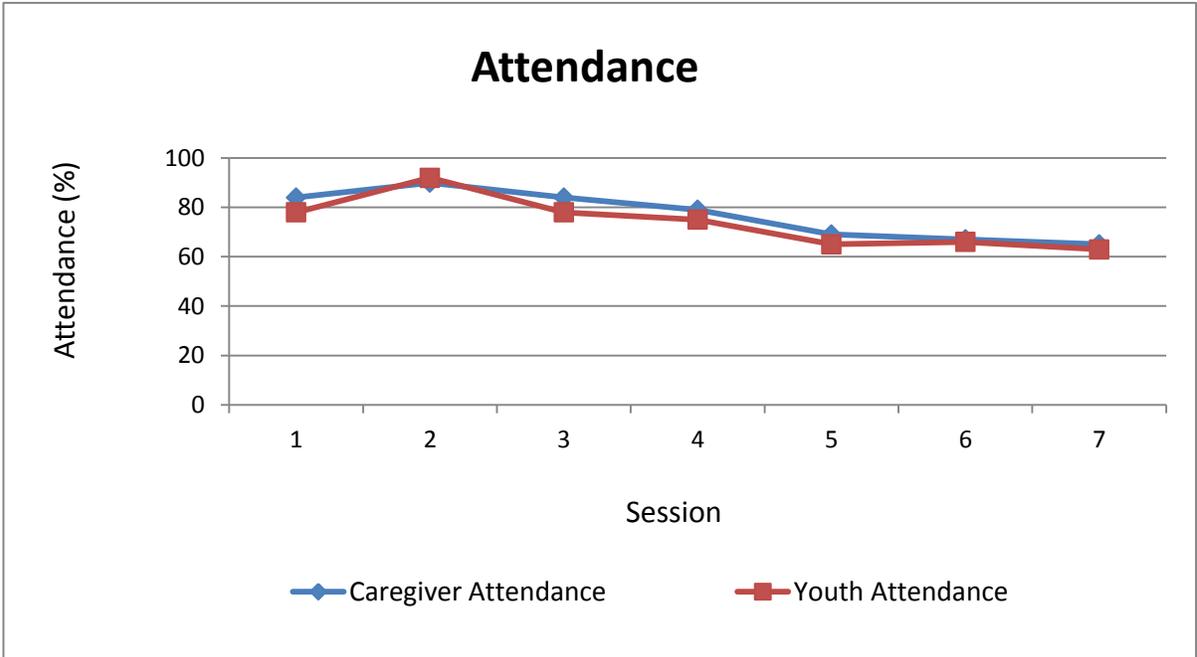
and family projects. Each session contains a variety of activities.

This report presents data collected from participants in the Strengthening Families Program across New York State between October 2013 to August 2014. Participants include youth and caregivers who attended one of the seven series in the following counties: Orange, Albany, and Livingston, at one of the following locations: Drew United Methodist Church, Hackett Middle School, Warwick Valley Middle School, Chapel Building LaSalle School, Colonie, Dansville Ellis B.



Hyde Elementary School, and Watervliet. The Strengthening Families Program in Livingston County was conducted as part of the PROSPER (PROmoting School-community university Partnerships to

Enhance Resilience) Demonstration Project. Fifty-eight caregivers and 60 youth participated in the Strengthening Families Program Statewide. The average attendance for both caregivers and youth was 74%.<sup>1</sup>

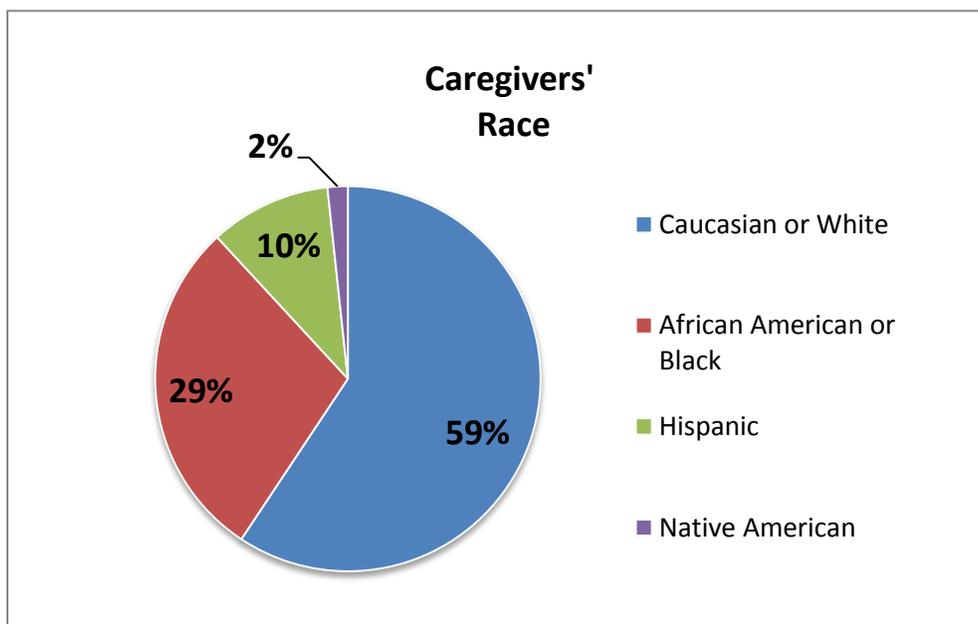
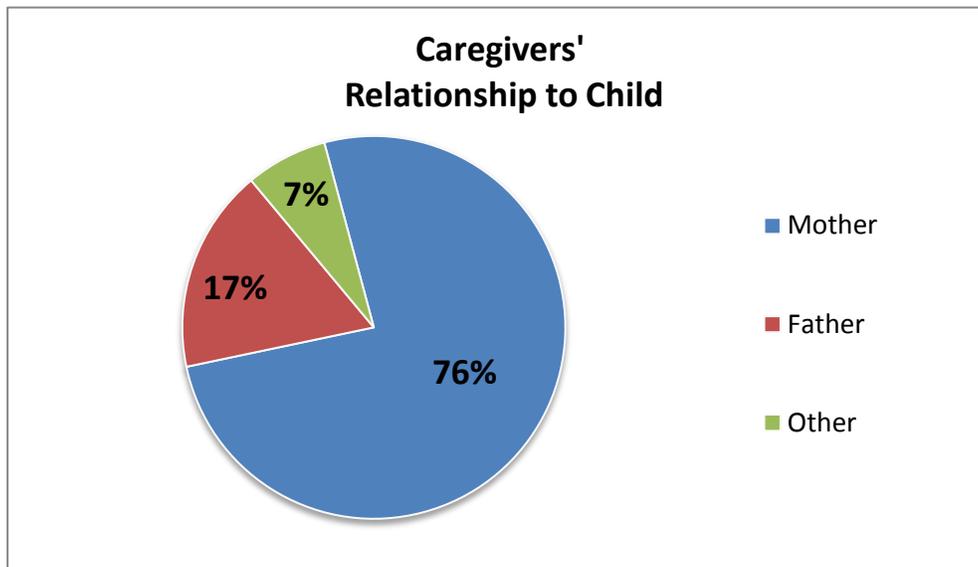


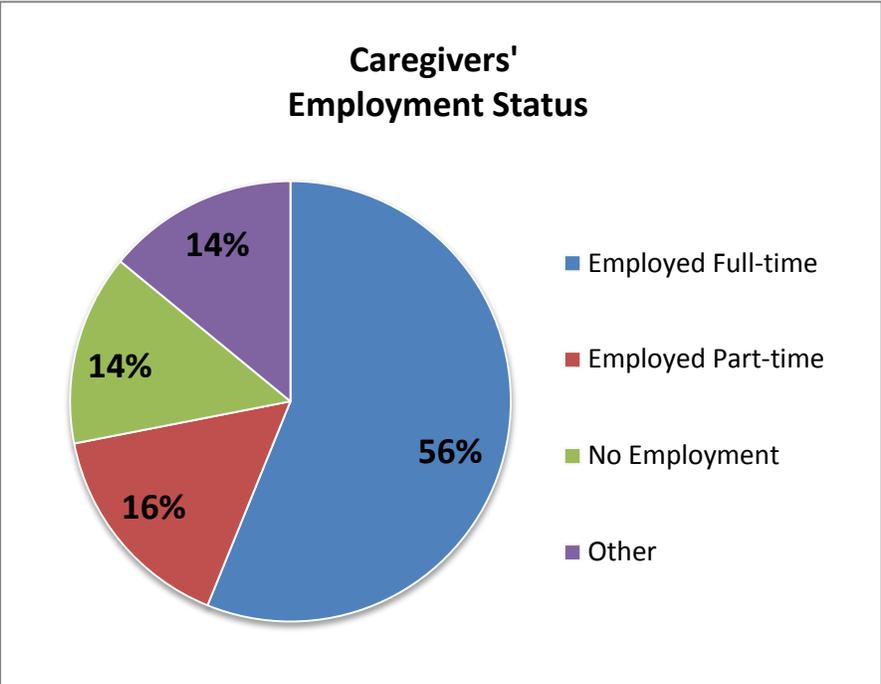
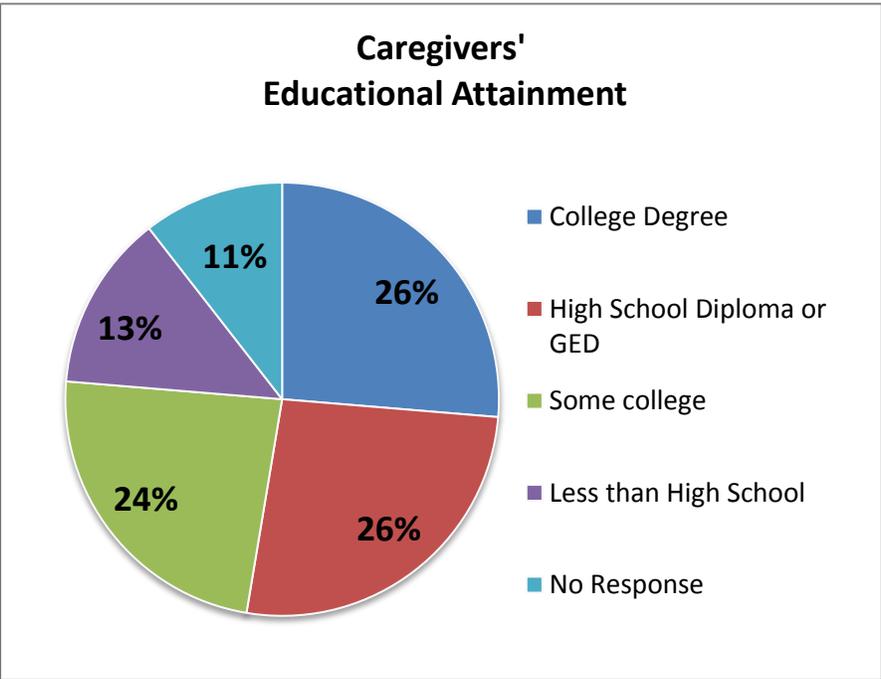
<sup>1</sup> Albany combined sessions six and seven into one final session. Thus, the attendance graph does not include caregiver and youth attendance results for Albany in session seven.

### Caregiver Demographics:

The following summaries use data of the 58 caregivers who participated in the program. The majority of participants were mothers (76%) and the average age of caregivers was 42 years. The majority of caregivers who participated in the Strengthening Families program were Caucasian or

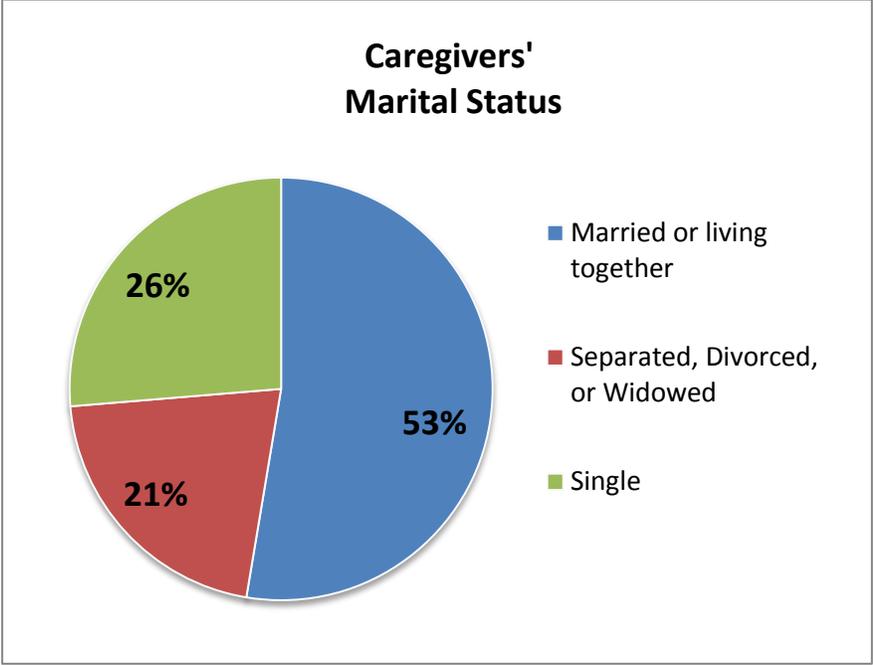
White (59%). Educational attainment varied, with the majority of participants having a college degree (26%) or a high school diploma or GED (26%). Employment status varied, with a majority of caregivers reporting full-time employment (56%). A majority of the caregivers in the sample (53%) reported being married.





Caregivers reported an average number of 2 children living at home. The average age of the youngest child

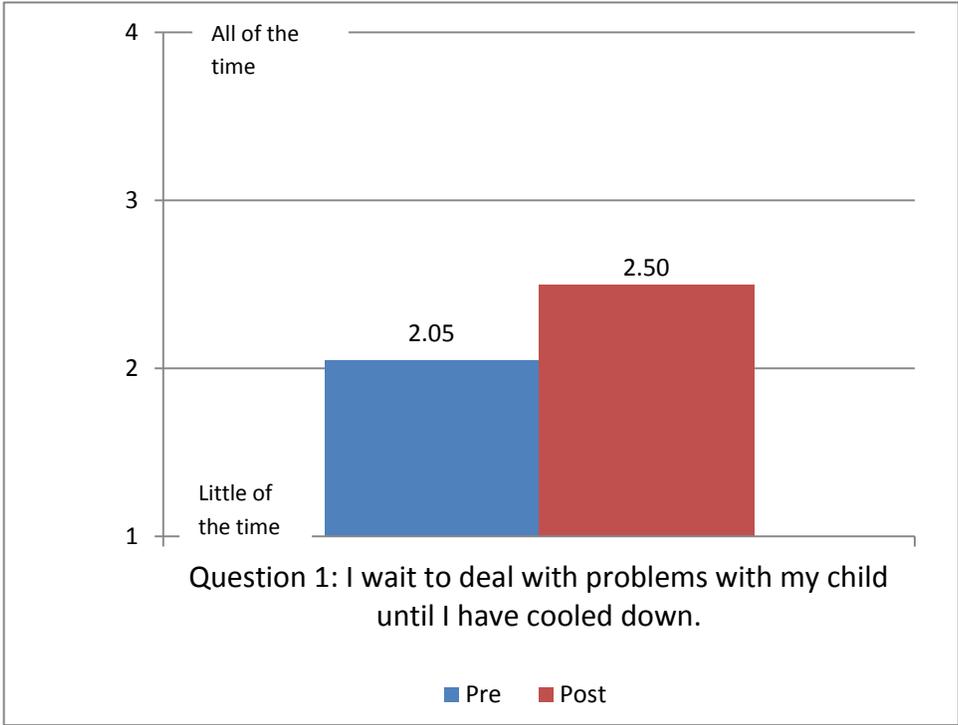
was 9 while the average age of the oldest was 14 years. Children's ages ranged from 3 to 25 years.

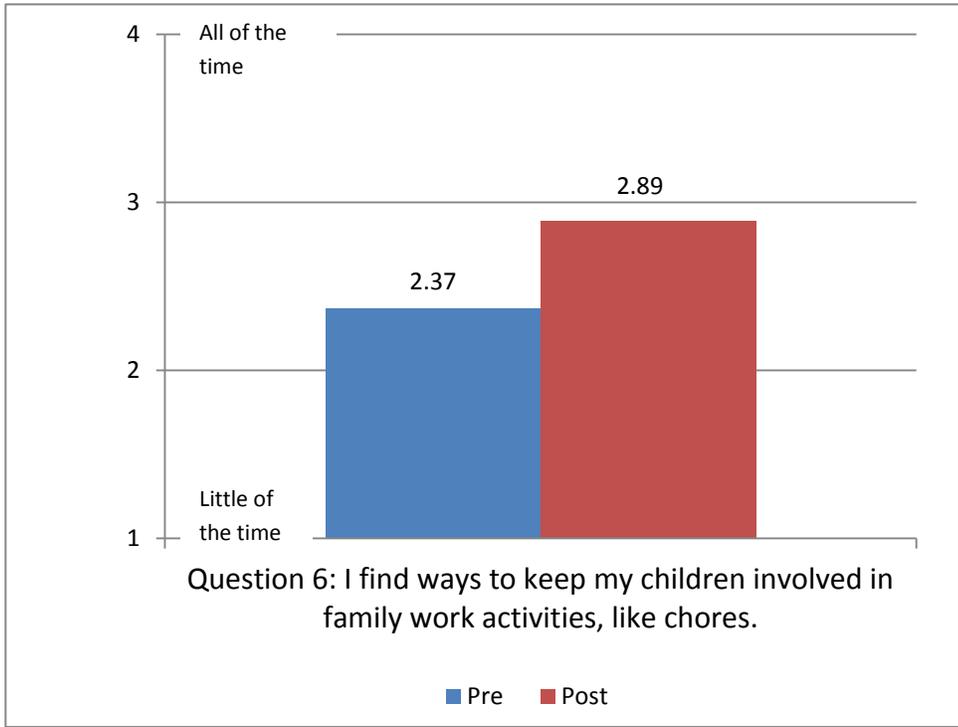
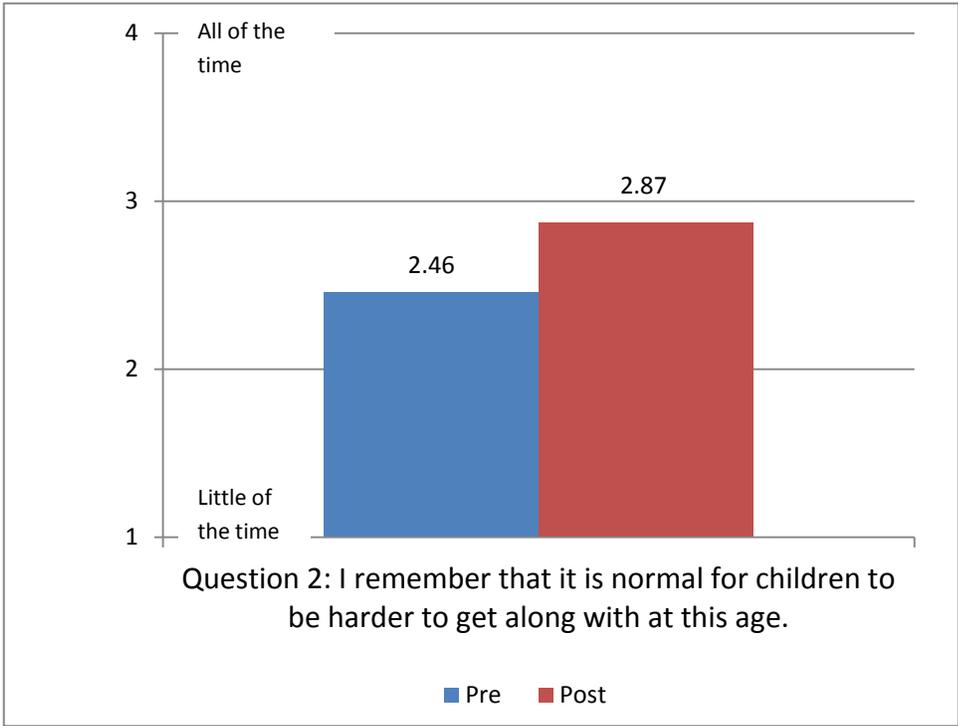


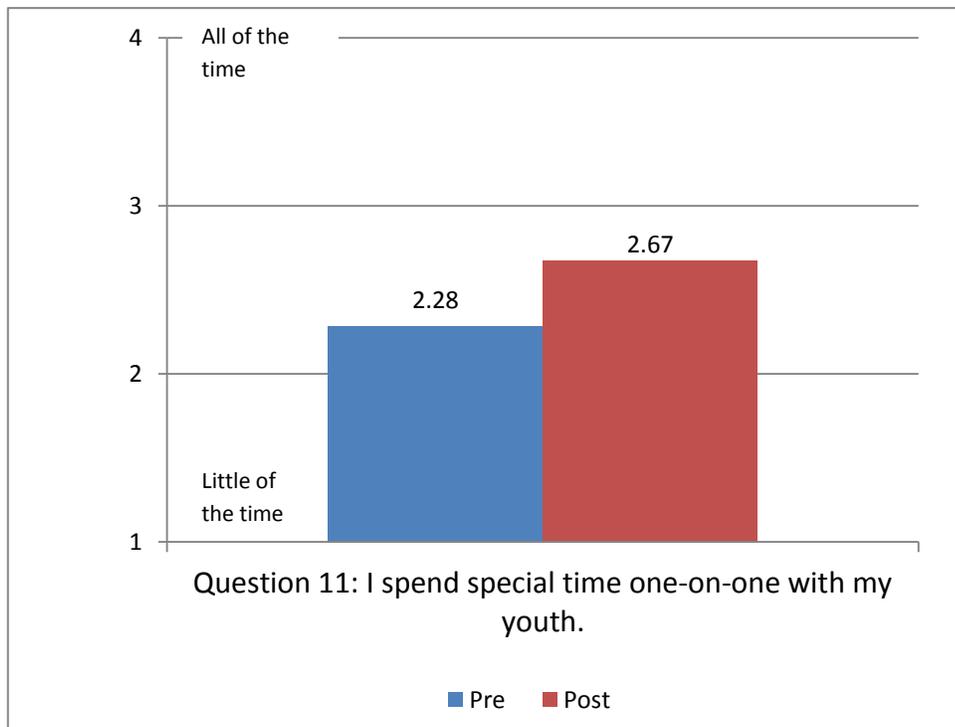
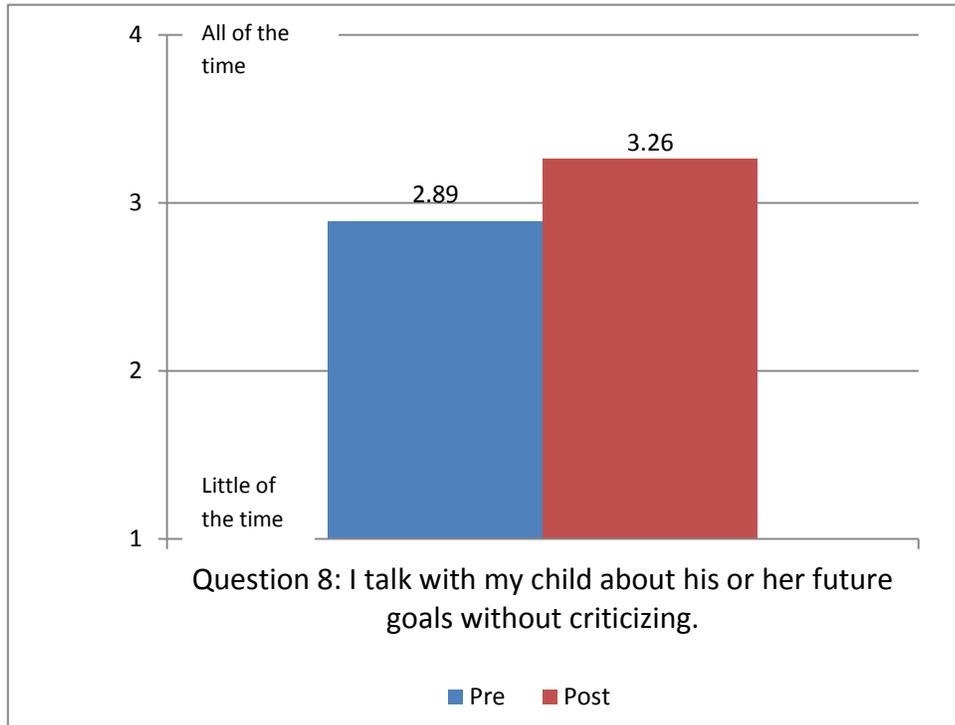
**Caregiver Results:**

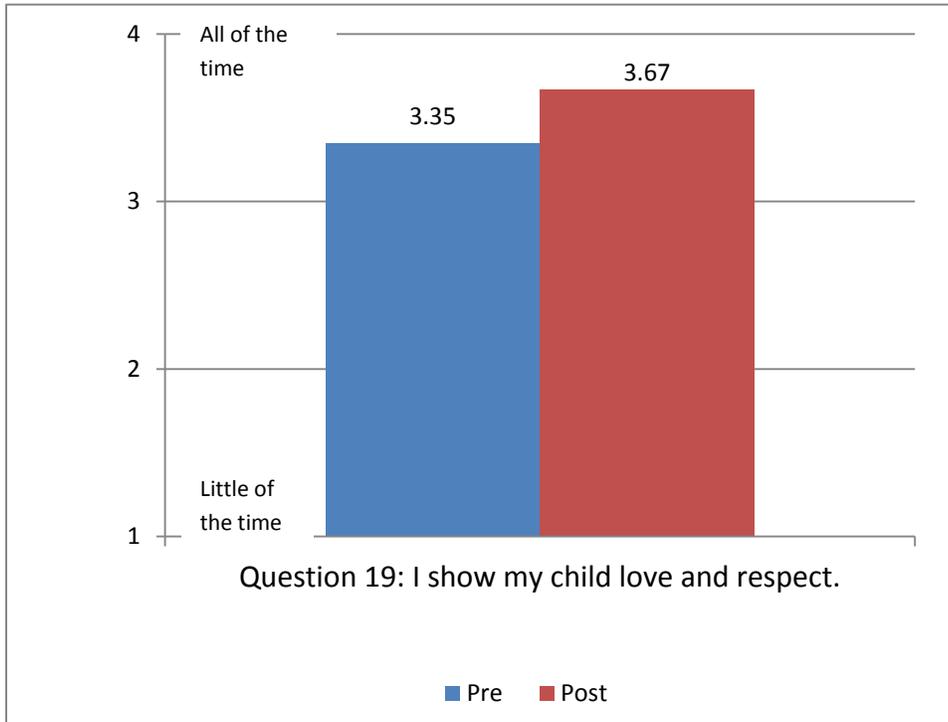
In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following six questions showed a significant

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



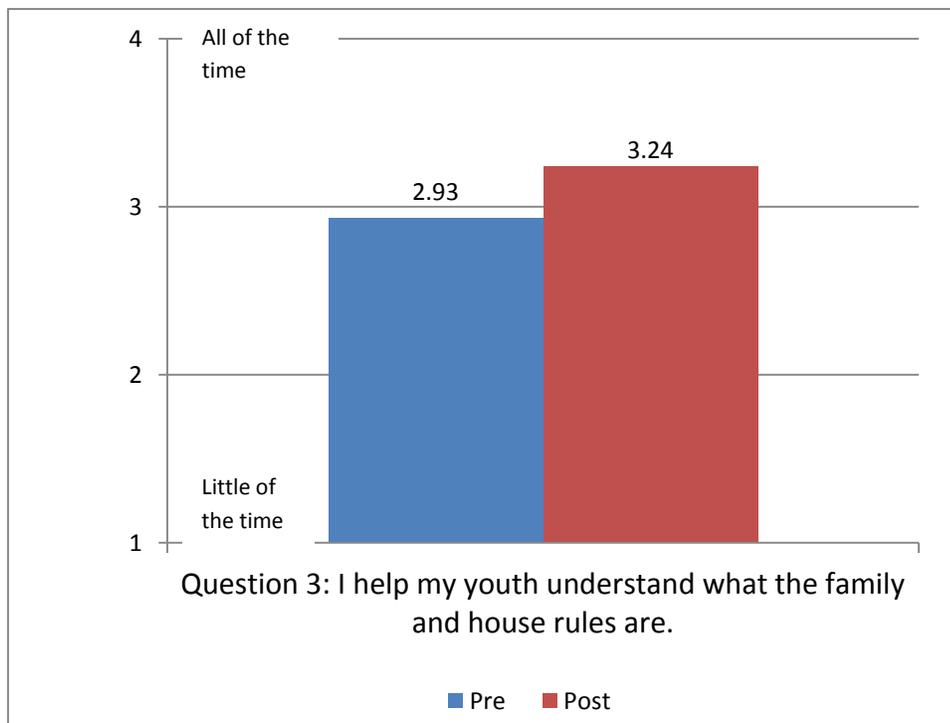


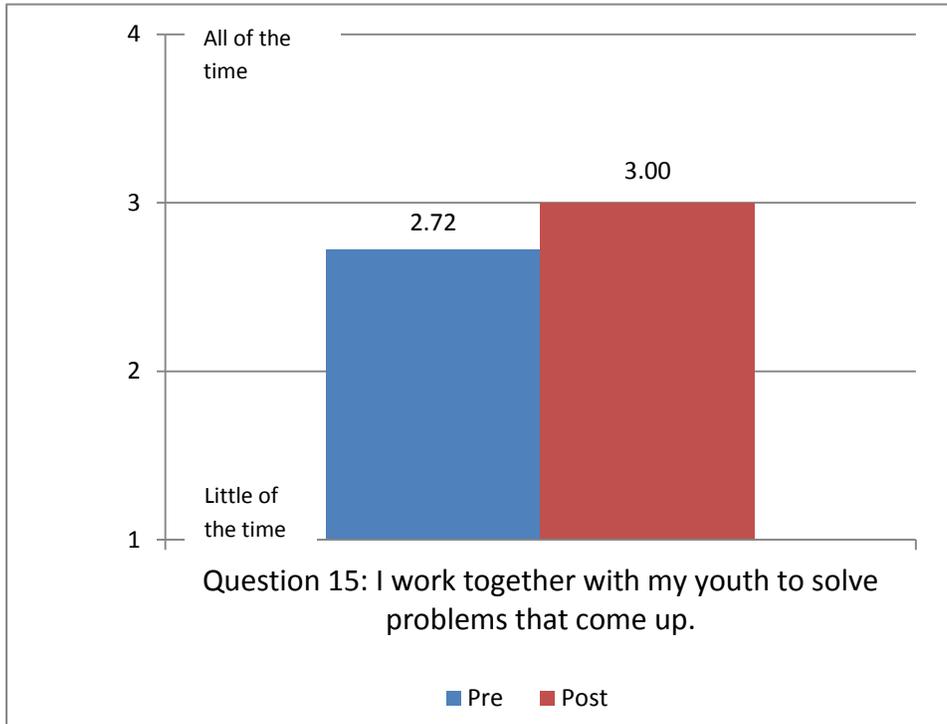




In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following two questions showed significant *positive*

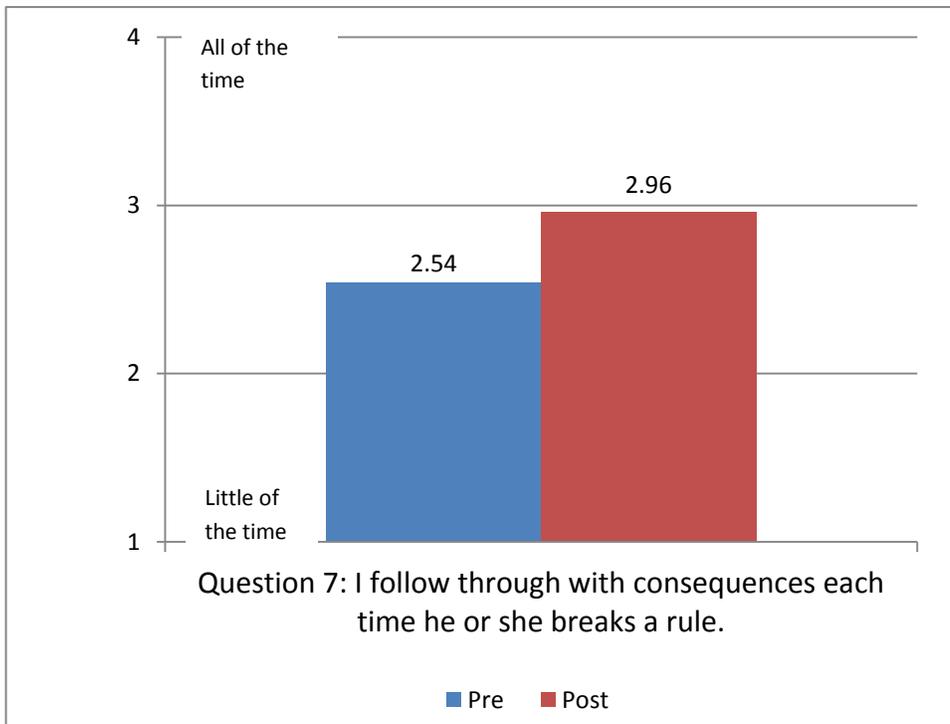
changes at the 5% level, indicating a 95% certainty that the results are not due to chance.

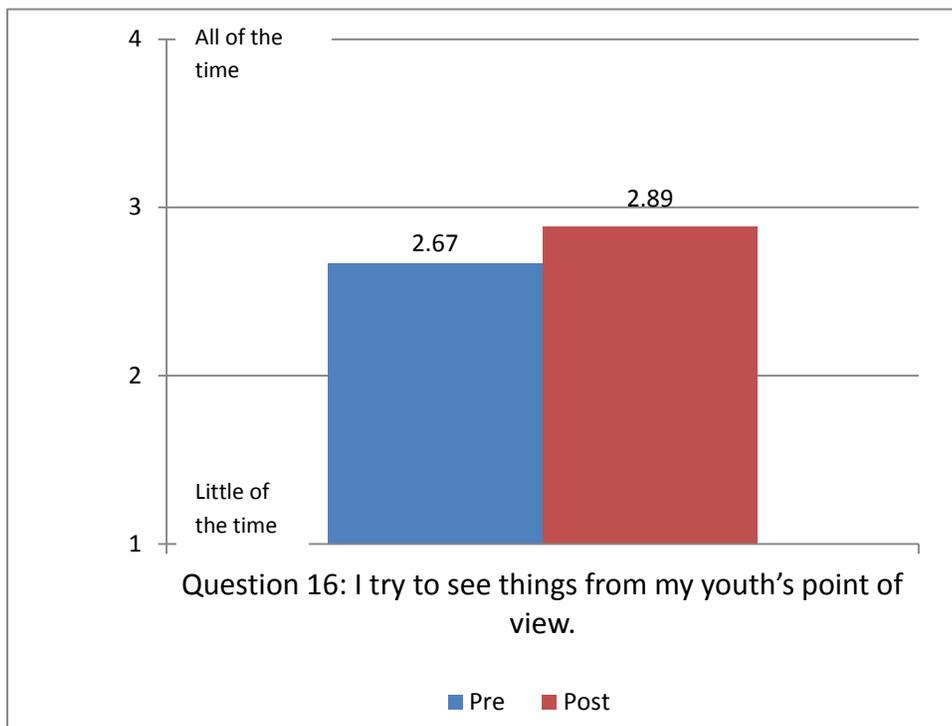
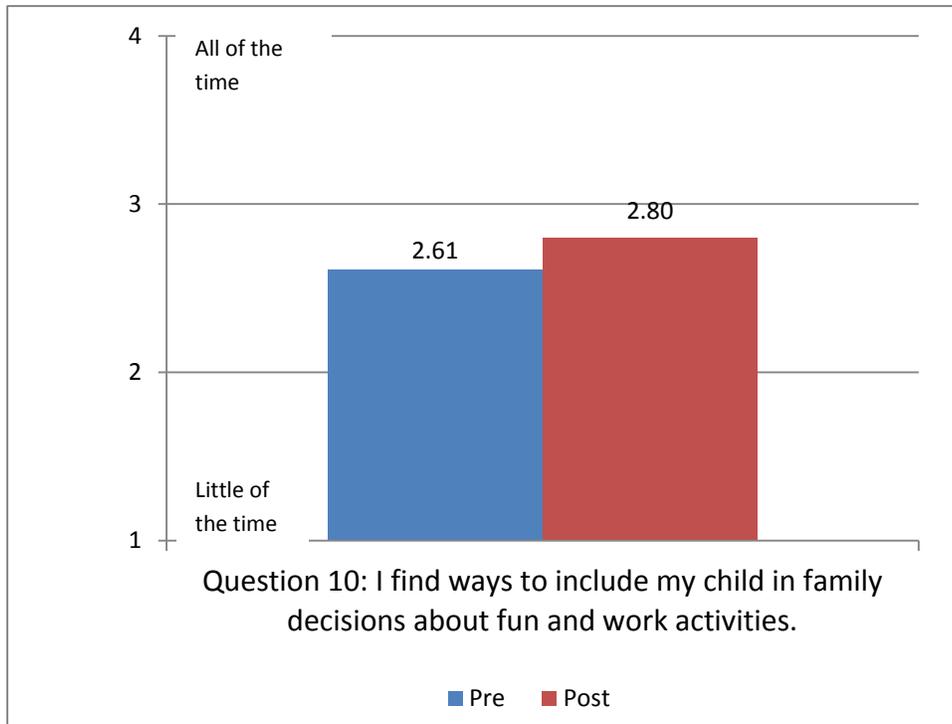




In comparing the pre- and post-test survey results, the following three questions showed significant *positive*

changes at the 10% level, indicating a 90% certainty that the results are not due to chance.





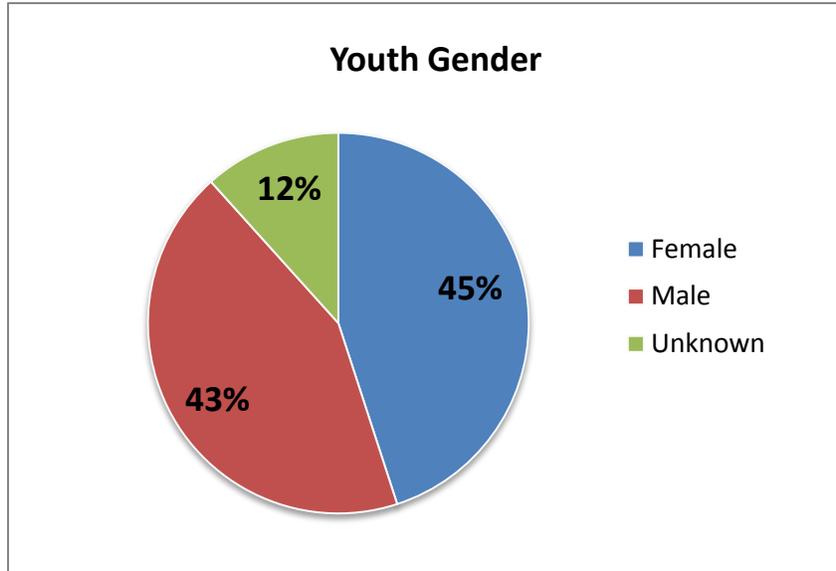
These results are highly encouraging for the Statewide Strengthening Families Program with 11 out of 20 questions showing significant

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

**Youth Demographics:**

Of the 60 youth who participated in

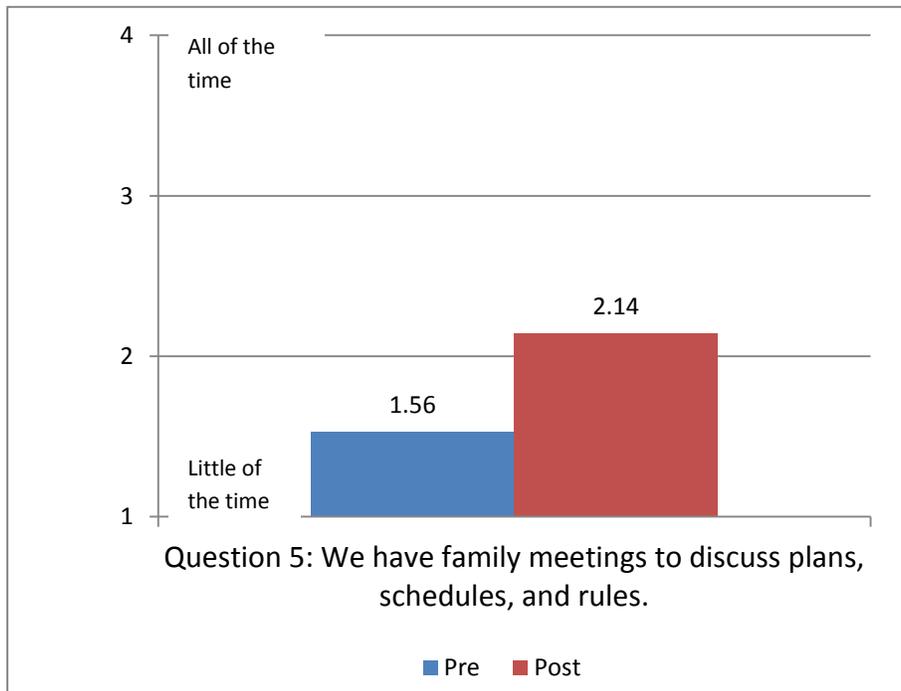
the program, 27 were females (45%) and 26 were males (43%).

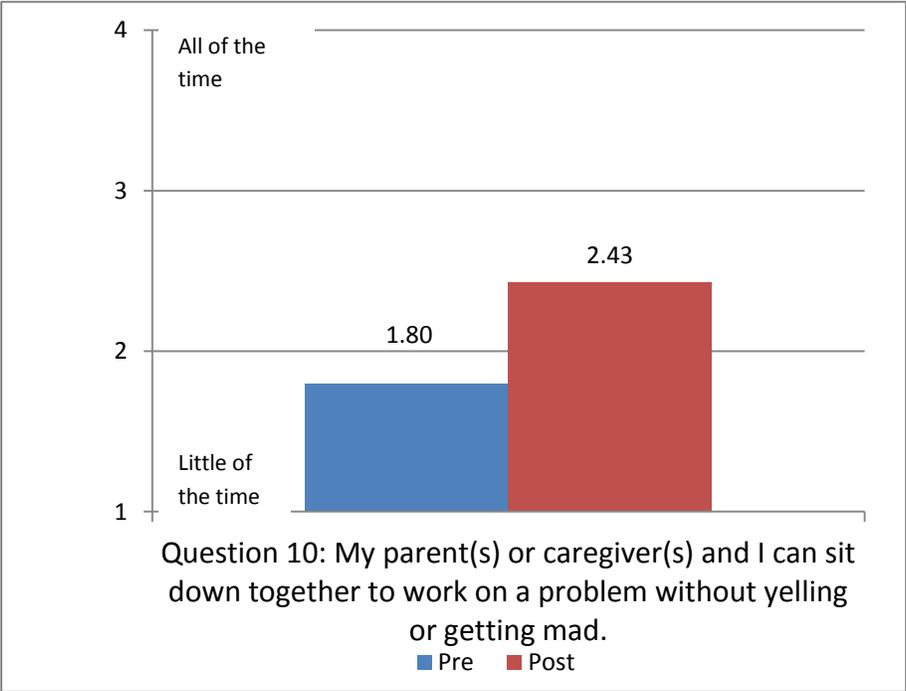
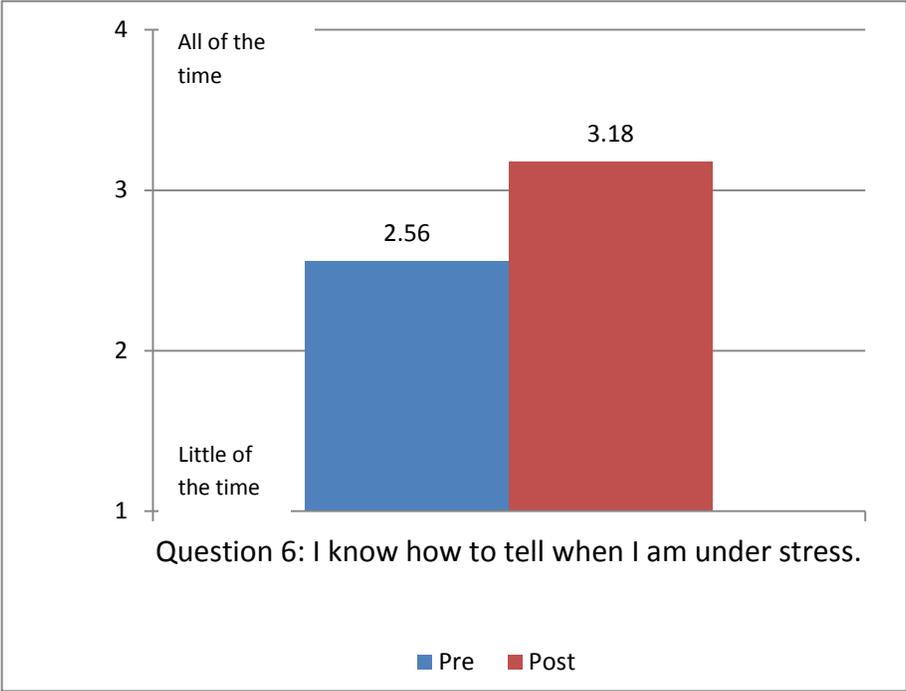


**Youth Results:**

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

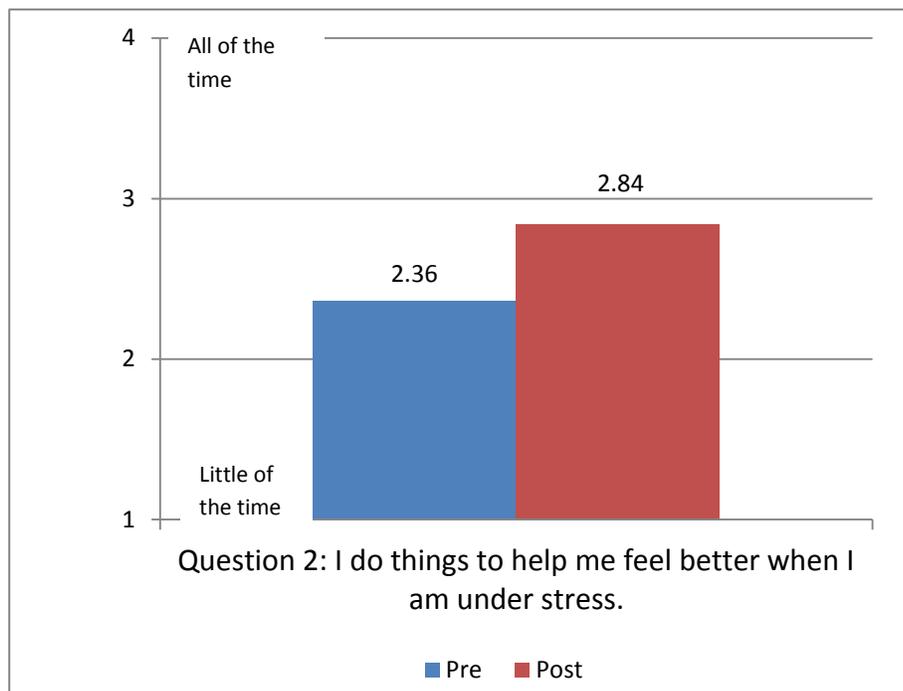
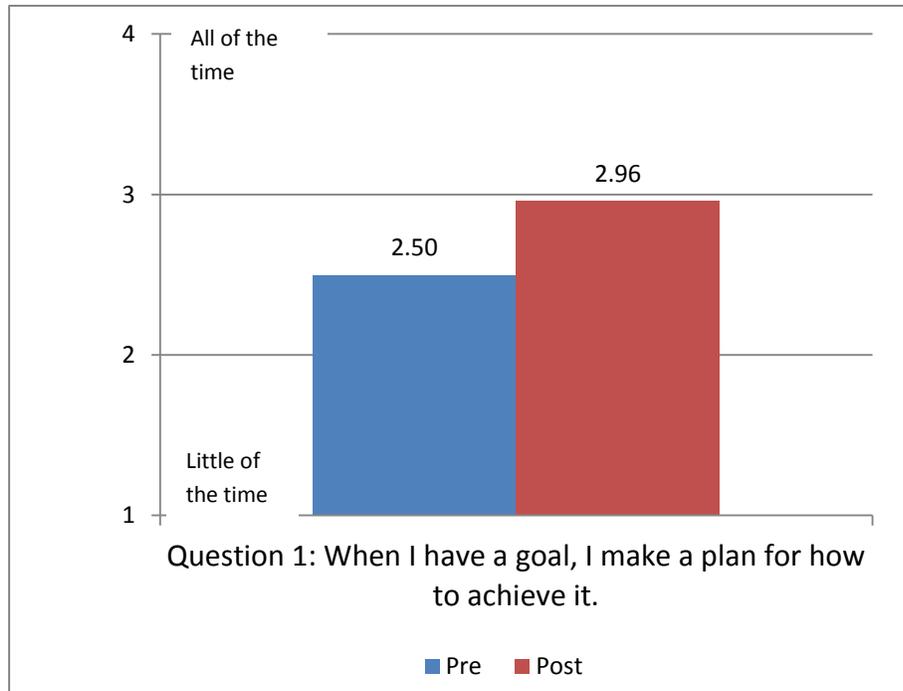
*positive* changes at the 1% level, indicating that results were highly significant with 99% certainty that the results are not due to chance.





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

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



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

**Conclusion:**

Between October 2013 and August 2014, 58 caregivers and 60 youth participated in one of seven sessions of the Strengthening Families program throughout New York State. Both caregivers and youth showed significant positive changes in their results.

Specifically, caregivers reported an increased ability to: cool down before communicating with youth about problems, remember that it is normal for children to be harder to get along with at this age, find ways to keep youth involved in family work activities, talk with youth about future goals without criticizing, spend special time one-on-one with youth, show youth love and respect, help

youth understand family and house rules, work together with youth to solve problems, follow through with consequences when youth breaks a rule, find ways to include youth in family decisions, and try to see things from youth's point of view.

As a result of participating in the Strengthening Families Program, youth reported having family meetings to discuss plans, schedules and rules and an increased ability to: know when they are under stress, sit down with parents to work on problems without yelling or getting mad, make plans to achieve goals and do things to help them feel better when they are stressed

These results from the Strengthening Families Program conducted in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Albany, Orange, and Livingston counties 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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