



What is the Strengthening Families Programme?

- SFP is an evidence –based **14 week skills-based** programme for families with children or teenagers to help build positive relationships.
- It was developed in the USA in 1982 and can now be found in more than 35 countries.
- It is a 3 skills programme that focuses on parent skills; child/teen skills; and family skills.
- Families of all different shapes and sizes can apply to the programme. Any adult who takes a parenting role with a young person can be considered a “parent”.
- **Extensive research has found that** found that families experience many improvements and benefits:
 - **Parent Skills** : Increases positive parenting skills and confidence; monitoring and supervision
 - **Child/Teen Skills**: improves communication, problem solving and anger and behavioural control.
 - **Family Skills** improves family attachment/bonding, harmony, communication, organization, family strengths and resilience.

SFP in Ireland

Since 2008, SFP has been offered in Ireland, starting in Cork and then expanding across different counties. The programme has been completed by over 500 families in Ireland and is implemented via a wide range of interagency stakeholders in communities.

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) Information for Agencies

THE ROLE OF AGENCIES IN SFP

- The value and success of SFP in Ireland has revolved around the interagency involvement of agencies, organisations & volunteers.
- Agencies support SFP in their area through:
 - **facilitation** on the programme every week;
 - membership on the local/regional **SFP steering group**;
 - as **referral agent**
 - **site coordination**
 - contribution of **venue, catering or childcare**
 - or **funding**
- Each role is equally fundamental to the successful implementation in communities.
- A 2–day SFP training is a pre-requisite to facilitating/delivering the programme, and in some areas, is needed for other roles. Interagency training can be requested with the local SFP Site Coordinator or through the National SFP Council of Ireland. All agencies and roles can apply.

WHAT HAPPENS AT SFP?

- SFP usually takes place in **the evening time** (approximately 6pm – 8:30pm).
- **Transport and childcare** can be provided if needed.
- **Dinner** is provided for all families.
- An SFP Team, made up of local agencies and volunteers support families throughout the SFP journey. Parents and teens are divided into groups and are assigned Group Leaders.
- Other families will also take part in SFP over the 14 weeks.
- The Site Coordinator will discuss policies around confidentiality, health and safety, sharing of information, etc.
- On completion of your 14 weeks, there is a fun graduation ceremony for all the family!

SFP SKILLS

Parents

- Encouraging good behaviour
- Family meetings
- Communication skills
- Handling peer pressure
- Managing Stress
- Problems solving & giving direction
- Setting Limits

Teens (12-16 years)

- Speaking and listening
- Staying cool in conflicts
- Speaking up for yourself
- Being who you want to be
- Problems solving
- Coping with criticism and anger

Family Skills

- Communication and family meetings
- Goals and Objectives
- Problem solving and giving directions
- Family Values
- Empathy
- Managing Anger

Children (6-12 years):

- Speaking and listening skills
- Problem solving
- Parents Practice
- Childs Game
- Recognising Feelings
- Understanding Rewards

How do I refer a family to the programme?

Contact your local Site Coordinator for an application form. You can find an SFP Directory on www.sfpcouncilireland.ie.

Referral agents are typically a family's support throughout the programme, and link person for the Site Coordinator, to ensure the needs of the family are being met.



National SFP Council of Ireland

The National SFP Council of Ireland is a nationally representative inter-regional group of organisations involved in the management and delivery of SFP across Ireland. You can contact us on 01 8832142 or through our website www.sfpcouncilireland.ie for further information or questions.