

Strengthening Families Program Works to Prevent Substance Abuse

Parents want to protect their children, but it's hard. Parents are challenged to keep their children's small setbacks, like skipping household chores or not doing homework, from leading to serious behavior problems like drug and alcohol abuse. And kids need skills to help them resist the peer pressure that leads to dangerous behaviors.

The Strengthening Families Program 10-14 can help. It is designed for parents or caregivers and their children ages 10 to 14. The goal of the program is to prevent substance abuse in youth by building youth skills and giving parents more tools to help their children become responsible young adults.

This program has recently been implemented in local middle and elementary schools in the Coeur d'Alene. It is supported by a grant received by Kootenai Alliance For Children & Families, through Benchmark Research and Safety. In receiving this funding, KACF was able to partner with other local agencies to provide the facilitators with training, program materials, meals and incentives each week for the participating families. The program consists of seven sessions plus optional boosters. In this program, parents build on their strengths in showing love and setting limits, youth develop skills in handling peer pressure and building a positive future, and families grow together. It is a *Best Practice* program.

The Strengthening Families Program 10-14 helps families reduce the risk factors that expose youth to dangerous situations, and contribute to dramatic increases in substance use and antisocial activities. It also helps families enhance the protective factors that are related to strong family relationships. Research shows that protective parenting improves the relationship between parents and youth and decreases the level of family conflict, contributing to lower levels of substance use.

Strengthening Families has been recognized by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Education.

A special THANK YOU goes out to our Strengthening Families Facilitator Team who has been responsible for successfully implementing the program and working with new facilitators at other area schools; Carol Quiring, Lou Quiring, Ellie Goltz, Ron Harrelson, Greg Johnson, Melanie Krier and Marilyn (Cookie) Hardy.

KACF hopes to offer another training in the fall of 2007, so more locations of this worthwhile program can be added throughout Kootenai County during the 2007/2008 school year. If you are interested in participating in this training and acting as a Strengthening Families Facilitator, contact Tammy Rubino at 676-8293, or email at Kootenai_alliance@hotmail.com.

Federation of Families Is About Helping Parents Help Their Children Cope

As parents, we are well versed in how to treat a skinned knee or a tummy ache, but what do we do when our child experiences emotional pain or trauma, that surface band-aids and kisses can't fix? Where do you turn when your child has exceptional difficulty at school, with peers, or within the family? Do you feel isolated because of your child's behavior? Confused about how to help, or who can help?

The Idaho Federation of Families is a statewide family-run organization focusing on the needs of families and children with emotional, behavioral and mental disorders. It's the mission to improve the quality of life for all children through support, education, advocacy, and promoting community based services to increase public awareness, working to ensure that families are equal partners in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services though family-centered support, education and training.

Each region of the state has a Family Support Specialist who is available, at no charge, to help families navigate the children's mental health system. They give referrals to support within the community — where to go and who to call. Your Family Support Specialist can help you access information, understand your rights, connect with other families in similar situations, and help you and your child advocate to meet your specific needs. In North Idaho, contact Karen Weppner (208)512-3305, Karen@idahofederation.org.

To find out more about the Federation, or find a Family Support Specialist in your area visit www.idahofederation.org or call toll-free (800)905-3436.

Early Childhood Information Clearinghouse
www.idahochild.org
(then click on the sun logo)

To help you find statewide health services and information, call

Available in español.
Information for parents and professional on child care, development, health and other topics.

Idaho CareLine • IDHW
2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.
Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588
Se habla Español.

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE