



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Celebrating Families!?

Celebrating Families! (CF!) is an evidence-based, trauma-informed, skill building program of 16 sessions serving the whole family: pregnant mothers, children ages 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, multiple problems: substance use disorders (SUD); multi-generational trauma; physical and mental health challenges; cognitive deficits due to trauma, genetics, or in-utero exposure; and safety (child abuse/neglect and family violence). Effective in-person and online program strategies are available.

Is Celebrating Families! a Parenting Program?

Published reports and current evaluations have shown that 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 dependency drug courts. But as a whole-family recovery program, it is much more than that! Each session provides educational support that is age appropriate for every member of the family. Further, Dear Caregiver Pages are available for foster parents, family members involved in Kinship programs, and parents. Dear Caregiver Pages provide additional information so that every adult who cares for children in the program are aware of skills taught to better practice these skills in day-to-day situations in-between sessions. Further, through the 0 thru 3 Years program, pregnant mothers and parents of young children learn, experience, and practice family skills that support attachment, communication, social skills, and resilience. Group leaders nurture the development of the attachment between parents and their young children.

Does CF! Help with Family Reunification?

Evaluation studies document CF!'s effectiveness in doubling the rate of reunification while decreasing the time in half.

Is Celebrating Families! Available for Diverse Populations?

Yes, there are adaptations of Celebrating Families! to meet the needs of diverse populations.

- ¡Celebrando Familias! was created for Spanish speaking families
- Wellbriety/ Celebrating Families! Partnership supports Native American tribal communities.

Curriculum, training, and consultation support is available for each adaptation.

How Long is the CF! Program?

CF! is a 16-session program, often offered weekly. CF! builds healthy living skills and educates on important areas to promote healing and nurture resilience. Every session, families are introduced to, and practice, important skills with their peers in an educational support group. With the planning that takes place a few weeks prior to the program, and a final review after the program ends, a 16-session program can extend to 18 or 19 weeks in total for staffing considerations.

What Topics Are Covered During the 16 Sessions?

Session 1: Orientation and Getting Started

Session 2: Healthy Living

Session 3: Nutrition

Session 4: Communication

Session 5: Feelings and Emotional Management

Session 6: Expressing Anger in a Healthy Way

Session 7: Understanding Alcohol, Nicotine, Cannabis, and Other Substances

Session 8: Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a Disease

Session 9: The Whole Family is Affected by SUD and Its Related Trauma

Session 10: Goal Setting

Session 11: Making Healthy Choices

Session 12: Healthy Boundaries

Session 13: Healthy Friendships and Relationships

Session 14: How We Learn

Session 15: Our Uniqueness

Session 16: Celebration!

*Note: Young Children session agendas are modified to be more simplified/age-appropriate.

What Kind of Staffing is Required to provide the Program?

CF! can be provided by paid staff, volunteers, or community collaborations. An administrator/program coordinator is key. It is also advisable to ensure your team includes a person who is clinically trained.

Depending upon the requirements of your state, one group leader may need prevention certification. It is also helpful to consider peer support specialists in healthy recovery for both substance use disorder and family impact. More mature programs can even consider graduates of the program as group leaders. Depending upon the size of your program, you may wish to start with a team of 8 – 10 group leaders. After the family meal, families are divided into five groups - one parents group and four children's groups – where each group will need two group leaders. For small groups, at times a single group leader is possible with access to a floater who provides assistance when needed. For online groups, two group leaders are always recommended.

What Kind of Curriculum Is Needed?

The online platform provides the entire curriculum needed for the program, with an array of additional support materials and resources to support successful programs.

Is It Possible to Provide CF! Virtually?

The Celebrating Families! curriculum includes guidance to support online/hybrid adaptations. Research findings provide evidence that when administered virtually, outcomes are similar to the in person implemented program.

Is Training Available?

Yes, Group Leader and Train-the-Trainer training programs are available, both in-person and online. Trainings will help your team – staff, volunteers, or community collaborators – become more familiar with the program and prepared to work with your families!

Group Leader Training Objectives include:

- 1) To discover the uniqueness and effectiveness of the CF! program
- 2) To introduce, and become comfortable using, the CF! curriculum
- 3) How to facilitate educational support groups across the age continuum
- 4) To experience program exercises to increase working knowledge of the program
- 5) To begin planning your CF! program

For our Train-the Trainer program, group leaders need to take part in a certified CF! Group Leader training, complete one cycle leading a parents' group, and complete one cycle leading a children's group. Train-the-Trainer opportunities prepare training candidates to successfully provide, and present, their first Celebrating Families! Group Leader training.

Consultation services are also available. Consultants can work individually with administrators/coordinators, attend planning meetings, or review the success and outcomes of your cycle with your team. Services are available in 3-hour bundles.

Are Evaluation Tools Available?

Celebrating Families! provides a wide range of interventions that strengthen family recovery, improve family functioning, and increase healthy living skills. Measuring these improvements for the families participating in Celebrating Families! is valuable to the families, the overall effectiveness of your program, as well as sustainability. Online data collection tools are available with curriculum. Additional services, such as the creation of an outcomes report, are available for a fee.

For more information about the Celebrating Families! program, contact NACoA Director of Programs Mary Beth Collins: mbcollins@nacoa.org or call 301.468.0985.