

Research-Based Program Initiative  
**McKean County Strengthening Families Program**  
**Grantee Outcomes Report**  
May 2009

**SECTION 1 – DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM GOALS**

**1. Explain the logic model of the evidence-based program you are implementing.**

The Strengthening Families Program 10-14, or SFP 10-14, was implemented through the PCCD Research-Based Program Initiative to help reduce youth alcohol use in McKean County. The program is funded July 2006 to June 2010; however, this report summarizes outcome results for three years of the project—July 2006 to June 2009.

Research has indicated that SFP 10-14 helps reduce early alcohol use and delays the onset of this problem behavior in youth. In a long-range study of SFP<sup>1</sup> done by Project Family at Iowa State, researchers found that “compared with youth in the control group, those in the intervention group showed statistically significant delays in initiation of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use.”<sup>2</sup> A study published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* explains, “A potentially powerful predictor of progression to alcohol-related harm is age at first use.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, “over 40% of all individuals who reported drinking alcohol before the age of 14 became alcohol dependent.”<sup>4</sup>

Essentially, the longer an individual waits before they drink alcohol, the less likely they will be to abuse alcohol in the future. Through SFP 10-14, McKean County hopes to reduce long-term alcohol abuse by teaching families communication, problem solving, rule setting, parental monitoring, and empathy skills.

SFP 10-14 is a seven-session family workshop where parents are taught how to communicate their expectations about youth drug and alcohol use, how to balance showing love and setting limits, and how to build strong family bonds. Youth are taught to evaluate good and bad characteristics in friends, how to handle peer pressure, and the importance of setting future goals.

The following logic model outlines the short and long-term benefits of the SFP 10-14 project in McKean County.

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<sup>1</sup> This study followed youth participants 6 years (6<sup>th</sup> –12<sup>th</sup> grade) after completing the Strengthening Families Program (at least five of seven sessions).

<sup>2</sup> Iowa state University Extension, “Evidence Based Research”; available from <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sfp/inside/research.php>; Internet; accessed 12 May 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Adlaf, Edward M., David J. Dewitt, David R. Offord, and Alan C. Ogborne, “Age at First Use: A Risk Factor for the Development of Alcohol Disorders,” *American Journal of Psychology*, no. 157 (May 2000): 745.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## McKean County Strengthening Families Program Logic Model

**Program Name:** McKean County Strengthening Families Program

**Program Vision:** McKean County youth will make good decisions to reach their goals; while parents will be strong, caring, show love and set limits.

**Population Served:** McKean County 5th and 6th graders and their parents.

**Population Needs to be Addressed by Services:** Research has shown that many of those who report drinking alcohol before the age of 14 become alcohol dependent later in life.

**Services:**

From July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2010 a total of 1,239 individuals (738 adults and 501) youth will participate in a seven-session family workshop called the Strengthening Families Program.

Of those participants, 1,027 (593 adults and 434 youth) will complete five out of seven sessions of SFP and graduate from the program.

**Assumptions:** Substance abuse and other youth problem behaviors can be reduced by teaching parents and youth strong communication, problem-solving, rule-setting, parental monitoring and empathy skills.

Outcomes	Long-Term Indicators	Short-Term Indicators	Measurement
<p>Delay the onset of alcohol use in McKean County by half a year by 2011.</p> <p>(In 2003 the average age of onset of drinking alcohol was 15 years. The 2011 goal is to delay the average age of onset to 15.5 years.)</p>	<p>To increase peer pressure skills among SFP youth.</p> <p>To increase family communication skills among SFP families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFP Parent graduates will increase bonding with their children.</li> <li>▪ SFP Parent graduates will increase their use of positive reinforcement</li> <li>▪ SFP Parent graduates will improve child monitoring.</li> <li>▪ SFP Parent graduates will improve limit setting.</li> <li>▪ SFP Parent graduates will improve their ability to respond to their youth.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will improve their coping skills.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will improve their future orientation.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will report improved family relations.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will increase awareness of parental ATOD expectations.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will improve peer pressure resistance skills.</li> <li>▪ SFP Youth graduates will improve academic performance.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">McKean County PAYS Surveying</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SFP Developer's Retrospective Post Test Survey</p>

**2. Identify the intermediate outcomes that you have tracked during the grant and the results you have found.**

In McKean County, outcomes were measured using the developers' retrospective survey. From July 2006 to June 2009, the following effects on participants were captured.

<b>McKean County SFP Parent Survey Responses</b> July 2006 to June 2009	<b>Total number of graduates indicating improvements:</b>	<b>Percent of graduates that improved:</b>
<i>Number with increased bonding with children</i>	197	53%
<i>Number with increase positive reinforcement</i>	185	50%
<i>Number with improved child monitoring</i>	186	50%
<i>Number with improved parent-child communication</i>	221	59%
<i>Number with improved limit setting</i>	267	72%
<i>Number with improved ability to respond calmly and appropriately</i>	243	65%

<b>McKean County SFP Youth Survey Responses</b> July 2006 to June 2009	<b>Total number of graduates indicating improvements:</b>	<b>Percent of graduates that improved:</b>
<i>Number with improved coping skills</i>	211	65%
<i>Number with improved future orientation</i>	229	71%
<i>Number reporting improved family relations</i>	116	36%
<i>Number with increased awareness of parent ATOD expectations</i>	96	30%
<i>Number with improved parent appreciation</i>	160	49%
<i>Number with improved peer pressure resistance skills</i>	186	57%
<i>Number with improved academic performance</i>	38	60% <sup>5</sup>

**3. Identify the long-term behavioral outcomes you are working to change.**

The long-term community level outcome anticipated through this project is to delay the onset of alcohol use by one half a year in McKean County by 2011. In 2003 the average age of onset of drinking alcohol was 15.0 years old. The 2011 goal is 15.5 years.

At the participant level, two goals were stated in the grant as desired outcomes as a result of SFP 10-14. The first was to increase resistance to peer pressure evidenced by 87% of youth responding that after intervention, they are better prepared for peer pressure and know the qualities of a true friend. The second was to increase family communication as evidence by 89% of parent/caregivers responding that after intervention they wait to deal with problems with their child after they have cooled down and they find ways to include their child in family decisions.

<sup>5</sup> The winter session of 2009 was the first time this measure was tracked.

**4. Describe any major changes to the project plan from what was originally proposed and why those changes were necessary.**

Two changes were made to the project plan. Originally, the plan called for Penn State Cooperative Extension in McKean County to provide subcontracted services to facilitate local teams that assisted in SFP recruitment. After the second year of the grant, this service was discontinued and merged into the duties of SFP Coordinators. This change helped streamline work more efficiently and save funds for direct service expenses.

The grantee has also offered SFP 10-14 to individual families in a home-based setting. This adaptation allows families who are not able to attend sessions because of geographic or personal barriers, to acquire the skills learned in SFP 10-14 in a different setting. Some families do not have transportation to get to workshops. Others may not feel comfortable in group settings. Community safety has also been an issue in a few situations. As just one example, several registered sex offenders and their families were served through home visits because participation in a group-based setting may have posed a safety risk to other children. It is important to note that the program offered to families in their homes does not follow high-fidelity practices, and is therefore not included in participation and outcome statistics reported in this document. Instead, it is mentioned because it is one of the ways the program has reached out to individuals wanting the service.

**SECTION 2 – POPULATION SERVED**

**1. Total number of youth served by the program.**

From July 2006 through June 2009, the Strengthening Families Program 10-14 in McKean County served 380 youth.

**2. Total number of adults served by the program.**

From July 2006 through June 2009, the Strengthening Families Program 10-14 in McKean County served 502 adults.

**3. A demographic description of the population served.**

Fifth and sixth graders and their parents in all McKean County schools were targeted. Demographic information was not collected, but according to facilitators, participants were fairly representative of the county population. Demographic information from the US Census shows that the population in McKean County is predominately white (96%), living in family households (67%) with an average household size of 2.93. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, there were 518 fifth graders and 508 sixth graders in the 2007-2008 school year. The chart below shows how these students are distributed in school districts in McKean County.

<b>2007-2008 Student Population</b>			
	<b>5th Grade</b>	<b>6th Grade</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bradford	176	188	364
Kane	108	94	202
Otto-Eldred	64	60	124
Port Allegany	77	72	149
Smethport	70	82	152
St. Bernard's	23	12	35
<b>County</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1026</b>

SFP facilitators noted that adult participants attending with 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> graders were from a variety of household types:

- Two married parents
- Divorced parents attending together
- Single parents
- Grandparents

In general, more female than male youth participated. More mothers than fathers participated. Adult male participation increased as the program became more embraced by the community over time. One surprise was the number of single/divorced and married fathers who started to attend SFP 10-14 within the last year and a half.

**4. Zip codes served by the project.**

Participants of SFP 10-14 in McKean County lived in the following zip codes:

16333	16729	16740	16748
16701	16731	16743	16749
16724	16732	16744	16750
16726	16735	16745	
16727	16738	16746	

**5. Was the program universal or targeted at a specific population.**

The program was universally available to all fifth and sixth graders and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) that reside in McKean County.

**6. Describe the dosage or amount of service provided.**

SFP 10-14 is intended to have a dosage of seven, two-hour sessions, which was followed in each of the 46 seven week programs offered during the grants duration in McKean County thus far (July 2006 to June 2009). During those sessions, youth attended an average of 5.6 sessions. Parent/caregiver attendance was slightly lower, with an average of 5.1 sessions. Of those attending:

- 321, or 84.5 percent, of the youth graduated and successfully completed the program by attending five or more of the seven sessions.
- 377 parent/caregivers graduated and successfully completed the program, which is 75.1 percent.
- 44.1 percent of youth and 34.9 percent of parent(s)/caregiver(s) completing the program attended all seven sessions.

**7. Of the total number of program participants served, how many completed the program.**

From July 2006 through June 2009, 321 youth and 377 parent(s)/caregiver(s) successfully completed the program.

As another way to target large participation, each fifth and sixth grade class in every McKean County school district was given a target goal of 17%<sup>6</sup> of the class completing SFP. This is an ambitious goal that helps school districts look at their recruitment and retention performance in comparison to other schools. It has helped McKean County focus recruitment efforts in different ways on school districts that may not be reaching the goal.

**Percent of Student Participation: Goal=17%**

	06-07			07-08			08-09		
	5th Grade	6th Grade	Total	5th Grade	6th Grade	Total	5th Grade	6th Grade	Total
Bradford	6%	8%	7%	10%	5%	7%	8%	3%	5%
Kane	14%	13%	13%	6%	4%	4%	8%	8%	8%
Otto-Eldred	9%	5%	7%	3%	5%	4%	28%	25%	26%
Port Allegany	12%	7%	9%	21%	17%	18%	14%	8%	10%
Smethport	19%	8%	14%	26%	15%	18%	30%	10%	19%
St. Bernard's	18%	30%	22%	30%	22%	26%	33%	33%	26%
<b>County</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>12%</b>

The comprehensive, team-driven recruitment strategy that has help the site to reach the mark in several sites, includes but is not limited to banners, radio ads, newspaper announcements, billboards, e-mail messages, presentations to agencies, online community calendars, cable announcements, and phone calls. The site has also targeted schools through classroom visits, PTO presentations, alert system messages, school board meeting announcements, and displays at school events. In addition, the site has targeted alumni to promote referrals through alumni events, an alumni Web site and list-serve, the use of alumni in media announcements, and a postcard that is given at the conclusion of each program requesting contact information for potential recruits. The site has also purposely targeted teachers, Children and Youth Services staff, and juvenile probation officers as facilitators to encourage program marketing. The wife of the director of human services and a chief juvenile probation officer are facilitators.

<sup>6</sup> The seventeen percent target was set by the PROSPER Project through Prevention Research Center at Penn State

## SECTION 3 – INDICATORS OF PROGRAM IMPACT

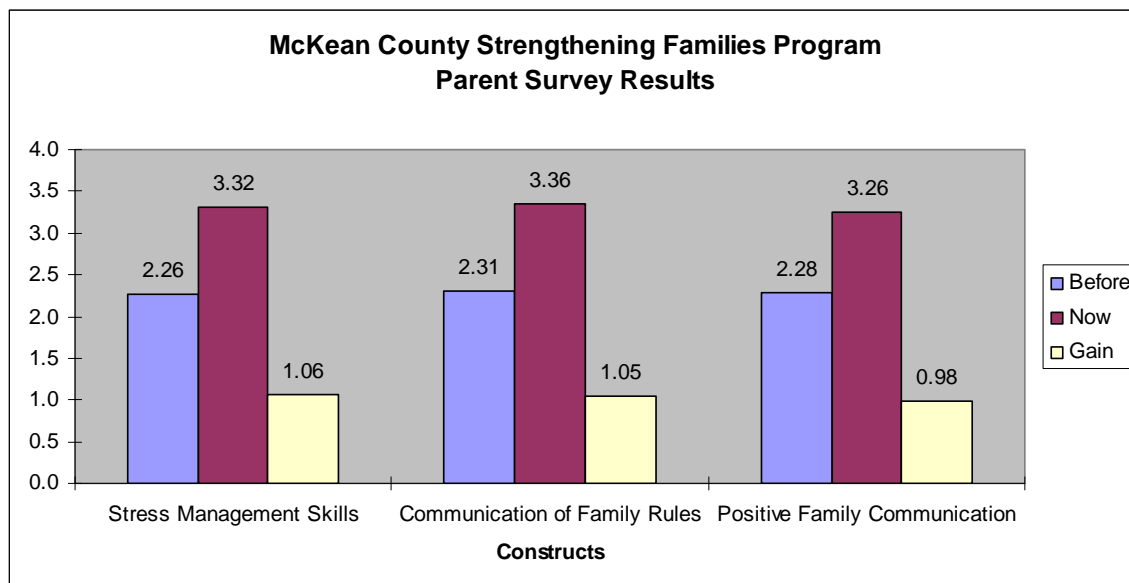
### 1. Describe the process used to measure the impact of your program.

To measure SFP 10-14's impact on participants, the developers' retrospective survey was administered during session seven to all participants who completed five of the seven sessions.

After they were collected, the surveys were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed by Casey Schillinger, one of the PCCD funded Program Coordinators in McKean County.

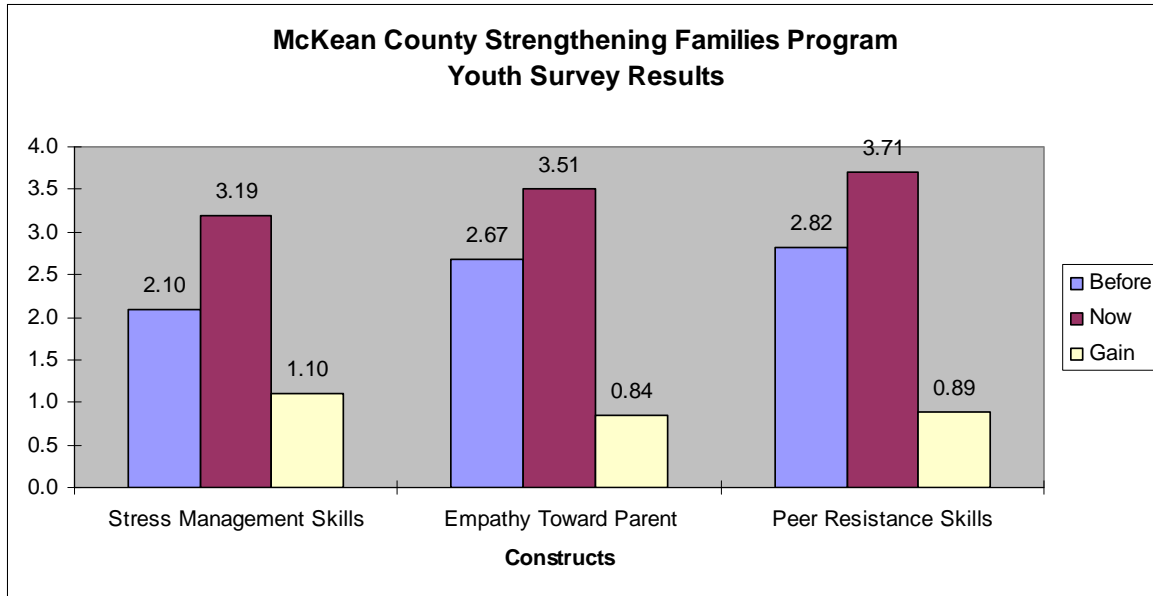
### 2. Describe the quantifiable changes in attitudes, skills, knowledge, or behaviors in the population served.

Surveys showed that 98% of youth participants had a positive change in anti-social behavior while attending SFP 10-14<sup>7</sup>. The surveys also demonstrated that, on average, parent(s)/caregiver(s) improved in their stress management skills (1.06 gain on a 4 point scale), communication of family rules (1.05 increase) and positive family communication (.98 rise).



Youth, on average, also showed improvements with their stress management skills (1.10 gain), empathy towards parents (.84 increase) and peer resistance skills (.89 jump).

<sup>7</sup> This measure only includes the Winter 2009 session due to recently updated performance measures.



**3. Describe the reason any outcome goals were not met.**

Of the population served, 94 percent of youth indicated they are better prepared for peer pressure and know the qualities of a true friend after attending SFP 10-14, exceeding the goal of 87 percent.

For parent/caregivers, 85 percent reported that after intervention they wait to deal with problems with their child after they have cooled down and they find ways to include their child in family decisions. This misses the goal of 89 percent, which may have been projected too high. The goal was established using a relatively high-scoring cohort, the community of Kane, PA, as an example community. The Kane cohort participated in SFP under a DOH State Incentive Grant funded project prior to the start of the Research-Based Initiative in McKean County. Different communities and cohorts have responded differently to the survey. Some indicated that the program did not influence them as much as other groups. For others there was a larger impact. It is possible that the Kane parent/caregiver cohort felt the program had a larger impact.

At the community level, the desired change in the age of initiation has not been measured yet, but will be in 2011. The baseline was 15.0 years of age in 2003. It is important to note that the average age of initiation did not increase in 2007 PAYS surveying. It remained the same at 15.0 years of age. McKean County SFP participants served through the early years of the Research-Based grant will be able to report average age of initiation of alcohol use in future surveying in 2011 and 2013

**4. In what ways did you exceed the expectations of the project as proposed?**

SFP participants demonstrated an increase in awareness of the available community resources in McKean County. Two examples are:

- Recently an SFP 10-14 alumni mother contacted one of the SFP coordinators. She had lost her job and was looking for the Angel Food Ministries phone number, which she remembered being discussed when talking about community resources during SFP Parent Session Seven.
- Another alumni mother got in touch with an SFP Coordinator to get contact information for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services. The mothers' niece, who abuses drugs and alcohol, was coming to live with her family and she wanted her niece to get connected with resources that would assist in her recovery. She also remembered back to the SFP Parent Session Seven discussion of community resources.

Program participation has exceeded expectations. As a result, more sessions were offered than originally planned. The facilitators delivered the program with ever-increasing excellence, exceeding our goal each year of facilitators presenting 90 percent of the curriculum as designed. The impact on participating families has also been evident, with survey results showing improvements in skills.

**5. Describe how you measured your clients' satisfaction with the program and explain any available indicators of client satisfaction, quantitative or qualitative.**

At the close of the seventh session, participants are given a survey. A few questions were added to the developer's tool to capture client satisfaction. Families were asked what the most valuable thing they learned was. Below are examples of responses from 2008-09 SFP graduates.

*It helped to reinforce some of the ways we were helping our child, but also gave us new ideas, like compliments and rewards. It also opened up discussion about peer pressure topics." – parent*

*"Techniques to use as my child gets older. Many of the things discovered have not yet been problems for our family but I know the day will come. One thing I learned that I can use now are better skills for listening to my child, actually LISTENING." – parent*

*"Just knowing other families are in the same boat is helpful." – parent*

*"Handling peer pressure, handling stress, and reaching goals for the future. I love Strengthening Families." – youth*

*"I learned that when you get mad or stressed, don't take it out on all the people around you. Take some time to cool off. Also I learned that you don't have to do something just because your friend wants you to." – youth*

*"What drugs and alcohol can do to your life." – youth*

Additionally, families are asked to rate their satisfaction with their facilitator. This rating scale was only recently added to post-testing during the Spring sessions of 2009.

Youth, on average, rated the youth facilitators highly with a 4.8; and the youth rated the parent facilitator with a 4.6 on a five-point scale. Parents indicated their approval of facilitators by ranking the parent facilitator with an average rating of 4.9 and the youth facilitators with a 4.7.

And finally, one indicator of client satisfaction is parent willingness to continue to participate in what McKean County has termed “alumni networking”. At the close of the seventh session adult participants were given a note card to complete if they would like to receive electronic updates and announcements. There are currently 133 alumni on this electronic distribution list.