¡CELEBRANDO FAMILIAS!

¡Celebrando Familias! (¡CF!) was developed for Spanish speaking families dealing with or at high risk for multiple problems: substance use disorders; multi-generational trauma; physical and mental health challenges; child abuse/neglect and family violence. It is based on Celebrating Families!™ (CF!) – a nationally recognized and implemented, evidence-based, trauma-informed, skill building program. ¡Celebrando Familias! serves the whole family: children, parents, and children’s caregivers, with a specific component for families with young children.

¡Celebrando Familias! was created by a team of bi-lingual Spanish, experienced CF! group leaders. The adaptation/translation was requested by community leaders as Hispanic/Latinx children are at high risk:

- Nationally, 51 percent of Hispanic children have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), compared with 40 percent of white, non-Hispanic children and 23 percent of Asian non-Hispanic children. The most common ACEs for all races/ethnicities are economic hardship, divorce and separation of parent or guardian. For Hispanic children, the next-most common are living with an adult with a substance use problem and parental incarceration.
- Even though Hispanics have high rates of abstinence from alcohol, Hispanics who choose to drink are more likely to consume higher volumes of alcohol than non-Hispanic Whites.
- Hispanic youth are more at risk for addiction, as age of initiation is highly associated with the development of dependency in adulthood: 8th grade Hispanic students are more likely to report binge drinking than non-Hispanic white students and Hispanic students at all grade levels were more likely than non-Hispanic black students to report using illicit drugs, other than marijuana.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program’s goal is to help the whole family recover and have an opportunity to live a safe, healthy, and happy life. Weekly sessions are organized utilizing the Healthy Living Circle that defines health as physical, social, psychological, and spiritual. In-person implementation consists of a family meal; 90-minute age-appropriate, skill building groups; and a 30-minute family activity. Effective online program strategies are available.

SESSION TOPICS

1. Getting Started
2. Healthy Living
3. Nutrition
4. Communication
5. Feelings & Defenses
6. Anger Management
7. Facts about Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs
8. Chemical Dependency is a Disease
9. Chemical Dependency Affects the Whole Family
10. Goal Setting
11. Making Healthy Choices
12. Healthy Boundaries
13. Healthy Friendships & Relationships
14. How We Learn
15. Our Uniqueness
16. Celebration!

1 https://www.childtrends.org/publications/prevalence-adverse-childhood-experiences-nationally-state-race-ethnicity#
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Every session includes components focused on helping participants develop practices of mindfulness and gratitude: (1) Centering; (2) Acts of Kindness: Weekly assignments to do a kind thing for someone else; and (3) Wonder of the World (WOW) Moments where participants are asked to report back to their group about something that touched them the previous week.

¡Celebrando Familias! 0-3 component was specifically developed for families with younger children and includes the basic program’s instruction on Healthy Living Skills, with additional emphasis on “Critical Parenting Skills” for young children (see chart below). The 0-3 component includes a Family Time (for young children) offered before the meal and take-home “Caregiver Pages” for each age group. Group leaders are instructed to be Guides on the Side, coaching parents in using the new skills.

YOUNG CHILDREN’S CURRICULUM (AGES 0-3)

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EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluation results indicate significant impact on family organization, cohesion, communication, conflict resolution, strengths and resilience, parent involvement, improvement in parenting skills, and alcohol and substance use reduction. Responses by parents about the impact of the program were highly positive¹. A recent study of Spanish speaking families attending ¡CFI! online confirmed statistically significant improvements with small to moderate effect sizes in areas of coping and parenting skills and family relationships².

An unexpected finding was the program’s effectiveness as a primary prevention program at Dorsa Elementary School, one of the pilot sites. At this site, five families were referred from Dependency Drug Courts. The additional 16 families voluntarily participated after learning of the program from the Dorsa school principal. These families were from a high-risk community but without identified substance use problems.

Curriculum, training, and training for trainers are available for this evidence-based program from NACoA.

¹ All evaluation reports available at www.celebratingfamilies.net/evaluation_reports.htm
² Ed Cohen, Ph.D., evaluator, January 2021.