

### Why is parenting education important?

Research indicates that parenting skills are critical to children's optimal well-being and can be enhanced by effective parenting education. Effective parenting education can strengthen and support families and communities by promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors leading to positive outcomes for parents and children.

#### Effective parenting education programs have been connected to ...

- ✓ Enhanced child-rearing skills
- ✓ Increased parental competence and confidence
- ✓ Increased child development knowledge
- ✓ More effective parental monitoring and discipline
- ✓ Strengthened parent-child relationships
- ✓ Enhanced child health, cognitive development, and social-emotional skills
- ✓ Decreased rates of child maltreatment

### Implementing evidence-based parenting education series

Over the five years of the grant, Project LAUNCH partnered with the Central Oregon Family Resource Center, which is part of the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) Hub initiative to implement 25 evidence-based parenting education series targeting families with children ages 0-8. (A series consists of multiple weeks of classes.) Five of the series were implemented in Spanish. The evidence-based curricula used were *Nurturing Parenting ABCs*, *Incredible Years*, and *Make Parenting A Pleasure*. Utilizing evidence-based programs increases the likelihood of positive outcomes for parents and children. The series were implemented by facilitators trained in the specific curriculum they were teaching. To reduce participation barriers such as transportation issues, the multi-week series were conducted in a variety of Deschutes County communities. Other examples of implementation best practices included serving meals, providing child care, and offering attendance incentives. The series reached a culturally and socio-economically diverse audience of parents.

#### Building Capacity and Sustainability

During the Project LAUNCH grant, 47 individuals were trained to facilitate at least one of the evidence-based curricula offered. Regional facilitator trainings were made possible through the collaborative partnerships between Project LAUNCH, the Central Oregon Parenting Education (OPEC) Hub, and other community agencies. Facilitators from a variety of sectors in the community, including child care providers, relief nurseries, early intervention, health educators, home visitors, and the Family Resource Center participated in the trainings. Training representatives from across sectors increases the community's capacity to implement and sustain the parenting education program.

### Evaluation Methods

Data collection methods used to determine the impact of parents' participation in parenting education series included the Parenting Skills Ladder (PSL), a Parent Focus Group, and the Cross-Site Evaluation (CSE) Parent Survey. Additionally, in 2010 and 2011 the pre- and post-Parent Practices Interview (PPI) was administered to parents completing *The Incredible Years* series but data were not available for cumulative reanalysis for this brief.

## Findings

From 2011-2014, 141 participants in the parenting education series reported on changes in parenting skills, knowledge, behavior as well as their perception of their children's behavior through the Parenting Skills Ladder (PSL). **Parents reported statistically significant improvements in all PSL items:**

**352**

parents enrolled in a parenting education series

**194**

completed a series by attending 70% or more of the classes

- ✓ Know normal behavior for my child's age level
- ✓ Show my child love and affection frequently
- ✓ Listen to my child to understand their feelings
- ✓ Help my child feel good about themselves
- ✓ Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules
- ✓ Know fun activities to help my child learn
- ✓ Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child
- ✓ Play with my child frequently
- ✓ Protect my child from unsafe conditions
- ✓ Talk with other parents to share experiences
- ✓ Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting
- ✓ Understand my goals and values as a parent

*"I am more concerned, dedicated, and committed now to being the best parent I can be."*

*~Deschutes County Parent*

Parents also indicated significant improvement in PSL items related to their child's behavior including their child...

- ✓ Showing concern for others
- ✓ Willing to follow limits and rules
- ✓ Getting along with others

## Implications for Policy and Practice

Parents participating in LAUNCH-funded parenting education series indicated significant improvement in their parenting behavior and that of their children. Research indicates that effective parenting is a protective factor against child maltreatment and leads to positive outcomes for children's health and well-being. Therefore, it is recommended that future initiatives include parenting education as an approach to improving overall outcomes for children and families.

*Of the 148 parents completing the CSE parent survey regarding the impact of LAUNCH services on their child...*

**81%**

*reported improvement in their child's overall health and well-being*

**79%**

*said that participation helped prepare their child for school*

**Nationwide, Project LAUNCH demonstration sites are pioneering new ways to promote young child wellness (prenatal - age 8). In 2009, Deschutes County was selected as the LAUNCH demonstration site for Oregon. For information visit: [Deschutes.org/ecwellness](http://Deschutes.org/ecwellness)**

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