

PROSPER

PENNSTATE



Cooperative Extension-Adams County
College of Agricultural Sciences

A collaborative family strengths
program of Penn State and the
Littlestown Area
School District

**Open to ALL youth
& families of
middle school
students**

*An exciting new program
in your community-designed to
help you succeed in raising
your middle-school-age child
to be a responsible adult.*



PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience





PROSPER- Littlestown

Organizational Overview

The Mission

Helping young people become self-directed, productive, and contributing members of a diverse society. Empower youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

This family resiliency component works to strengthen families by positively developing children, youth and adults.

Collaborations

The **PROSPER** Project (**PRO**moting School-community-university **Partnerships to Enhance Resilience**) is a collaborative endeavor of Penn State and Iowa State Universities, the Adams County Penn State Cooperative Extension and 4-H program, with the Littlestown School District and local community.

We are governed by the Littlestown PROSPER Advisory Committee that is made up of 11 members representing the Littlestown community. This includes the 4-H Coordinator, the middle school principal, parents, program graduates and a school board member. There are also three youth members that have graduated from the Strengthening Families Program.

Clients served

SFP is offered to all families of the Littlestown Middle school. We will offer the choice of two programs of 6-10 families per session. We offer 2 programs in the fall and 2 programs in the winter of each school year, for up to forty families.

Since March of 2003, 108 parents and 84 youth have graduated from the SFP Program. In addition, younger and older siblings have benefited from this programming.

In three years, the All-Stars school based program has provided prevention education to every seventh grader, and the school has embraced this program and will continue to maintain it. Youth served in All-Stars totals approximately 600 individuals.

Accomplishments

Littlestown Partnership with Penn State Prevention Research Center Recognized Model by White House

“On October 27th, 2005, PSU’s Dr. Mark Greenberg will join First Lady Laura Bush and other prominent prevention researchers, policymakers, and educators for the first ever White House Conference on Helping America’s Youth.”

Also from that press release:

“An economic analysis suggests that for every one dollar invested in this program, a community will receive an estimated \$9.60 return on their investment.”

General Information

Evidence-based programs like this have shown significant improvements in communities. They include more effective parenting, better academic achievement, decreases in alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamine and cigarette use, and less violent behavior.

Our goals for 2006-2007, are to provide 4 sessions (2 winter and 2 fall) with approximately 10 families per session. We require a six family minimum to start a session and can serve a maximum of 12 families.

Need/Problem To Be Addressed

Troubling Teen Drug Use Statistics

The negative effects of drug use and abuse are undeniable and obvious. When considering those negative effects, it is alarming to see some of the actual statistics concerning the amount of teen drug use in high schools and middle schools. In addition, many parents have felt that their teen's alcohol use is ok because it isn't a harder drug like crack, or heroine. However, it should be noted that alcohol kills five times more teenagers than all other drugs combined (usually through accidents)! Below are just a few of alarming statistics associated with teen drug use and the effects of alcohol on teenagers.

- Illicit teen drug use as of 2003.

* 8th grade -- 30.3%

* 10th grade -- 44.9%

* 12th grade -- 52.8%

<http://www.teendrugabuse.us/>

The average age when youth first try alcohol is 11 years for boys and 13 years for girls. The average age at which Americans begin drinking regularly is 15.9 years old.

The *Strengthening Families Program* is a scientifically-tested intervention program designed to **reduce adolescent substance use and other problematic behaviors** in youth 10 to 14 years of age. This unique curriculum provides learning opportunities for the entire family. The program is delivered within parent, youth, and family sessions. These sessions are highly interactive and include role-playing, discussions, learning games, and family projects designed to:

- Improve parenting skills (consistent discipline, general child management)
- Build life skills in youth (goal setting, problem solving, stress reduction)
- Strengthen family bonds (establishing family meetings, communication)



An SFP family learning to support one another

Activities/Strategies

This evidenced based program is delivered over a 7 week period during evening sessions. For the first hour the youth and parents are split, they then meet together for a one hour family session.

- **Parent** sessions consist of presentations, role-plays, group discussions, and other skill-building activities. Videotapes are used for most sessions to standardize program delivery and demonstrate effective parent-child interactions.
- **Youth** sessions engage each youth in small and large group discussions, group skill practice, and social bonding activities. Topics are presented in game-like activities designed to engage participants and maintain their interest while learning.
- **Family** sessions use specially designed games and projects to increase family bonding, build positive communication skills, and facilitate the learning of problem solving, together.

To enhance this weekly program, we also provide a meal and family time prior to the start of the sessions. This helps families reduce the stress of getting home from work and rushing to prepare and eat a meal before coming. Families eat together and it gives them additional time to discuss their SFP homework and to catch up on daily events.

Funding

- We received Safe & Drug Free Schools Funds to support the program for 2005 with a commitment for 2006.
- We have in-kind contributions from the school district for facilities and copying equipment
- Penn State Cooperative Extension supports that cost of recruitment mailing.
- We have received financial contributions from businesses and service clubs in the Littlestown community.
- The Littlestown Ministerium has pledged their support to assist with meals in the upcoming year.

The Littlestown PROSPER Advisory Committee is continually exploring additional funding sources and grants to maintain this program, to ensure that prevention programming opportunities are available to the parents, youth and families of the Littlestown community.

The costs for running a Strengthening Families session:

Facilitators	\$1,260.00
Meals	\$1,204.00
Family Meeting Supplies	\$ 100.00
Session supplies	\$ 250.00

Total: \$2,418.00

The Return:

*An economic analysis suggests that for every one dollar invested in this program, a community will receive an estimated **\$9.60** return on their investment.*

Detailed SFP 10-14 Training Outline

Session One

Parent:

Parents learn to identify things that stress youth and how to help their teens deal with them. They learn the value of showing love, setting limits, and supporting their youth in their goals.

Youth:

Youth focus on identifying and visualizing their dreams and goals for the future.

Family:

To help families build positive relationships and reinforce supporting their youth's goals and dreams.

Session Two

Parent:

Help parents understand changes in youth and to understand the need for rules. Also focuses on reminding youth of the rules without criticizing.

Youth:

Youth focus on understanding their parents and their stressors, and to appreciate them for what they do for them.

Family:

Families identify their strengths and develop a family tree as well as learn to appreciate each other.

Session Three

Parent:

Parents learn to identify and reward good behavior and develop new tools to teach new behaviors.

Youth:

Youth learn to identify and cope with stress.

Family:

Families learn the process for family meetings and to work together to identify rewards and punishments.

Session Four

Parent:

Parents learn to focus on staying calm and respectful, and to use small penalties for small problems and larger consequences for larger issues.

Youth:

Youth learn that everyone has rules including parents and that things go better for them when they follow rules.

Family:

Families see the connection between family values and their activities and decisions. Families develop a family values statement.

Session Five

Parent:

Parents will learn the importance of good listening and further develop tools to assist them. They also learn to listen for feelings in what their son or daughter share.

Youth:

Youth learn that drugs and alcohol will hurt them and to practice skills for resisting negative peer pressure.

Family:

Families learn to build listening skills and to solve problems together.

Session Six

Parent:

Parents learn how to help protect their kids against drug and alcohol abuse and learn ways to interact effectively with the youth's school.

Youth:

Youth continue to learn how to resist peer pressure and to identify qualities in a good friend.

Family:

Families talk together about avoiding drugs and alcohol abuse and about general behavior problems. Families also work on setting clear expectations for the youth's behavior and outline consequences for actions.

Session Seven

Parent:

Parents will learn how to identify special needs other families may have and how to help them access support in the local community.

Youth:

Youth learn how to be of service to others and to interact with positive older teen role models. A panel of positive high school teens come in and answers questions from the youth group.

Family:

Families graduate from the program and recognition certificates and graduation refreshments are served to the group including the younger siblings in childcare.



Do we accomplish what we set out to do?

We know the importance of justifying donations and contributions to our supporters. Here are the ways we do that.

Evaluation

The Research Center at Penn State University continues conducting a long range study on the effectiveness of these programs.

1. Youth and parents complete a “Now and Before” survey at the completion of the program. The multiple question survey has the youth and parents compare what they knew before the sessions and to assess what they learned from the sessions. Anecdotal information from the participants has been tremendous.
2. Our advisory committee also hosted an alumni gathering, after the sessions took place. Results from that gathering were also extremely positive. 100% of the participants were able to identify meaningful impacts on their behavior as a result of participating in the program.
3. Penn State and Iowa State Universities are studying a combined fourteen intervention sites and fourteen control sites for this project, with a total of over 6,000 people.

An extensive survey is given to all youth at all locations in sixth, eighth, and tenth grades. Results are totaled, compiled and a comparison is made between intervention and control sites.

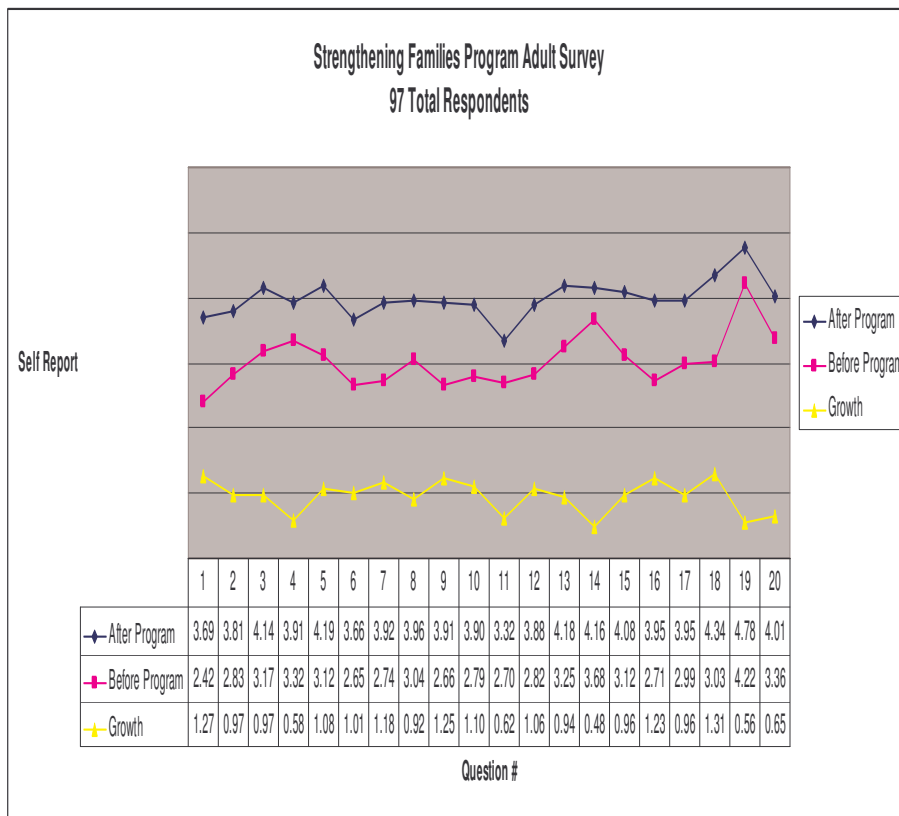
Significant differences have been found in the comparison of the sites and the specific results are attached.

Due to the success, other states are interested in becoming involved with this project, or in replicating the model.

Top 5 Adult Survey Responses Indicating Growth (20 questions – 1 to 5 scale)

- Respondents report growth in all categories
- Top 5 areas of self-reported growth:

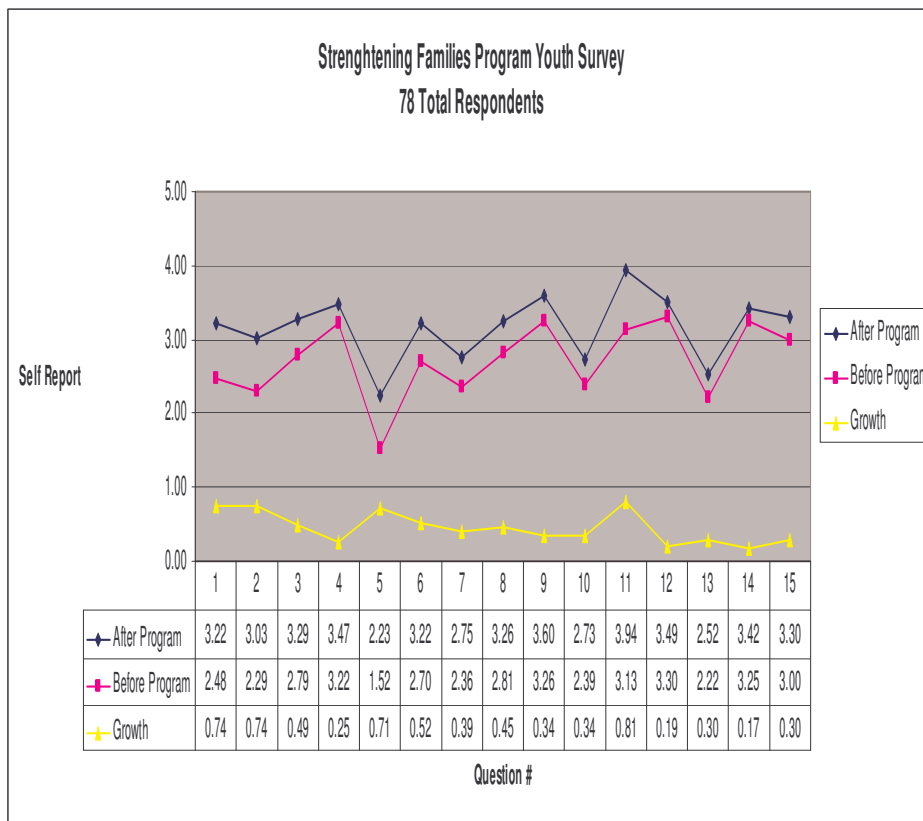
- 1 Wait to deal with problems with my child until I have cooled down.
- 7 Follow through with consequences each time he or she breaks a rule.
- 9 Often tell my child how I feel when he or she misbehaves.
- 16 Try to see things from my youth's point of view.
- 18 Give compliments and rewards when my child does chores at home or learns to follow rules.



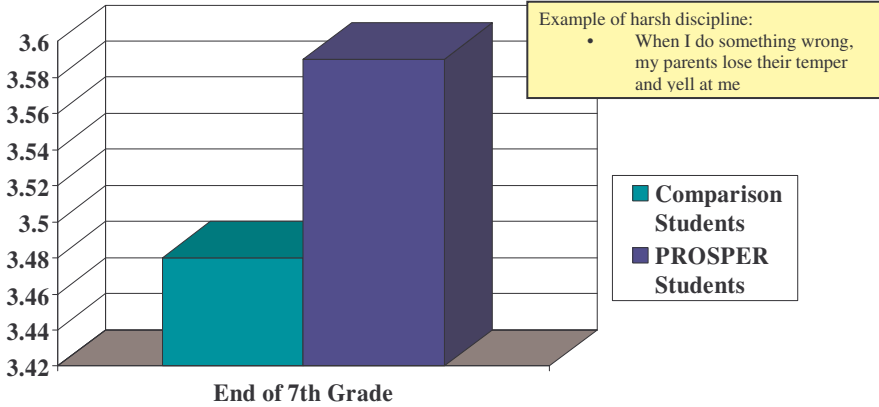
Top 5 Youth Survey Responses Indicating Growth (15 questions – 1 to 5 scale)

- Respondents report growth in all categories
- Top 5 areas of self-reported growth:

- 1 I know one step to take to reach one of my goals.
- 2 I do things to help me feel better when I am under stress.
- 3 I appreciate the things my parent(s)/caregivers(s) do for me.
- 5 We have family meetings to discuss plans, schedules, and rules.
- 11 I know the qualities that are important in a true friend.

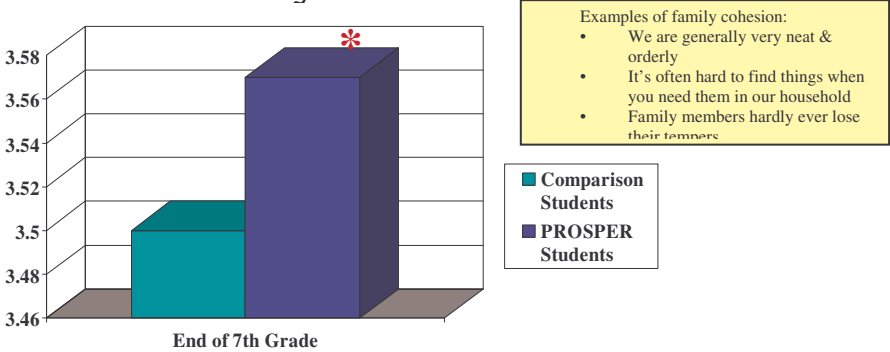


Less Harsh Discipline



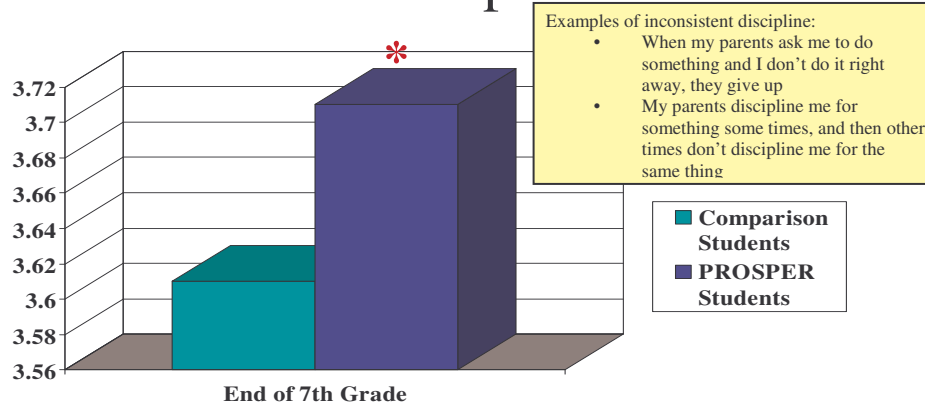
Parenting practices of students in PROSPER communities are significantly different from those in the Comparison Communities

Family Cohesion



Family cohesion in PROSPER communities are significantly different from those in the Comparison Communities

Consistent Discipline



Parenting practices of students in PROSPER communities are significantly different from those in the Comparison Communities

Youth responses from self surveys:

- **I learned not to try drugs and alcohol**
- **not to do drugs, how to get out of peer pressure**
- **how to become better, closer family.**
- **I've learned to appreciate what my parents do for me**
- **how to deal with stress and peer pressure**
- **How to say NO to something wrong**
- **How to talk to parents.**
- **how to keep a strong relationship with my family.**

Parent responses from self surveys:

- **communication, setting goals, getting along with my child**
- **to give positive reinforcement for good deeds**
- **how important listening and communicating with your child is in developing a good relationship**
- **importance of setting limits and being consistent.**
- **see things from my kid's point of view.**
- **Setting house rules, using a point system, schedule family time and reward good behavior and following rules.**
- **Scheduling family meetings for scheduling chores and fun.**

Littlestown PROSPER Advisory Committee

Eric Naylor	Maple Avenue M.S. Principal
Edward Bender	Penn State 4-H Coordinator
Leslie Breighner	Alumni Parent & Facilitator
Ken Thomas	Retired Teacher & Facilitator
Carol Greene	Teacher & Facilitator
Tim Harrison	Alumni & Community Rep
Cherie Tober	Alumni & Community Rep
Pastor James Martin	Redeemers U.C.C. & Littlestown Ministerium
Corey Tober	Alumni & Youth Rep
Andy Breighner	Alumni & Youth Rep
Lindsay Harrison	Alumni & Youth Rep

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Visit our website:

<http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/Webpages/Strengthening.htm>

We would like to thank these Littlestown area businesses and groups for supporting the **PROSPER** Project at Maple Avenue Middle School:

- Littlestown Lions Club
- Adams Electric Cooperative
- The Littlestown Ministerium
- UTZ Potato Chip Company
- Littlestown Foundry
- Littlestown Dental Associates
- Hawk Industries
- Fraternal Order of the Eagles
- Complete Family Foot Care
- Girl Scout Troop # 1704 Littlestown

For information on getting your name added to this list by making a tax deductible contribution to PROSPER, please contact:

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