



MARYLAND FYI

Family & Youth Interventions for Substance Use

Strengthening Families Program (SFP)

*** Adaptable for online implementation ***

The **Strengthening Families Program (SFP)** is a group-based parenting and youth skills program that aims to promote good parenting skills and positive family relationships, reduce child and adolescent aggression and hostility, and prevent adolescent initiation of substance use. The program can be offered by any youth-serving organization that has the ability to work directly with parents and youth. The **Strengthening Families Program** is suitable for all youth ages 7-17 years as well as for youth who may be at higher risk of developing a substance misuse disorder (e.g., those already receiving services for substance misuse).

The **Strengthening Families Program** consists of 14 sessions and may be delivered either in-person or virtually. While there is some flexibility in how the program gets delivered to families, the program works best when 5-6 families participate together and when each weekly session involves parents-only, youth-only, and whole family together segments. Staff members of participating organizations (professionals or skilled paraprofessionals) will be prepared to provide **SFP** to families after a three-day Family Coach training (12 hours total) and will receive ongoing implementation support. Participating organizations will receive a complementary Family Coach manual that includes complete lessons for every session.

Parent skill-building sessions include:

- Reviewing appropriate developmental expectations
- Teaching parents to interact positively with their children
- Positive communication strategies
- Encouraging family meetings to improve order and organization, and
- Discussing effective discipline including reasonable and logical consequences and time-outs

Youth skill-building sessions include:

- Communication skills to improve parents, peers, and teacher relationships
- Talking about hopes and dreams
- Skill building including resilience skills, problems solving, peer resistance, feeling identification, dealing with criticism, anger management and coping skills.

**** PLEASE NOTE **** *Training for this intervention is only available to agencies who make a commitment to implement the Strengthening Families Program. A minimum of four SFP coaches are recommended per agency.*

Maryland FYI is a collaboration between the State of Maryland, Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), and the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) and is part of the Maryland State Opioid Response funded by SAMHSA.

For more information on the Strengthening Families Program (SFP), please contact:

Sylvia Huntley, Ph.D.

shuntley@som.umaryland.edu

Maryland FYI Strengthening Families Coordinator | National Center for School Mental Health