

**Validation of the  
Nurturing Skills for Families Programs**

**Nurturing the Families of Hawaii:**  
Nurturing Parenting Skills for the Prevention of  
Child Abuse and Neglect

Final Report 2008-2009

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# **Nurturing the Families of Hawaii: Program to Build Nurturing Parenting Skills for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect**

## **Abstract of Findings**

Nurturing the Families of Hawaii is a state-wide parenting project designed for the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect. The program was first implemented in Hawaii July 2005. The project, funded by Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS) was implemented by the Institute for Family Enrichment (TIFFE) located in Honolulu. A 12 session parenting program is offered to parents and their children statewide. Participation in the program is voluntary. The Nurturing Program, evidence based parenting program, was modified and implemented to meet the specific needs of the families. Each lesson lasts 90 to 120 minutes with parents and children attending separate groups which meet concurrently. Families participate jointly in a snack/meal time that involves fun family activities.

Parents are required to complete pre and post program inventories. Highlights from the data generated from the completion of the inventories support the following findings:

1. Forty-four 12 session programs were implemented statewide.
2. A total of 356 parents participated in the Nurturing the Families of Hawaii Parenting program. A total of 1157 inventories were completed.
3. Of this total, 220 parents (62%) completed all 12 program sessions.
4. The data generated from the administration of the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) indicate that posttest mean scores in all five parenting patterns measured by the AAPI-2 showed significant increases. Parents who completed the program increased their appropriate expectations of their children; increased their level of empathy; learned alternatives to corporal punishment; increased their level of self awareness and self-worth; and increased their own power and independence as well as the power and independence of their children.
5. The data also show that parents who completed the 12 session program had significantly higher posttest mean scores than the pretest mean scores of parents who dropped out.
6. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the parents indicated they were abused as children by someone inside their family while 24% indicated they were abused by someone outside their family.
7. Posttest mean scores show significant positive increases between the pre and posttest scores on the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS) in knowledge of common parenting practices.
8. Posttest mean scores show a significant increase in the frequency of use of appropriate, nurturing parenting practices.

The findings indicate that families who completed the 12 session Nurturing the Families of Hawaii Parenting Program improved their nurturing parenting practices in comparison to families who dropped out of the program.

## **Nurturing the Families of Hawaii Parenting Program**

The *Nurturing Skills for Families* model of the Nurturing Programs was selected as the model to implement in Hawaii. The Nurturing Skills for Families is a curriculum of 80 lessons presented in two lesson guides: one presenting lessons for parents and the other presenting lessons for children. The lessons are taken from the two evidenced-based Nurturing Parenting Programs for parents and children birth to five and school-age. In the Nurturing

Skills model, lessons are presented in 18 competency skill areas such as discipline, empathy, handling feelings, age-appropriate developmental expectations, etc. The Nurturing Skills Lesson Guides for Parents and Children allow professionals to tailor-make parenting programs for families by selecting specific parenting lessons that meet the specific needs of the target population.

## **Program Description**

The Nurturing the Families of Hawaii Parenting Program was created to address the parenting needs of families at the primary and secondary levels prevention. Parents and their children attend 12, ninety-minute group-based sessions.

- Session 1: Hope and Fears, Assessment, Nurturing as a Lifestyle, Nurturing Parenting
- Session 2: Children's Brain Development and Ages and Stages of Development
- Session 3: Developing Empathy in Parents and Children and Getting Needs Met
- Session 4: Discipline, Morals, Values and Family Rules
- Session 5: Rewarding and Praising Children and their Behavior
- Session 6: Using Punishments to Guide Children, Time Out and Why Parents Spank
- Session 7: Recognizing and Understanding and Handling Feelings
- Session 8: Understanding, Handling and Expressing Anger and Stress
- Session 9: Families and Alcohol and Keeping Kids Drug Free
- Session 10: Building Personal Power and Helping Children Manage their Behavior
- Session 11: Keeping Children Safe and Possessive and Violent Relationships
- Session 12: Budget Management, Assessment and Graduation

Parents and children attend separate sessions that meet concurrently. Lessons for both programs have compatible competencies to reinforce the adoption of the new parenting concepts by all members of the family.

## **Program Assessments**

Parents participating in the Nurturing the Families of Hawaii parenting program were asked to complete two inventories at the beginning (pre) and end (post) of their 12 session program. The two inventories are the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) and the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS).

**The Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)**, a norm-referenced inventory designed to assess the parenting and child rearing beliefs of parents. The AAPI-2 measures beliefs in five constructs:

- Construct A: Inappropriate Developmental Expectations
- Construct B: Parental Lack of Empathy
- Construct C: Strong Belief in Corporal Punishment
- Construct D: Reversing Parent-Child Family Roles
- Construct E: Oppressing Children's Power and Independence

Responses to the AAPI provide indexes of risk for abusive and neglecting parenting behaviors in all five sub-scales.

**The Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS)** is a criterion reference inventory designed to assess the quality of family relationships and history, knowledge of nurturing parenting skills, and frequency of use of program skills. The NSCS gathers information in six domains:

- Subscale A: About Me
- Subscale B: About my Childhood
- Subscale C: About my Partner

Subscale D: About my Children and Family  
Subscale E: My Knowledge of Nurturing Parenting  
Subscale F: My Utilization of Nurturing Parenting Skills

Responses to the NSCS provide information about the nurturing atmosphere of the household and the ability of parents to implement nurturing parenting practices.

## **FY 2008/09 Findings**

1. During the course of the FY 2008/09, 44 twelve session programs were implemented throughout Hawaii. Of this total, 11 programs were implemented on the Big Island; 15 programs on Maui/Molokai; 3 programs on Kauai; and 15 programs on Oahu. A total of 356 families participated in the program.
2. During the year, 1,157 inventories (AAPI and NSCS) were completed. Of this total, 872 represent matched AAPI (220/440) and matched NSCS (216/432). This means, 356 parents had an AAPI pretest and posttest and 329 parents had matched pre and post NSCS. These cases are referred to as Matched cases.
3. A total of 329 parents completed 605 AAPI inventories. Matched inventories totaled 220 out of the possible 329 parents for a completion rate of 67%.
4. A total of 300 parents were administered the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale. Of this total, 216 parents completed pre and post assessments for a match completion rate of 72%.
5. Of the 1,157 inventories, 165 AAPI inventories and 120 NSCS inventories were either pre or posttests, but not matched (pre and post). These cases are referred to as Unmatched. It is likely that unmatched in this category represent people who dropped out before the posttest was given during the last session; completed the program but failed to take a posttest; or took a posttest but did not take a pretest most likely because they entered the program after the first session when the pretest was administered.

Summary tables detailing the specific findings for all programs offered on each of the Islands are appended to the report. Pages 157 to 161 represent the summary tables for FY 2009-09.

## **Demographic Findings**

The following represent the salient findings of the demographic data gathered during the year-long study. Demographic data provide us an indication of the characteristics of the families participating in the classes.

1. Beginning July 1 of 2008 to June 30, 2009, three hundred fifty six parents completed 1157 program inventories. Of this total, 605 were AAPIs and 552 were NSCS'.
2. A total of 44 twelve session programs were implemented throughout the state.
3. Demographic findings of the parents who participated in the program indicate:
  - 74 % female and 26% male.
  - 33% Pacific Islander; 29% White; 17% Asian; 7% Hispanic; and 1% Black. Thirteen percent (13%) indicated Other as their Race/Nationality.
  - 33% are between the ages of 31 to 40 yrs; 23% between 41 and over 50 yrs; 17% between 26 to 30 yrs.
  - 31% of the participants are married; 34% single; 35% other.
  - 26% of the participants finished high school—20% did not; 28% indicated they had some college while 19% graduated college; and 5% had post graduate degrees.
  - 40% of the participants indicated they earn under \$15,000 while 9% earn over \$60,000. The remaining 51% earn \$15,000 to \$60,000.
  - 90% of the participants indicated they were not in the military.
  - 49% of the participants had one (32%) or two children (17%); 15% indicated they didn't have any children.

- 24% of the participants indicated they were abused by some one within their family; 36% indicated they were abused by some one outside their family.

### **AAPI Findings**

1. A review of the AAPI data indicates 220 parents (60%) completed pre and posttests (matched pairs) and 40% of the parents (165) completed pretests or posttests only (unmatched).
2. The data indicate that posttest mean (average) scores per construct are higher than the pretest mean scores in each of the five constructs (subscales) of the AAPI.
3. The data also show that the posttest mean scores per construct are higher than the pretest scores of people who dropped out and didn't finish their program.
4. Data further indicate that the number of parents expressing high risk parenting beliefs dropped substantially in each construct: Expectations 16% to 8%; Empathy 32% to 15%; Corporal Punishment 11% to 6%; Reversing Parent Child Roles 25% to 18%; and Oppressing Children's Power and Independence 16% to 10%.

### **NSCS Findings**

1. A review of the data generated from the administration of the NSCS indicates 300 parents completed 552 inventories.
2. Posttest data indicate that about 57% of the parents indicate personal histories of abuse/neglect and family dysfunction.
3. Posttest data indicate that about 69% of the parents indicate dysfunctional and/or abusive partner relationships.
4. Parent responses to Part D: Knowledge of nurturing parenting practices show significant ( $p < .05$ ) improvement between pre (12.54) and posttest (15.56) mean scores.
5. Posttest data for Part E: Utilization of Nurturing Skills shows an increased frequency of use of Nurturing Parenting skills from a pretest mean score of 38.29 to a posttest mean score of 42.
6. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the parents who didn't complete a NSCS posttest indicated they had a dysfunctional childhood and currently have a dysfunctional partner relationship (62%).

## **Summary and Conclusions**

The findings support the following conclusions:

- Parents who complete all 12 sessions of the Nurturing the Families of Hawaii parenting program develop a stronger nurturing parenting philosophy which entails stronger nurturing parenting beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. The program lessons and the program facilitators are generally doing a competent job improving the nurturing parenting skills of parents, while concurrently reducing their risk for child abuse and neglect.
- Across the entire state of Hawaii, the data show that parents who complete their 12 session program do improve their nurturing parenting beliefs and practices in comparison to parents who drop out and leave the program. Participating in the entire program provides the best opportunity for parents to reduce their high risk parenting beliefs and behaviors and adopt healthier nurturing practices.
- The program is targeting and attracting the appropriate families for the nurturing parenting classes. Self-report data indicate 24% of the parents indicated they were abused as children by someone outside their immediate family. In addition, 36% of the parents indicated they were abused as children by a member of their immediate family. For many families, abuse and neglect become a way of life that is viewed upon as "normal" within the context of their reality. Because self report abuse and neglect data have a tendency to be under-reported, it can be suspected that the percentage of actual abuse and neglect is much higher than the percentage of self-identified reports.

- Other self-report data gathered on the NSCS suggest that a high percentage of the families are living in conditions that generate the type of stress that challenge nurturing parenting practices from being a consistent and daily occurrence. The classes are proving to be a resource for the parents to manage their stress, socialize with parents in a supportive learning environment, and improve the quality of their life by seeking help for domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and emotional disturbances that can be controlled with the help of therapy and medication.
- The percentage of parents who express high-risk parenting beliefs and who lack knowledge of nurturing parenting practices is lower among parents who have completed all 12 parenting classes. Education in nurturing parenting is replacing old, unwanted and abusive parenting practices for newer, healthier nurturing practices.
- The continuation of the program is recommended for several reasons:
  1. Parents and their children are participating in a family based parenting program designed to improve positive parent-child interactions.
  2. Hawaiian communities across the Islands are participating in a parenting philosophy that teaches positive, empathic, non-violent parent-child interactions.
  3. Prevention designed parenting programs opened to the community allow parents to build their parenting skills and for families to build positive attachments.