

A READY-TO-USE PROGRAM

The Strengthening Families for the Future program manuals are easy to use. Each session has fun and engaging activities that teach valuable skills.

The Strengthening Families program manuals have:

- everything you need to know to start a program and to keep families coming back—sample consent forms, promotional materials, job descriptions and more
- outlines for 14 parent, child and family sessions, complete with background information for facilitators, session objectives, presentation scripts and worksheets for participants (in English and French).

Strengthening Families is worth it!

The Strengthening Families program was a pleasure to facilitate. The materials are comprehensive and well organized. It was wonderful to see family members recognize their strengths and work at further developing them—it was clear that parents and children alike looked forward to coming. There was lots of laughter as well as serious discussion.

— Pam Gardiner

*Addiction Services Program Director
Alcontrol, 174 King Street North and
Moving Forward programs—House
of Friendship*

*Witnessing families improve their
communication skills was very rewarding.*

— Sandi White

*Clinical Supervisor
Simcoe Outreach Services*

BRING STRENGTHENING FAMILIES FOR THE FUTURE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

To find out if a Strengthening Families for the Future coalition exists in your area, or to start a coalition, please contact:

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Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale
A Pan American Health Organization /
World Health Organization Collaborating Centre

Strengthening Families for the Future

A PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES
WITH CHILDREN AGED 7–11

Families will learn:

- how to solve problems together
- how to communicate better
- how to help children develop resiliency.



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ABOUT THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAM

Strengthening Families for the Future is a prevention program for families with children between the ages of seven and 11 who may be at risk for substance use problems, depression, violence, delinquency and school failure.

The Strengthening Families program is unique because it was designed specifically to:

- reduce risk factors
- build individual resilience
- enhance family protective factors.

Together, these strategies help prevent children from developing problems with alcohol or other drugs, or mental health problems.

Strengthening Families is a powerful family change program because it involves the whole family, not just the parents or the children alone. The goals of the program are to:

- reduce children's or adolescents' intention to use alcohol or other drugs, and to reduce other behaviour problems
- increase children's resilience and life skills, including communicating, resisting peer pressure, recognizing their feelings and solving problems
- increase positive and effective parenting skills
- improve family communication.

HOW DOES STRENGTHENING FAMILIES WORK?

The Strengthening Families for the Future program is presented in 14 consecutive weekly sessions, plus a "booster" session intended to be offered several months after the program ends. Sessions last about three hours, and include a communal meal.

Strengthening Families for the Future includes:

- a parent program
- a child program
- a family program.



At the beginning of each session, parents and children meet together to share a meal. This is followed by separate one-hour sessions for parents and children. Finally, the families come back together for the family session, where they practise skills they learned in their separate sessions. The sessions are fun and are activity based.

Practising new skills together helps families make real and sustained changes in their interactions.

The parent and child sessions are each led by two co-facilitators. All four facilitators are present for the family session.

The Strengthening Families program works best when it is offered by several agencies working in partnership, with one person overseeing the co-ordination.

What I liked best about the program was having the kids learning the same material as the parents.
— Strengthening Families participant

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Strengthening Families for the Future is modelled on a successful program developed in 1988 by Dr. Karol Kumpfer, of the University of Utah.

The original program was updated, with input from treatment agencies in Ontario, and has undergone an extensive evaluation.* Preliminary results show that Strengthening Families is a promising intervention for fostering significant improvements in family functioning, parenting and children's psychosocial functioning. While the evaluation was conducted with families at risk, the effective parenting skills and positive life skills learned in the program can benefit all families.

The most important skill I learned was how to talk so kids will hear me.
— Strengthening Families participant

The biggest pay-off is the new and renewed appreciation that parents have for their children, and, as a result, the beaming faces of the children. It is a program that builds the foundation for a healthier future for families.

— Diane Buhler
Executive Director, Parent Action on Drugs

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