A parenting education train-the-trainer program

that teaches professionals how to teach parents

■ To develop healthy relationships with their children
■ To build the practical skills that all parents need to care for their families

Designed and developed by the University of Connecticut

Healthy Environments for Children Initiative

2005
Building Family Futures: A comprehensive program

Increasingly, managers and staff of outpatient, day treatment, and residential programs are being asked to teach their clients essential parenting skills. The goal of this parenting education is to strengthen the clients as parents so that they can care for their children, helping them grow into healthy and capable adults.

To provide parenting education most effectively and efficiently, program staff need the following:
- Training skills to teach adult learners, especially clients in recovery
- Training materials, including
  - Detailed lesson plans designed in accordance with the principles of adult learning and covering a full range of parenting education topics
  - Handouts on parenting topics written at appropriate literacy levels for their clients

Building Family Futures provides all of these elements in a carefully structured, multilevel curriculum. It prepares managers and staff to deliver a comprehensive program of parenting education to their clients, in both individual and group settings.

Instructors

Each Building Family Futures session is led by a facilitator who is an experienced trainer and parenting educator and who has been trained in the use of this curriculum.

What participants have said about Building Family Futures

“Learning this curriculum as a structured way to share parenting information is very helpful.”

“All the information we have received was valuable, both to clients and to providers.”

“Each time I come, I get something useful to take home with me.”

“I’m more aware of not giving up on people.”

“I’m more mindful of client needs.”

“This has been a terrific experience.”

“This curriculum actually helps us implement a real parenting education program…. The training is imperative to what we do. It is at the heart and soul of our work with women in recovery. These are parenting women, and we see these issues day in and day out.”
Training skills: The foundation

Building Family Futures teaches participants how to teach their clients. Recognizing that the professionals who take this course may have a wealth of experience outside the training realm, Building Family Futures helps them construct a foundation of the training skills that are most important in their settings. Participants learn and practice, in a safe and supportive environment, the practical skills that are most effective in reaching adult learners, particularly adult learners who face the challenges that their clients often face.

The training skills are based on the core competencies developed by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction. The Building Family Futures program has developed specialized instruction in these skills for the participants and the particular audience of clients whom they will train.

Each session covers a new training skill, with opportunities to review and practice previously learned skills as well.

Training skills include

- Motivating clients to learn
- Establishing credibility as a trainer
- Managing a positive learning environment
- Handling routine behavior problems in the classroom
- Using effective verbal and nonverbal communication
- Using active listening
- Demonstrating presentation skills
- Using questioning skills
- Clarifying and providing feedback
- Team teaching
- Working in a multicultural world
- Developing new lessons

Sample Learning Objectives

Training Skills

At the end of this program, participants will be able to

- Identify important principles of adult learning
- Describe the psychological environment that best supports client learning
- Identify methods of motivating clients
- Apply techniques that help clients feel successful as learners
- Apply methods of handling their mistakes or gaps in knowledge
- Describe ways of encouraging clients to participate actively in learning
- Apply effective strategies for handling routine behavior problems during a training session
- Identify strategies for handling cultural differences in nonverbal communication
Parenting skills: The heart of the curriculum

While training skills are vital, parenting skills constitute the heart of the Building Family Futures curriculum. This curriculum gives program staff detailed lesson plans, activities, and handouts that they can use to teach clients how to become more effective as parents.

The parenting skills in the curriculum are based on the National Extension Parenting Education Model (NEPEM), developed by the Cooperative Extension System. (The Cooperative Extension System is one of the primary providers of parenting education in the United States.) This comprehensive model, based on decades of careful research in universities across the United States, incorporates a wide range of recommended practices that parents may adopt. These practices include understanding, guiding, nurturing, and motivating children, advocating for children, and self-care for parents.

The Building Family Futures curriculum divides parenting skills into two categories: healthy parent-child relationships and practical aspects of parenting. Each of these categories is subdivided into discrete topics to cover the range of skills that clients need to learn.

Lesson plans: dialog, activities, and handouts

The lesson plans for all topics have been designed to meet the needs of the program staff as trainers and the needs of their clients as learners.

- Each lesson plan starts with carefully constructed learning objectives—both affective objectives (encouraging clients to recognize the importance of the topic) and cognitive objectives (identifying the content that clients will master).
- Each lesson plan contains instructional dialog, activities that reinforce the dialog, and handouts that clients can take with them.
- The instructional language is simple and free of jargon, to make each topic accessible to clients with limited language abilities and literacy levels.
- Information is divided into manageable pieces so that clients will not be overwhelmed.
- Information is presented in a careful sequence to build developing skills.
- To accommodate diverse learning styles and to reinforce spoken instruction, client interaction is integrated into each lesson plan, with detailed directions for trainers on how to conduct the activities.
- Reviews of previous topics are built into each lesson to help clients retain information.
Methodology

Building Family Futures facilitators actually teach the lesson plans as the participants might teach them to their clients. They thus provide not only explicit instruction on the parenting content but also demonstrate how to teach each topic and model the key training skills.

Parent-child relationship lesson plans

Establishing a sound, healthy relationship with children is one of a parent’s key tasks. It’s a demanding task for many parents, and for those in recovery programs, it usually offers special challenges.

To help these parents, Building Family Futures provides guidance on best practices in establishing, supportive relationships between parents and their children.

Parent-child relationship topics include

- Parenting styles
- Ages and stages of development
  - Infants
  - Toddlers
  - Preschoolers
  - School-age children
  - Adolescents
- Communication techniques to build children’s self-esteem
- Encouraging children
- Listening skills for parents
- Teaching children to solve problems
- Telling children how you feel
- Understanding misbehavior
- Guidelines for effective discipline
- Guidance techniques: logical and natural consequences

Each lesson plan covers a new parent-child relationship topic, with opportunities to review previously learned topics as well.

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Sample Learning Objectives

**Parent-Child Relationship Topics**

At the end of this program, clients will be able to

- Associate the key features of parenting styles with outcomes for children
- Recognize the importance of understanding the stages of child development
- Identify the key physical, social/emotional, and intellectual features of children at various stages of development
- Identify effective behaviors for parenting teenagers
- Apply encouraging communication methods with children
- Apply steps to determine whether a child or an adult needs to solve a given problem
- List the steps of an effective method to teach children how to solve appropriate problems
- Recognize the value of communicating their feelings to children

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Practical parenting lesson plans

Parents in recovery programs often need assistance in mastering the practical skills of everyday life as well as child-parent relationship skills. The Building Family Futures curriculum provides training in these areas as well.

Practical parenting topics include

- Caring for yourself
- Managing your stress
- Feeding your family
- Resolving conflict peacefully
- Keeping track of your money
- Making decisions about money
- Shopping and keeping food safe
- Finding housing
- Keeping your children healthy and safe
- Keeping your home healthy and safe
- Advocating for your family
- Working with your child’s school

Each lesson plan covers a new practical parenting topic, with opportunities to review previously learned topics as well.

Sample Learning Objectives

Practical Parenting Topics

At the end of this program, clients will be able to

- Recognize the value of caring for themselves so that they can be effective parents
- Identify constructive strategies that they can use to manage the stress in their lives
- Identify healthy food choices for their children and themselves
- Identify a strategy for keeping track of their money that they can use
- Distinguish between financial wants and needs
- List ways of stretching their food dollars
- Apply the steps of advocating effectively for their families
- List key features to consider when choosing housing for their families
### Schedule for a typical Building Family Futures training session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (minutes)</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Activity for participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Opening circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants transition to their roles as learners, connect this training with their work, and focus their attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Training skills</td>
<td>Participants deliver practice presentations. Volunteers give short, prepared presentations on any topic previously learned, using as many as possible of the training skills learned to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants review the training skill learned in previous session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants learn a new training skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Parent-child relationship topics</td>
<td>Participants review the parent-child relationship topic learned in previous session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants learn a new parent-child relationship topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants customize the new parent-child relationship topic for individual programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Practical parenting topics</td>
<td>Participants review the practical parenting topic learned in previous session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants learn a new practical parenting topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participants customize the new practical parenting topic for individual programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>Participants provide feedback to facilitators. Closing circle</td>
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Building Family Futures was designed and developed by the Healthy Environments for Children Initiative

[www.hec.uconn.edu](http://www.hec.uconn.edu)

University of Connecticut

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