

**Strengthening
Multi-Ethnic
Families and Communities**

Nationally Certified Facilitator
A Parent Support/Education Program
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**REALITY-BASED
TRAINING & FACILITATION**

Adapted from
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Program Overview

The STRENGTHENING PROGRAM uniquely and creatively empowers parents, especially those parents who have experienced the effects of violence (alcohol and drugs, domestic violence, etc.) with the practices and values that specifically address the aforementioned issues. This curriculum includes the following techniques and strategies:

- 1. Specific guidelines for the establishment of family rules and reasons.**
- 2. A “process of discipline” which creates guidelines for responding to both respectful and disrespectful behavior.**
- 3. Information that will empower parents with the courage and commitment needed to change the destructive parenting of their childhood, along with specific alternatives to the use of corporal punishment as the primary teaching tool.**
- 4. Assists parents to clarify their own emotions so as to enhance their ability to validate their child’s feelings and encourage them to express them in a respectful manner, with parents, peers, and adults in the community.**
- 5. Parents are encouraged to create special relationships with their children by encouraging individual support and affection. Specific skills are provided to assist their younger and older children in making the transition from childhood to adulthood.**
- 6. Connects parents and children to the healthy aspects of their childhood and provides parents with strategies, skills, techniques and information needed to break the cycle of violence to self and others within a cultural frame of reference.**
- 7. Decreases the sense of isolation by supporting parents during the Program as well as provides a mechanism for connecting parents with the informal and formal resources that are needed in order for meaningful and lasting changes to occur.**

The STRENGTHENING PROGRAM addresses violence against others (family violence, gangs, crime) and violence against self (alcohol and other drug abuse) from a variety of strategies, i.e.; Ethnic and Cultural Roots, the Parent/Child Relationship, Parent Modeling (Family and Community), and Parent Teaching Focus (Positive Relationships, Positive Discipline Approaches, and Social Competence).

The BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESS is the schematic that is utilized to represent the way in which these various strategies are inter-related and how they impact our children's ability to achieve Violence Free Lifestyles. Every idea that is presented in the curriculum is tied back into the BUILDING BLOCKS, showing parents how each strategy or technique will enhance the parent/child relationship, children's ethnic and cultural identity, the parents ability to teach the child the things he/she must learn in order to function successfully as an adult and to achieve a violence free lifestyle. These BUILDING BLOCKS are presented at the beginning of each session and at the end of each session and the way in which all components inter-relate is emphasized during each session.

The ways in which FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE are inter-related are shown in the schematic. We know that parents (and youth) are concerned with the amount and extent of violence in their communities and this schematic is utilized to show parents that all forms of violence (domestic violence, child abuse, crime, gangs, drugs and alcohol) are all inter-related and carry their influence from one generation to the next. Although this schematic is used as a "motivator" for parent participation throughout the program, the issues related specifically to FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE are emphasized in the curriculum.

The information discussed by the group and presented by the Facilitator and Community Speakers should motivate parents to become more actively involved in community prevention efforts. Empowering parents to take more responsibility for the prevention of family and community violence is the focus of the COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT of the curriculum.

The importance of ETHNIC AND CULTURAL ROOTS is emphasized from the very beginning as the driving force behind our attitudes, beliefs and behavior. The need to help parents and children to reconnect to their positive family/cultural roots forms the foundation of the BUILDING BLOCKS and the philosophy behind this curriculum. Beginning with the "Orientation" Session, parents are asked to think about their relationships with significant adults when growing up. During Session "Three" they are asked to think about specific family/cultural traditions and customs and how social-historical trauma has influenced their beliefs, values and behavior. In addition, the influence of ETHNIC AND CULTURAL ROOTS is continuously emphasized in the RITES OF PASSAGE COMPONENT of the curriculum.

Given that this is a parent-training curriculum and parents expect to influence child behavior, it is important that parents have a basic understanding of the many factors that contribute to different child behaviors. The CAUSES OF BEHAVIOR schematically presents six contributing factors. The Facilitator throughout the presentation of the curriculum information will stress these areas. Parent Modeling and Parent Teaching (by the use of different types of consequences) are emphasized in the BUILDING BLOCKS. The child's personality and physical and emotional characteristics are discussed as they relate to the Parent/Child Relationship and Situational Factors are emphasized when discussing Social Competence, Enhancing Relationships, and Family and Community Violence. Thus, these six areas are emphasized throughout each of the five program component areas.

The PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE lists all the different positive discipline methods that are presented in the curriculum. Once parents understand that "discipline" means to "teach", they will be introduced to a series of alternative methods to increase respectful behavior and to decrease disrespectful behavior. Having a "Process of Discipline" encourages parents to "respond" to the child's behavior, instead of "react" to it. Parents come to understand that when they use "less controlling" and "more positive" methods, they are encouraging to accept responsibility for his/her actions (self-discipline).

REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals can come from a variety of sources: Diversionary Court, Attendance Officers, Principals, and Counselors. Parents can also self refer.

Ideal candidates are those parents whose children have identified as "at-risk". Those children with a history of truancy or other behaviors that could qualify them for the Alternative Program could also be referred for Parent Education Training.

S.B. 181 authorizes a board of education to refer parents to parent education for their child's truancy and/or failure to send child to school.

Program Components

1. CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL COMPONENT:

This component focuses on the development of positive family identity, rituals, customs and traditions. It looks at how traditional societies view the CYCLES OF LIFE, THE NATURE OF HUMANS, and how communities have traditionally provided CIRCLES OF SUPPORT and encouraged the development of TRUE PRIDE. This component area encourages parents to reflect back to their family/ethnic/cultural roots and to share this information with each other as well as with their children. Activities are provided that can assist parents in helping their children develop a stronger cultural/spiritual foundation.

2. ENHANCING RELATIONSHIPS/VIOLENCE PREVENTION:

This component provides information and activities to enhance the parent-child relationship. Within the parent-child relationship parents have an opportunity to model and teach their children a variety of violence prevention skills: DEVELOPING EMPATHY, MANAGING ANGER, SOLUTION BUILDING, and MANAGING CONFLICT.

3. POSITIVE DISCIPLINE:

This component provides information on a variety of positive parenting practices. The more techniques we have to call upon and model, the more effective we will be in developing competent and confident children. Emphasis is on “Disciplining without Fear” and providing alternatives to corporal punishment. The STRENGTHENING PROGRAM promotes a “Process of Discipline”, beginning with an understanding of DEVELOPMENT, CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS AND POSITIVE ATTENTION. Methods are introduced to encourage respectful behavior as well as discourage disrespectful behavior.

4. RITES OF PASSAGE:

In traditional societies RITE OF PASSAGE CEREMONIES marked the transition from childhood to adulthood. Today our youth have defined their own RITES OF PASSAGE into manhood/womanhood (high school graduation, drinking age, violent acts, making babies, going to jail, etc.). This component provides information and activities that will assist us in helping our children develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make a successful transition from childhood to adulthood.

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Since we cannot raise our children in a vacuum, we must take responsibility for what goes on in our communities. This component focuses on community connectedness, obtaining information and utilizing resources. Emphasis is placed on community members becoming actively involved in defining and solving their own problems and developing the “formal” and “informal” resources needed to eliminate and prevent family and community violence.