

Nurturing Parenting Program Helps Parents and Improves Child Well-Being in North Dakota

The Situation

Preventing child abuse and neglect is a critical public issue and requires strengthening families and safeguarding children. In the U.S., research shows that 1 in 4 children will be victimized by abuse or neglect. In North Dakota, there were 1,760 confirmed cases of child abuse or neglect in 2015 (and many more cases reported or suspected abuse). Parent education provides a mechanism to intervene with families that may struggle in raising children and support them in developing needed knowledge and skills for giving care to children.

Extension Response

The *Nurturing Parenting Program* (NPP) is used by the state of North Dakota as its primary parent training program with families involved in the child welfare system. Through a grant provided by the ND Department of Human Services, the NDSU Extension Service partners to provide training, support, implementation and evaluation of the *Nurturing Parenting Program*. In the 2016-17 program year, the NPP operated at 12 sites and conducted 22 4-month sessions with a total of 286 families participating.

Impacts

Based on responses by participants who completed the *Nurturing Parenting* course in 2016-17:

- Parents showed substantial and statistically significant changes in key areas, including increases in parental empathy toward children's needs, belief in using alternatives to corporal punishment, and more healthy expectations of children.
- The percentage of individuals in the "substantial risk" category regarding harsh punishment of children fell from 18.2% to 7.4% following course participation, a very significant drop in potential risk to harm children.

Resource Link

- www.ndnurturing.org

Feedback

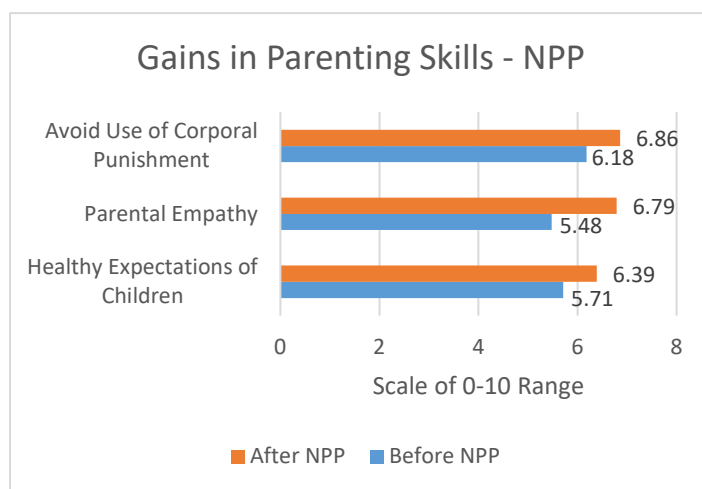
- *"It was good to have the information and new ideas shared, and to learn new perspectives from other people. It has made our lives better."* – Female participant, Valley City, ND
- *"It helps me not feel so helpless. I can do this and change my mistakes. It made me use different tools than yelling all the time."* – Female participant, Harvey, ND

Public Value Statement

Strengthening families through parent education reduces costs spent on child welfare, lowers crime by adults, and improves well-being of children.

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Non-Extension Collaborators

ND Department of Human Services; ND Parent Education Network; local NPP facilitators and collaborators.