



A PRODUCT OF NACoA

“Published reports and current evaluations have shown that Celebrating Families! (CF!) is effective in improving parenting skills, family relationships, and family communication for parents whose substance use has resulted in involvement with child welfare and [treatment] courts. As a ‘front end’ engagement intervention, CF! is the only intervention that can effectively provide a positive learning experience for parents who might not yet have engaged in treatment, and who have multiple barriers to recovery.” -Dr. Ed Cohen, San Jose State University, Evaluator.

Celebrating Families! (CF!) is an evidence-based, trauma-informed, skill building program of 16 sessions serving the whole family: pregnant mothers, children aged birth -18, their parents and caregivers. Each session begins with a family meal, followed by 90-minute age-appropriate instructional session, and ends with a 30-minute family activity where families practice the skills they are learning. CF! was **developed specifically for families** dealing with or at high risk for complex problems: substance use disorders (SUDs); intergenerational trauma; physical and mental health challenges; cognitive deficits due to trauma, genetics, or in-utero exposure; and safety (child abuse/neglect and family violence). CF! addresses these needs through building healthy living skills and providing information. (See Skill Chart, pg. 3.) Effective virtual/hybrid program strategies are also available.

Celebrating Families! – A Transformative Family-Centered Approach

Celebrating Families! is an intergenerational program designed to break cycles of the disease of addiction, violence, and trauma while healing and nurturing family bonds. Implemented in over 40 U.S. states, Washington D.C., and Alberta (Canada), it is tailored for diverse communities, including Spanish-speaking families, Native American families (through the Wellbriety partnership), families with young children, and those in residential treatment or juvenile court systems.

Why Celebrating Families! Works

- Whole-Family Healing: Uses a dual-family, trauma-informed approach that enhances reunification rates while reducing time in child welfare systems.
- Skill-Building for Stability: Empowers families with tools for healthy living, including nutrition, sleep, and positive communication.
- Breaking Cycles of the Disease of Addiction & Trauma: Addresses substance use and mental health challenges in every session, helping all family members learn how to trust, identify feelings, and communicate in a healthy way, and help parents develop the skills needed for sobriety and safe, nurturing relationships.
- Adaptability for High-Need Populations: Tailored to families at risk due to substance use, learning differences, and mental health challenges.

The Science Behind Celebrating Families!

Research underscores the program’s effectiveness in preventing substance use disorders (SUD) across generations:

- Children of parents with SUDs are eight times more likely to develop an SUD.
- Parental SUD is cited in 26% of substantiated cases of child maltreatment and 36% of cases in which a child was removed from the home. (USDHHS, 2023)
- 1 in 3 children entered foster care in 2017 due to parental drug abuse (Child Trends, 2017)
- 50-80% of child welfare cases involve parental SUDs (SAMHSA, 2009).
- Children in child welfare with a parent with SUD experience longer out-of-home placements, repeated involvement in the system, and lower reunification rates (USDHHS, 2023).

Evidence-Based Outcomes

Celebrating Families! is recognized by The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare and is a Best Practice for Family Drug Courts.

“Results have demonstrated consistently superior outcomes when manualized, cognitive-behavioral family interventions were added to the Drug Court, including ... Celebrating Families! (Adult Drug Court Best Practices, Vol. II, National Assoc. for Drug Court Professionals, 2015).

“FTCs that offered Celebrating Families! improved parenting capacity, increased participants’ understanding of their substance use disorder (SUD) and had fewer new maltreatment allegations.” (Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. Center for Children and Family Futures and National Association of Drug Court Professionals. (2019).

Evaluations show:

- **Doubled reunification rates and reduced time to reunification for families** in Dependency Drug Court (Brook et al., 2015).
- **Significant increases in effective parenting skills**, including positive discipline strategies (Sparks et al., 2013).
- **Demonstrated effectiveness in Hispanic communities** (Coleman, 2006).
- **Strengthened protective factors**, such as an 80% increase in family meals, emotional expression, and community service engagement (Sparks et al., 2013).
- **Successful online adaptation**, leading to measurable improvements in family outcomes (Cohen & Tisch, 2020).
- **93% no longer used substances** to cope with emotions like sadness or anger
- **91% of children reported they feel “more hopeful about their family’s future.”**
- **89% of parents talk to their children about feelings**
- **89% of parents reported improved communication and connection with their children.**
- **83% of participants said they use fewer harmful coping strategies** post-program.
- **100% of parents said they are good at protecting their child’s safety.**
- **94% of parents are now strong advocates for their children.**

Why Family-Based Programs Matter

Family-focused interventions, like Celebrating Families! are nearly 15 times more effective than other prevention approaches (UNODC, 2014). With so few evidence-based programs addressing the disease of addiction’s impact on families, Celebrating Families! stands as an essential tool for breaking generational cycles and fostering resilience.

Insights

- Benefit of Helping Others: Acts of Kindness
- Knowledge We Are Part of Something Larger Than Ourselves: Wonder of The World (WOW Moments)
- An Attitude of Gratitude: WOW Moments
- Personal & Family Values Clarification
- Recognizing and Celebrating Each Person’s Uniqueness and Personal Power

Skills

- Strengthening Family Relationships through Family Meals & Family Time Activities
- Affirming, Encouraging Our Children: Importance of 1-on-1 Time with Children, Telling Children “I love you,” Reading to Children
- Centering/Meditation/Relaxation Practices
- Planning Nutritious Meals Together/Cleaning Up After Meals Together
- Communication: Use of “I” Messages, Ways to Communicate, Active Listening
- Appropriate Expression of Feelings, Understanding and Emotional Management
- Anger Management, Avoiding Fights, and Healthy Conflict Resolution
- Goal Setting, Dreaming/Planning for the Future
- Problem Solving: Steps in Making a Wise Decision
- Becoming a Nurturing Parent
- Maintaining a Recovery- Safe Home and Environment for Families
- Becoming a Safe Family: Developing Safety Plans and Family Agreements
- Choosing Safe and Trustworthy Friends
- Finding Safe People
- Recognizing and Establishing Boundaries
- Saying NO to Others
- Understanding SUD and the Genetic and Environmental Risks for Families
- Understanding Age-Appropriate, De-Stigmatizing Language to Discuss Disease of Addiction/SUD in Families
- Understanding Risk and Protective Factors Related to COAs
- Utilizing Helpful Resources

Information

- Components of Healthy Living
- Impact of disease of Addiction/SUD on the brain and body
- Age-appropriate content for the family with disease of addiction/SUD
- Nutrition and Impact of Sugar on the Body and Brain
- Facts about Alcohol, Nicotine, Cannabis and other Substances, Medication Safety, Substance Misuse; Substance Effect on Body and Brain, Risk of Overdose,
- Disease of Addiction/ Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and Increase Risk for families
- Recognition of the Influence of Media, Advertising, Social Media
- Facts About How SUD and its related Trauma Affects Families, Friends and Relationships
- Seven Cs
- Building strength and resilience in your children and family
- Attachment-Based Limit Setting
- Choosing Good Friends & How to Be a Good Friend
- Facts about Domestic/Family Violence
- Learning Differences, Anxiety, Depression, ADHD, and FASD
- Risk and Protective Factors
- Recurrence of SUD
- Why Treatment And Recovery Works
- Protecting our Children: Safety Planning, Good Nutrition, Sufficient Sleep, Taking Action on Their Behalf
- Healthy Ways To Celebrate Without Alcohol, Other Substances



Celebrating Families! and ¡Celebrando Familias! are copyrighted programs of National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA)
Nacoa.org/celebrating-families nacoa@nacoa.org 888.554.2627

For more information on Wellbriety/Celebrating Families!, partnership, contact White Bison: 877.8711495 or info@whitebison.org