



## PARENTS ANONYMOUS

### STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Strengthening Families is a research-informed, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It builds five protective factors:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Through the Strengthening Families Initiative, more than thirty states are shifting policy, funding and training to help programs working with children and families build protective factors with families. Many states also use the Strengthening Families approach to inform state prevention strategies, strengthen families in the child welfare system and engage parents and communities in building protective factors.

### WHY SITES USING PARENTS ANONYMOUS® AND STATE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ EFFORTS SHOULD CONNECT

Strengthening Families efforts provide a cross-systems framework for family support and capacity building in more than 30 states. State initiatives are led by cross-system leadership teams generally representing a diverse set of disciplines, including early childhood, child abuse and neglect prevention, child welfare and public health. In most states, Strengthening Families is being implemented broadly in settings as diverse as early childhood centers, family support programs, parenting programs and other venues that serve young children and their families. Connecting to these leadership teams provides an opportunity to place Parents Anonymous® groups in the context of broad cross-disciplinary thinking about how to leverage existing systems to support families and prevent abuse and neglect.

At the programmatic level Strengthening Families provides a framework and set of tools to help any environment that supports young children and their families enhance their capacity to build protective factors that promote optimal development and prevent abuse and neglect. For sites implementing the Parents Anonymous® group, Strengthening Families materials and tools can be used to help build a more comprehensive family support strategy that will complement existing work. Programs implementing the Strengthening Families approach in states may also be an important resource for Parents Anonymous sites. These programs are already working with families in a strengths-based, capacity building way and may be an important resource to families who need additional supports.

Visit the Strengthening Families website ([www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)) to learn more about efforts going on in specific states, or to download tools and resources to support Strengthening Families implementation within a program.



Parents Anonymous® is an evidenced-based family strengthening program that effectively prevents child abuse and neglect using the Strengthening Families approach. Parents Anonymous® Inc. operates an international network of accredited organizations that adhere to national benchmarks and standards of practice. Parents and caregivers attend the adult group while their children (ages 0 to 18) attend the specialized Children and Youth Groups.

These groups foster the empowerment of parents and caregivers by engaging in mutual support that results in personal growth and leadership development. Parents Anonymous® groups represent partnerships with community-based entities such as schools and social service agencies and are supported by National Parent Helpline® and Shared Leadership® in Action program.

For more information on becoming a Parents Anonymous® site, visit their website today at <http://www.parentsanonymous.org/>

### HOW PARENTS ANONYMOUS® LINKS TO THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Parents Anonymous® Inc. leads a diverse and dynamic international network of accredited organizations that implement Parents Anonymous® programs around the world. The Parents Anonymous® program serves the entire family through free, weekly, ongoing, community-based Parents Anonymous® adult groups, Children's Programs and Youth Groups. Parents Anonymous® Inc. also operates Shared Leadership® in Action Program, an evidence-based program that brings staff, parents/caregivers and youth together to make meaningful systems change to ensure implementation of protective factors to create long-term positive change for families and communities. A National Parent Helpline® (1-855-4A PARENT) is also available nationwide to strengthen families by providing emotional support and empowerment. Parents Anonymous® is consistent with Strengthening Families efforts and serves to build the protective factors. For example:

**Parental Resilience:** Parents Anonymous® helps parents improve problem-solving skills and the ability to cope with stress. At the program's core are support groups for parents, which aid in alleviating depression, low self-esteem and stress.

**Social Connections:** Through shared leadership®, parents and caregivers support one another and partner with group facilitators to build on their strengths to create a supportive community regarding child and youth development, interpersonal communication, positive discipline, domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems, effective parenting strategies and social concerns.

**Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Increased knowledge of parenting and child development is an outcome of the Parents Anonymous® program, through the giving and getting of emotional support parents significantly improved their abilities to nurture their children and themselves.

**Concrete Supports:** Group facilitators and parent group leaders serve as resources and link families with additional services such as housing, mental health, education, social services and employment.

**Children's Social and Emotional Competence:** An evaluation of the children and youth groups suggests that the Parents Anonymous® program effectively creates positive change in children's social and emotional development. Parental observations of children's behavior improved during their children's participation in the program. Children also improved their abilities to positively interact with parents more appropriately and to control their anger and not act out.