



## Family Living Programs

# Strengthening Families Program

## for Parents and Youth 10-14

**“I didn’t realize  
how much my  
mom cared  
about me.”**

—participating youth

### Background

Juvenile delinquency and substance use are dangers for many Wisconsin youth. In 2004, there were over 113,000 total juvenile arrests in Wisconsin (Wisconsin Crime and Arrests 2004, Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance). In 2005, nearly half of high school students in the state reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Marijuana use among high school students increased significantly from 1993 to 2005 (Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction). Preventing these pitfalls is critical to the health of our young people and our state’s future.

### What is the Strengthening Families Program 10-14?

One of the most well-studied and effective prevention programs is the Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 (SFP 10-14). While many prevention programs only involve youth, SFP 10-14 is family-focused, meaning parents and youth learn together. The goal of the program is to reduce substance use and behavior problems in youth during their teen years.

The program improves parenting skills and builds competency skills in youth. In seven two-hour sessions, parents and youth attend separate skill-building groups for the first hour and spend the second hour together in family activities.

### Evidence

#### Youth who participated in SFP 10-14:\*

- were less likely to use alcohol and other drugs.
- were less aggressive.
- had fewer conduct problems in school.
- resisted negative peer pressure.

#### Parents in SFP 10-14:\*

- developed more positive feelings towards their child and became more involved with their child.
- improved their parenting skills in
  - setting appropriate limits.
  - controlling anger.
  - setting rules and following through with consequences.
  - monitoring their child’s whereabouts.
  - using appropriate and consistent discipline.

\* Compared to youth and parents who did not attend the program



## Costs and benefits

Research shows that the economic benefits of SFP 10-14 far outweigh the costs. For every dollar invested in SFP 10-14, \$9.60 is saved in future costs such as drug treatment, lost future earnings, and time in the juvenile justice system.

*Journal of Studies on Alcohol*  
March 2002

**For each dollar  
invested in SFP**



**\$9.60 is saved  
in future costs**



## Long-term results

Studies found that four years after the conclusion of the program, youth whose families had participated in the program fared better than their control group peers whose families hadn't participated. Youth attending the program had significantly lower rates of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use compared to control youth. Youth attending the program had significantly fewer conduct problems in school than youth in the control group. For some outcomes, these positive results actually increased over six years of follow-up evaluation.

*Iowa State University Institute for Social  
and Behavioral Research*

## Beyond Wisconsin

The Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 is recognized as an exemplary prevention program by the

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- National Institute on Drug Abuse.
- Department of Education.
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration.

**“Outstanding! The program  
has been very helpful to us  
as a family.”**

—participating parent



The Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14 is a program of Iowa State University, University Extension. It is part of UW-Extension's effort to bring the best research and resources to Wisconsin families. Contact your local county UW-Extension family living educator for more information.