



NEW YORK STATE
PARENTING
EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIP
ANNUAL
REPORT



2020-2021



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Message from NYSPEP Co-Chairs

Hello,

Tim and I are grateful to have the opportunity to share the amazing work completed over the past year.

We use the word grateful, because like everyone else, we acknowledge living in this world whose lens of uncertainty has been magnified. Grateful because we know the loss many have endured this past year has been unprecedented. Grateful because we saw how communities worked together to support each other and their neighborhoods and didn't think twice to ensure families felt supported. Grateful that we share a partnership with all of you who too have been perseverant, flexible and kind in light of worldwide challenge. In another word, your support helps us build our own resilience.

What an opportunity to find our resilience – to adapt ourselves in the face of adversity. NYSPEP did just that over the past year, from communities in Schuylers and St. Lawrence centering on building healthy families, to coalitions who jumped in to provide Strong Roots trainings and planted seeds of resilience, to a storyteller who guided us in finding our voice to tell our own story. We are grateful to say that despite COVID, our communities, parents and providers responded. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure all children grow in nurturing and healthy families.



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About Us

The New York State Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) is a statewide cross-systems initiative designed to ensure all children grow in nurturing families, by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills and behavior. NYSPEP informs and supports close to 1,052 practitioners, program managers, researchers and policymakers to promote, provide and improve evidence-based parenting education. Parenting education is a core component of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen family and community approaches to healthy child development and help prevent child abuse and neglect. When the rate of indicated reports of child abuse and neglect is over 65,000 for children ages 0-17 years in NYS, the capacity of families to raise healthy children and the cost to the larger community must be considered a public health issue. Effective parenting education programs have been linked with better physical, cognitive and emotional development in children; increased parental knowledge of child development and parenting skills; improved parent-child communication; more effective parental monitoring and discipline; reduced youth substance abuse; and decreased rates of child abuse and neglect.

2020 Progress

In 2020, New York Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) celebrated fourteen years of collaborative work supporting parenting educators, defined broadly as all professionals with the expertise and knowledge to provide parents with developmentally appropriate strategies to guide healthy development of the children in their care. NYSPEP leaders have taken significant steps this year to advance our mission "To enhance parenting skills, knowledge and behavior by developing a strong, statewide network that promotes, provides and improves parenting education." We are pleased to share our recent accomplishments.

Community Coalition: 2020 Awards and Reports

In March 2020, NYSPEP awarded two mini-grants, of \$5,000 each, to help providers increase access to research-based parenting education programs and proven practice models that impart knowledge, skills and resources to nurture children. Funds were awarded to two coalitions, one in St. Lawrence County and the other in Schuyler County. Focused criteria asked applicants to demonstrate how their coalition will work to strengthen the Protective Factors of families in their community and strengthen family engagement and parent leadership through the implementation of a series of Community Cafés. The grant year concluded with a one-day professional development *Strong Roots* training in each community. NYSPEP *Strong Roots* trainings offer full-day, high-quality content developed by experienced professionals in the field and are associated with effectiveness in parenting education. Each of the community coalitions developed and offered a *Strong Roots* professional development day.

The impact of COVID-19 on local communities cannot be over emphasized. The global pandemic and resulting stay-at-home order, changed all aspects of life and of service delivery. NYSPEP had awarded a third grant to additional community coalition. This coalition ultimately withdrew from the project, as COVID-19 resulted in many transitions – for staff, for families and for all members of their coalition. This coalition determined they needed to focus on responding to adapting their services in order to meet family needs.

NYSPEP used these unaccessed funds to support continued partnership with coalitions from previous grant years. These coalitions were invited to submit applications for additional *Strong Roots* events. As a result, NYSPEP was able to support a total of 6 Strong Roots events across the State.

St Lawrence County: Massena Community Services Coalition

The mission of the Massena Community Services Coalition is to break down siloes that exist various agencies and sectors to help strengthen the local community and provide additional support to community members. This coalition was created on November 9th 2015, by the Mayor of Massena with the goal to bring together local agencies and community representatives to increase collaboration.

For 2020, the Massena Community Services Coalition mobilized to align their focus toward providing safe, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families. The goal of this initiative is to increase access of parenting resources and support through professional development, sharing of best practices, and use of Community Cafes to engage communities.

During the process, this coalition brought more awareness of parenting resources availability in the Massena community. The community cafés were an effective vehicle to engage with community partners and professionals to implement activities and spread the message of resources, collaboration, as well as tackling barriers. During the community cafés, acute conditions of the county were raised. Through the use of the community café model, over 100 providers and families were brought together during a tumultuous time to address their concerns.

Strong Roots

On February 8, 2020 the Massena Community Services Coalition partnered with the North County Prenatal/Perinatal Council to provide the Strong Roots Professional Development Day. The first workshop focused on Adverse Child Experiences and Trauma Informed Care. The staff provided an overview of an ACEs study on the impact of trauma on learning and development, and discussed ways schools and communities can build resilience. The second workshop introduced the principles of Safe Zone. The staff did an overview of the important terms related to sex and gender identity, provided statistics related to LGBTQ youth, and shared strategies to help school and community-based organizations develop Safe Zone. Over 100 people participated in this professional development day. The Massena community partners closely with families to discuss resources that

are helpful and then identify action steps to address any gaps. The community members who participated in the discussions felt comfortable to share ideas and feedback about concerns and increasing community awareness in response to adverse events that happened around the presentation of workshops. Some common themes included providing additional education sessions to students, provide peer connections, creation of safe spaces for youth to share stories, and increase of parental education.

Schuyler County: Early Childhood Community Coalition

The Early Childhood Community Coalition started out as a series of meetings involving community-based organizations that came together to strategize on how to best serve children and families in Schuyler County. This coalition started as a result of families in the Family Play and Resource Center identifying that there were uncertain places to go for parenting education.

The coalition has transformed to a community workgroup with a goal to promote existing resources and identify gaps in services and systems that support children's growth and development.

The Early Childhood Community Coalition held together through COVID and successfully garnered more specific details in selecting parenting topics that reduce ACES. There were monthly meetings to discuss trauma informed care, ACES, resiliency and building strong foundations for families. A training took place on trauma informed care with shared a curriculum, *Positive Solutions*, to foster a united and common language amongst providers working with children and families.

Strong Roots

The Schuyler County Early Childhood Coalition held their Strong Roots Training, a viewing of the Resilience movie, on February 22, 2021. Those who attended began the community conversation on to promote 'building resilience' in Schuyler County. The conversation on 'building resilience' continued during monthly coalition meetings with the focus turning to building a trauma informed community and developing community response to preventing ACES. All of the events have been held virtually and over time included representatives from the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County (project lead), the Odessa Montour School District, United Way of the Southern Tier, the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, Montour Falls Library, ProAction of Steuben and Schuyler County the Child Care Resource & Referral agency, Schuyler County Department of Social Services' Foster Care and, through the outreach to organize the viewing of the Resilience film, the Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of NYS based in Ithaca. Early in the process Schuyler County Head Start was also actively involved but due to wild changes in the health protocols and adaptations to program delivery caused by the COVID pandemic, their attendance has lapsed. At the core of their group, there has been an effort to share resources, exchange of ideas, and encouraging each other during unprecedented times.

Additional Strong Roots Events

Clinton County Strong Roots

In 2020, Clinton county held a Strong Roots event that targeted navigating differences of race, culture, and class to facilitate practical and candid conversation that centers on elevating children and families. Those who participated were encouraged to make a commitment that would further awareness on the impact of implicit bias. Some commitments included: talking more with family members and co-workers about diversity and implicit bias, respecting others, speaking and listening with intention, and to pay more attention and find unbiased source for news. This Strong Roots event had 42 participants.

Orange County Strong Roots

The Orange County Parenting Coalition, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Garnet Health Medical Center and other partners worked together to present the 23rd Annual Making Healthful Decisions Conference in December 2020. This year's theme was "Tools for Growing Resilience: for Schools, Health and Human Services and the Community. Presenters discussed current research regarding fostering social and emotional development, building resilience in individuals, families and communities throughout the lifespan with strengths-based and protective factor-building approaches.

Workshops specific to educators included applying social and emotional development strategies into the classroom and learning environments. Workshops specific to health and human services provided example of incorporating resilience-building approaches into working with patients and clients. Workshops specific to the community will offer tools and hone skills for building resilient and healing-engaged communities.

The conference had 242 unique registrations from 11 states and 2 countries, with some sessions hosting over 150 participants.

Tioga County Strong Roots

The Tioga County Strong Roots: A Vision for a Healthy Family professional development virtual event took place on March 9th and March 11th, 2020. The topics of this 2-part event was "Helping Parents Create a Vision for Healthy Families" and "The Elephant in the Room." These professional development events explored the concept of a "healthy family" and learning skills for working with parents and caregivers to create their own version of a healthy family life. A third session was held for discussion. The event altogether drew 19 parenting educator participants.

Tompkins County Strong Roots

Tompkins County held a two-part event focusing on sex positive families. “Creating a Consent Conscious Home” and “Tackling Talks about Porn so You're prepared not scared” featured scenarios where participants can have group discussions about sex positivity. The “Creating a Consent Conscious Home” had 33 attendees and ‘Tackling Talks about Porn so You're prepared not scared’ 25 people attended. Both events drew positive feedback from participants expressing appreciation the information presented.

Community Cafés

Community Café initiatives have been supported by NYSPEP and its member agencies since 2012. Community Cafés are culturally relevant, neighborhood-based opportunities for families and the community service providers to build relationships, develop leadership skills, and identify issues that ensure safe, secure, nurturing environments for the children and families who live in these neighborhoods.

Using the World Café Model and based on the Protective Factors Framework, Community Cafés are a series of guided conversations with four common objectives:

1. Build parent capacity to help families thrive.
2. Build community-based organizations’ capacity to support parent partners in hosting Community Cafés.
3. Identify and strengthen community supports that engage and protect families.
4. Build community capacity to create action plans that enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of families.

In 2020, NYSPEP provided our community coalition grantees with a training of facilitators on the community café model that was completed remotely. Equipped with their training, the cohort facilitated 8 community cafés throughout their counties. To learn more about the Community Café work in New York, please visit www.nyspep.org/community-cafes.

The year 2020 presented challenges due to the global pandemic, and community cafes were hosted virtually this year, which was new for NYSPEP. The pandemic was difficult for everyone, but NYSPEP was responsive and flexible to the needs of community coalitions. Massena Community Services Coalition was able to host 5 cafes on topics including ACES, SafeZones, and youth exploitation prevention with up to 230 registrations and over 100 participants.

The Schuyler County: Early Childhood Community Coalition held community cafes with the following organizations:

1. Schuyler County Youth Bureau and Schuyler County Department of Social Services

2. Schuyler County Head Start Board of Directors
3. Schuyler County Parent Policy Council

At the Community Conversations we discussed questions that the group came up with together. The theme of all three centered around:

- a. What resources were present and available for young families? What is missing or desired?
- b. How accessible are resources, programs, activities? Do families feel welcome?
- c. What resources are needed in relation to the providing stronger opportunities for families through Professional Development for organizations in the Schuyler County community?

Generally, the consensus was that there are not many programs for very young children unless families are involved with Head Start, attend sponsored venues that are hosted by community agencies or have attended events that the Family Play and Resource Center hosted prior to the Pandemic. It was highlighted that the libraries continue to be a hub of resource events for early childhood ages and have had success during the pandemic with sponsoring take home activity kits. Parents indicated that they would enjoy free or low cost “fun, family style” activities at a Community Center that were geared for children six and under. They discussed how helpful it would be to have an indoor ninja course for the winter months. They also expressed concern that the Town’s investment in tourism meant that children were forgotten.

Overall families felt welcome in programs that they attended, although several spoke up that there is no one spot to find out about activities, even if they are virtual. Several individuals that represented organizations also indicated that it would be great to have a social media site, or monthly “here is what is happening” for young families.

2020-21 Training Institute

The Training Institute, is traditionally an opportunity to promote research-to-practice and emerging issues for a wide audience of parenting educators. NYSPEP hosted a successful Training Institute on October 20, 2020. The theme was “Storytelling: A Tool for Resilience” with a goal of supporting parenting educators during this time of increased stress by focusing on the use of storytelling to support resilience and healing. The morning session featured a keynote with Eva Tenuto, Executive Director of the TMI Project. The afternoon workshop featured an interactive experience in which participants had an opportunity using storytelling to support resilience. Resources provided at the Training Institute can be found here: [Click here!](#)

The Institute was funded in part by the NYS Birth through Five project and saw up to 60 attendees.

Webinars

- NYSPEP Pre-Café Orientation 2020: Kara Georgi presents an overview of the Community Café Model, a powerful community engagement tool. Community Cafés are not community presentations, but an opportunity for meaningful dialogue between the café organizers and community members. Come learn how to create safe space for listening, learning and working together toward common goals.
- NYSPEP’s Community Coalitions RFA Orientation Webinar
- NYSPEP Workshop “How to Incorporate Storytelling in your Work: NYSPEP’s November 18, 2020 Workshop “How to Incorporate Storytelling in your Work.” This workshop was facilitated by Meg Akabas, NYSPEP Certified Parenting Educator. The presentation was inspired by the NYSPEP’s recent Training Institute, “Storytelling: A Tool for Resilience”*, which provided a new and deeper understanding of how narrative process and practice promote resiliency and healing.

In the November 18th workshop, participants discussed and shared ideas about how Parenting Educators can apply storytelling with confidence and success in supporting parents. Participant feedback indicated that the workshop provided a better understanding of the importance storytelling and tools for weaving storytelling into parenting education.

Workshop Resources:

- “Parenting From the Inside Out” by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell (book)
 - “Narrative Medicine” by Rita Charon (book)
 - Story Corps - www.storycorps.org and diy.storycorps.org/our-courses/ (website and free online mini-courses)
- Grab Your Oxygen First: Tips to Manage Selfcare: Donna Morrison, Deputy Executive Director of The Guidance Center of Westchester Early Childhood Department, will present a lunch hour conversation on the importance of taking care of yourself as a basic step in being an effective parent, and parenting educator.

This webinar is co-sponsored by New York State Parenting Education Partnership and New York Zero-to-Three Network.

- NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential: What is it? Who should get it? ...and Why?: What is the NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential and what are the steps I need to take to get started?

NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential

NYSPEP’s Parenting Educator Credential defines the knowledge and skills needed by all parenting educators to provide high-quality programs and successfully implement evidence-based curricula.

The Aspire Registry is a required first step in the credential process, providing a resource for the parenting educators to track professional development events and employment history. Peer review panels assess applicant portfolios that document competence achieved through education, training and experience.

There are currently 38 Credentialed Parenting Educators. In this program year, 8 parenting educators renewed their credentials. One applied and was awarded a credential at a higher level, and 7 renewed their credentials, documenting required on-going professional development. To highlight the work of credentialed parenting educators, Dawn Bruce was interviewed for the September 2020 NYSPEP E-news. Dawn shared about her experience as a parenting educator and the value of the NYSPEP Parenting Educator Credential to her in her work with families. To support parenting educators in their on-going professional development, in June of 2020, Jennie Knox presented a webinar on *Ethical Practice for Parenting Educators*, outlining a multi-perspective integrated approach to ethical thinking and practice. Participants were guided through making decisions based on how virtues, principles, and relationships shape work with families.

In February 2020, NYSPEP held a “Summit on Workforce Quality for Parenting Education.” The summary report can be found here: [Click here](#)

Online Database

The online program database serves as a resource to locate parenting programs and local county programs in New York State. The contacts listed in the program database is updated quarterly. The program database was accessed 1,050 times between March 2020 and February 2021.

NYSPEP extends many thanks to the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the New York State Council on Children and Families for their continued support of excellence in parenting education across the state of New York. These agencies provide funding to NYSPEP's fiscal agent, Prevent Child Abuse New York. NYSPEP also wishes to thank our Conveners, Steering Committee members, partners, and individuals who have contributed to and supported our work.

Conveners of the New York State Parenting Education Partnership

- NYS Council on Children and Families
- NYS Office of Children and Family Services / Children and Family Trust Fund
- NYS Office of Mental Health
- Prevent Child Abuse New York
- NYS Education Department

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