**Strengthening Families Program**

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a family skills training program designed to increase resilience and reduce risk factors for behavioral, emotional, academic, and social problems in children 3-16 years old. SFP comprises three life-skills courses delivered in 14 weekly, 2-hour sessions. The Parenting Skills sessions are designed to help parents learn to increase desired behaviors in children by using attention and rewards, clear communication, effective discipline, substance use education, problem solving, and limit setting. The Children's Life Skills sessions are designed to help children learn effective communication, understand their feelings, improve social and problem-solving skills, resist peer pressure, understand the consequences of substance use, and comply with parental rules. In the Family Life Skills sessions, families engage in structured family activities, practice therapeutic child play, conduct family meetings, learn communication skills, practice effective discipline, reinforce positive behaviors in each other, and plan family activities together. Participation in ongoing family support groups and booster sessions is encouraged to increase generalization and the use of skills learned.

**Descriptive Information**

| Areas of Interest | Mental health promotion  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Substance abuse prevention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Review Date: December 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: Parenting practices/parenting efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3: Family relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Outcome Categories** | Family/relationships  
|                   | Mental health  
|                   | Social functioning |
| **Ages**          | 6-12 (Childhood)  
|                   | 13-17 (Adolescent)  
|                   | 26-55 (Adult) |
| **Genders**       | Male  
|                   | Female |
| **Races/Ethnicities** | American Indian or Alaska Native  
|                   | Asian  
|                   | Black or African American  
|                   | Hispanic or Latino  
|                   | White  
|                   | Race/ethnicity unspecified  
|                   | Non-U.S. population |
| **Settings**      | Home  
|                   | School |
| **Geographic Locations** | Urban  
|                   | Suburban  
|                   | Rural and/or frontier  
|                   | Tribal |
| **Implementation History** | The Strengthening Families Program was initially developed and evaluated in 1982-1986 in a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) randomized controlled trial (RCT) with children of addicted parents. Later independent replication studies with cultural adaptations for high-risk, culturally diverse families were conducted in Alabama, Colorado (Denver), Hawaii, Michigan (Detroit), New Mexico, and Utah with SAMHSA/Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) 5-year grants. NIDA and National |
Quality of Research
Review Date: December 2007

Documents Reviewed
The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. The research point of contact can provide information regarding the studies reviewed and the availability of additional materials, including those from more recent studies that may have been conducted.

Study 1

Study 2

Supplementary Materials


Outcomes

Outcome 1: Children’s internalizing and externalizing behaviors
### Outcome 2: Parenting practices/parenting efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Measures</th>
<th>Parenting practices and parenting efficacy were assessed using the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire, the Strengthening Families Parenting Scale, and a 30-day substance use measure used by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>In a study conducted in the United States and Canada, families with a parent who had problems with alcohol in the past 5 years were exposed to SFP or a control condition (receiving free and widely available educational materials on parenting and family life skills to study at home). Parents who received SFP had lower scores on inconsistent discipline (p &lt; .05) and verbal abuse (p &lt; .01) than parents in the control group. The effects were modest (standardized coefficient = -.088 and -.095, respectively). In a statewide implementation of SFP, four annual cohorts of families completed retrospective pretests to assess change from baseline. Families who participated in SFP reported improvements in positive parenting (p &lt; .01), parental involvement (p &lt; .01), parenting skills (p &lt; .001), parental supervision (p &lt; .01), and parenting efficacy (p &lt; .01). The effect sizes were small for parenting skills (Cohen's d = 0.46) and medium for positive parenting, parental involvement, parental supervision, and parenting efficacy (Cohen's d = 0.54, 0.52, 0.58, and 0.55, respectively).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies Measuring Outcome</td>
<td>Study 1, Study 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Designs</td>
<td>Experimental, Preexperimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Research Rating</td>
<td>3.1 (0.0-4.0 scale)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcome 3: Family relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Measures</th>
<th>Family relationships were assessed using the Conflicts Tactics Scale (parent version), the Family Effectiveness Scale, and the Family Strengths Scale.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>In a statewide implementation of SFP, four annual cohorts of families completed retrospective pretests to assess change from baseline. Families who participated in SFP reported improvements in family organization (p &lt; .01), family cohesion (p &lt; .01), family communication (p &lt; .001), family conflict (p &lt; .001), and family strengths/resilience (p &lt; .01). Effect sizes were small for family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conflict (Cohen's $d = 0.20$) and medium for family organization, family cohesion, family communication, and family strengths/resilience (Cohen's $d = 0.67, 0.50, 0.67,$ and $0.65$, respectively).

Studies Measuring Outcome
- Study 2

Study Designs
- Preexperimental

Quality of Research Rating
- 3.1 (0.0-4.0 scale)

**Study Populations**
The following populations were identified in the studies reviewed for Quality of Research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 1</td>
<td>6-12 (Childhood)</td>
<td>53.3% Male 46.7% Female</td>
<td>50% Non-U.S. population 29.7% Black or African American 15.9% White 2.4% American Indian or Alaska Native 1.9% Hispanic or Latino 0.1% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-55 (Adult)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2</td>
<td>6-12 (Childhood)</td>
<td>51% Male 49% Female</td>
<td>43% White 36% Black or African American 17% Hispanic or Latino 3% Race/ethnicity unspecified 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native 0.5% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13-17 (Adolescent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-55 (Adult)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)**
External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention's reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Quality of Research](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Reliability of Measures</th>
<th>Validity of Measures</th>
<th>Fidelity</th>
<th>Missing Data/Attrition</th>
<th>Confounding Variables</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Parenting practices/parenting efficacy</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Family relationships</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study Strengths**
The first study used random assignment to help minimize potential confounds. The psychometric properties of the outcome measures used were generally well established. Use of a manualized curriculum, staff training and supervision, and a fidelity measure and process evaluations helped ensure fidelity. In the second study, which occurred over 4 years in real-world settings, improving fidelity each year produced stronger results over time.

**Study Weaknesses**
Studies relied on parental reports of child behavior with no collateral reports to verify that parents were not answering questions based...
Readiness for Dissemination

Review Date: December 2007

Materials Reviewed

The materials below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. The implementation point of contact can provide information regarding implementation of the intervention and the availability of additional, updated, or new materials.


Parent handouts

Program dissemination overview


Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Readiness for Dissemination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Materials</th>
<th>Training and Support Resources</th>
<th>Quality Assurance Procedures</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissemination Strengths

Implementation materials are thoughtfully designed and contain considerable detail on establishing the program and addressing obstacles. Materials also include specific guidance for adapting the model to different cultures and ethnically appropriate artwork for use in the manuals. On-site training, an online supervision course, and implementation consultation and technical assistance are provided to support the delivery of this program. A comprehensive array of instruments is available to support quality assurance.

Dissemination Weaknesses

The program objectives outlined in the manuals are not clearly related to program content and evaluation. Additional guidance is needed for administering some of the quality assurance measures and interpreting the results.

Costs

The cost information below was provided by the developer. Although this cost information may have been updated by the developer since the time of review, it may not reflect the current costs or availability of items (including newly developed or discontinued items). The implementation point of contact can provide current information and discuss implementation requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Required by Developer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD containing materials for one age group: 3-5, 6-11, or 12-16 years</td>
<td>$450 each (or included in training fee)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2-day, on-site group leader training and one SFP CD master set $3,650 plus travel expenses for 2 trainers for groups of 35 or fewer No

2-day, on-site group leader training and one SFP CD master set $3,050 plus travel expenses for 1 trainer for groups of 15 or fewer No

Technical assistance (basic) Free No

Technical assistance (advanced) $85 per hour No

Evaluation services $1,950-$12,000 annually depending on number of participants and number of evaluation reports No

Fidelity site visits $1,500 plus travel No

Additional Information
Small agencies may find it economical to attend a training hosted by a nearby agency. Lutra Group, Inc., the entity that coordinates SFP training and technical assistance, can help in locating other trainings. Training in the United States is available in English and Spanish. Implementation requires a minimum of five trained staff: two group leaders for the parents, two group leaders for the children, and a site coordinator.

Replications
Selected citations are presented below. An asterisk indicates that the document was reviewed for Quality of Research.


Contact Information
To learn more about implementation, contact:
Henry O. Whiteside, Ph.D.
(801) 583-4601
hwhiteside@lutragroup.com

To learn more about research, contact:
Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D.
Consider these Questions to Ask (PDF, 54KB) as you explore the possible use of this intervention.

**Web Site(s):**

- [http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org](http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org)

This PDF was generated from http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=44 on 8/31/2014