



Co. Kildare Strengthening Families Programme

Presenters:

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Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

National Outcome 3

- Safe & Protected from Harm

Transformational Goals

- Support Parents
- Earlier Intervention & Prevention

Strengthening Families Programme in Co. Kildare: Context

- Population: 210,212 (total) 77,832 (u25) 59,449 (u18)
- Exceptional population growth 12.9% (State 8.2%)
- Not matched by growth in services
- Historically low level of service
- Significant service gaps including family support e.g. only 1 family support project, only 2 x FRCs.

What is the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP)?

- Research-based family skills programme developed in USA in 1982
- 14 weekly sessions plus pre-programme parent intro evening & post-programme reunion/booster session
- 3 hours per session: family meal, group session (parents/teens/children separately), family session (parents & teens/children together)
- Examples of topics covered: Encouraging good behaviour, communication and family meetings, alcohol and drug awareness, solving problems and giving directions, setting limits, staying cool in conflict, speaking and listening, coping with anger, handling criticism and appreciating family members.
- Childcare provided for under 7s.

Story of SFP in Co. Kildare

- 2007: First training in Co. Kildare as part of national roll out
- From 2008 to 2009: 2 programmes completed in the county (Teen programme)
- No programmes took place from 2010 to 2012
- 2013: 1 programme (Child & teen programme)
- 2014: 1 programme (Child & teen programme)
- 2015: Programme due to take place in September (Child & teen programme)

Role of Kildare CYPSC

- SWRDTF brought to CYPSC table
- Do we want SFP in our county? If yes – how?
- Multi-agency approach/commitment reaffirmed
- Funding & human resources
- 1 per annum in county – mid/south/north cycle
- CYPSC role ongoing – SFP action in both CYPSC 3-Year plans (2011-2014) & (2015-2017)

Inter-Agency Working

- **Essential** to implementation of programme in Co. Kildare
- Steering Group
- Funding
- Facilitation Team
- Premises
- Referrals
- Evaluation
- **Partners** – Tusla, SWRDATAF, CKLP, KCoCo, KWETB, Le Chéile Probation Service, Newbridge FRC, HSE Primary Care, KYS, KCCC, KARE Disability Service, ISP, Foróige, KCYPSC, Extern, Happy Days Childcare Service, GYDP

Benefits/Outcomes

Overall

- Improved family functioning
- Reduced family stress & conflict
- Recognition that positive change is possible

Case Study

- Family engaged with SWD since 1998
- 3 children on CPNS in 2012
- Participated in SFP in 2013: 13/14 sessions attended
- 3 children taken off CPNS in 2013 – Social Worker & family members attributed this to families involvement in SFP.

Feedback from Families

Parents

Things are better

Since doing the class life is very different

Great to learn to play with kids

Realised I am not the only one

Teens & Children

I can talk to my mam now, and wasn't before

Want to start all over again [the programme]

[I learned to] talk to my family and sort things out

Feedback from Facilitation Team

Family Outcomes

- Getting on better as a family
- Better communication skills
- Improved anger management & stress control

Benefits to Facilitators/Agencies

- Building inter-agency relationships
- Parents/families seeing me/my role as more positive
- Building skills, knowledge & experience
- Vulnerable families needs met

Challenges & Learning

- Ongoing sustainability
- Funding/resourcing – especially in context of inadequate service provision
- Clear driver – locally & nationally
- Practical challenges – premises, childcare, transport
- Keeping families engaged over 14 weeks
- Volume & nature of multi-agency requirements – timelines, reporting, paperwork – diverse & time consuming

Evaluation

- External (Lutra/Alta)
- Internal (focus groups, questionnaires)
- Agreed national approach to evaluation
- Practical, cost effective, efficient, useful, relevant
- National SFP Council of Ireland link
- Explore local links e.g. NUI Maynooth

Considerations for the future

- Consolidation of funding – locally & nationally
- Maintaining inter-agency approach
- Increase local pool of trained facilitators
- Agreed evaluation framework for Ireland
- Local PR – online presence, rolling referrals
- Viability of annual SFP in Co. Kildare
- Viability of 3 site plan

Contact Details

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Website link to Kildare CYPSC:

www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc/kildare.238.html

THANK YOU!