

TITLE: Florida's Initiative for Family Engagement

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PROJECT ABSTRACT:

Background and Purpose: Evidence of the benefits of parent involvement in preventing youth substance abuse has led to a proliferation of family-based prevention programs over the past decade. Yet, getting parents to attend these programs continues to challenge service providers. Some suggest that a broader public health effort is needed, reaching out to the larger parent community through environmental strategies (e.g., social marketing) to strengthen prevention-based parenting practices. Similar to efforts at reducing auto accident fatalities by promoting seat belt use, environmental strategies targeting parenting practices may have a positive impact on preventing youth substance abuse and other problems by influencing community norms and beliefs about family management and bringing parenting behaviors into better alignment with the principles of effective prevention. The aim of this multi-year study was to develop and test a population-based, universal preventive intervention to promote effective parenting, with a particular focus on preventing underage drinking.

Methods: To establish a baseline for the development of the population-based model, we a) synthesized relevant literature across multiple disciplines; b) employed mail and telephone procedures to survey a randomly selected sample of parents (N = 1,153) about their parenting practices; c) administered a web-based survey to gather information from other stakeholders (i.e., directors, policy makers, and researchers) about their experiences with environmental strategies for promoting parenting practices; and d) conducted focus groups with highly engaged parents to explore their perspectives on strategies for engaging families in prevention activities. These findings were then used to develop a model that depicts our theory of change. However, at the end of the second year of funding, the funder requested that, instead of completing the original project, we develop a tool to measure parent views on underage drinking, which we did.

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Co-Investigators:

None

Community Collaborators:

None
