

Welinski, D. Solano County California Family Strengthening Program. Final Report, 2003.

PART II RESEARCH REPORT

1. A. Project Abstract

The Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention and its partners selected two models of family prevention services and tested the feasibility of these approaches, which built on ongoing efforts in Solano County to bring research-supported services to at-risk and high-risk families. **The purpose of this project was to assist health, education, and human service leadership of Solano County in implementing best practice models that have been shown to reduce violence and substance abuse within the family and to reduce recidivism rates for formerly incarcerated parents.**

In this project, called the Strengthening Solano Families Project, an existing interagency collaborative group worked cooperatively with SAMHSA and reviewed a number of effective models of family prevention activities; it then selected two models for use with Families involved in the County's justice system. The goals of the Strengthening Solano Families project are to reduce family violence, parental substance abuse, and subsequently prevent substance abuse among children. The steering committee of Strengthening Families Collaborative consists of a cross section of representatives from various community systems including the county public systems, such as the Courts, the Sheriff's Department, the Probation Department, Alcohol and Drug Programs, Child Protective Services, and Mental Health Division.

In Year 1 of the two-year project, we engaged in a planning process to select a research-supported program designed for a well-defined target population of parents of infants and children, prenatal to 5 years of age. **After analysis, the collaborative chose two models, the *Nurturing Parenting Program* and the *Nurturing Program for Families in substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery* (both for children 0-5 years of age).**

The Collaborative established pilot site criteria that would fulfill the requirements of the project. Three agencies that fit the criteria were then selected for pilot testing. The first site selected was Vacaville Police Department (VPD) because that agency was already involved in working with at-risk families. VPD agreed to work with as many as ten families, that would fit the target population criteria. VPD has two Family Support workers assigned to families that have been brought to the attention of the police department by formal complaints involving child abuse, domestic violence, and/or substance abuse. VPD utilizes their Child Abuse Response Team (CART), which handles complaints of child abuse, to provide the science based parenting model. The family support workers completed the Nurturing Parenting training and implemented the program in a classroom setting and in the homes of these clients (with their children). Participation by families in the program was voluntary.

Findings indicated significant increases in Appropriate Expectations, Empathy, Belief in Alternatives to Corporal Punishment, Appropriate Family Roles, and Empowering Children.