

Strengthening Families Prevents Drug Abuse

Issue:

Family factors play a significant role in youth's vulnerability to substance abuse. Establishing good parent-child relationships before the teen years is crucial since kids are most likely to encounter drug use for the first time between the ages of 12 and 13.

What Has Been Done:

The Delaware Drug and Alcohol Problem Severity Index reveals that youth living in zip codes 19901 and 19962 are in the highest quartile of drug use of all Delaware Zip Code areas. Therefore, all families with youth aged 10-14 residing in the Caesar Rodney School district has been targeted for our educational efforts. A science-based community educational program was employed to address a critical transition period in youth and bring about positive behavioral changes. This seven-session program focuses on reducing family-related risk factors for adolescent behavior. It also is designed to build protective factors in adolescents and their parent/caregivers.

The program has received recognition by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, The National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Impact:

This Strengthening Families program has been shown to reduce the likelihood for substance abuse and other problems associated with the teen years. In 2002, 84 individuals from 22 families completed the program. Evaluation statistics include:

- 100% of the parents said they let their youth know what the consequences are for breaking rules. This is an increase of 33.3% compared to pre- program numbers.
- 100% of the parents said they follow through with consequences each time their child breaks a rule. This is an increase of 77.8%.
- 92.3% of the youth said they know one step to take to reach one of their goals as compared to 30.8% who reported they knew one step to reach their goals prior to attending the program.
- 61.6% of the youth said they do things to help them feel better when they are under stress. This is an increase of 30.8%.
- 77% of the youth said they now use peer pressure steps when they are pressured to get into trouble. This is an increase of 30.8%.

Funding

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