

FAST: Involving Parents and Schools in Creating a System of Mental Health Care

ABSTRACT

FAST is an early intervention/prevention program designed to build protective factors to enhance resistance against school failure, juvenile delinquency, & substance abuse during adolescence. The program targets the whole family and participation is strictly voluntary.

FAST Program Goals

- Enhance family functioning
- Prevent target child from experiencing school failure
- Prevent substance abuse, depression, and domestic violence
- Reduce the stress and social isolation that children, youth and families experience from daily life situations

Finding Suggest

Parents and youth report a number of improvements, including improved:

- family functioning
- social relationships and support
- behavior by FAST children
- involvement in school

Teachers report improved:

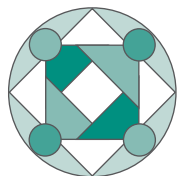
- behavior by FAST children
- involvement in school

Evaluation

- For elementary FAST, parents and teachers complete pre- and post-program questionnaires
- For middle school FAST, parents and youth complete pre- and post-program questionnaires
- The questionnaire includes standardized measures and open-ended questions

Quantitative instruments in the survey include:

- Social Support (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991)
- Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1986)
- Self-Efficacy Scale (Sherer, et al., 1983)
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997)
- and more



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FAST PARTICIPANTS 2004-2005

About 3,500 families graduated from FAST in 2004 and 2005

Age Range of participants:

- **Parents:** average age of 35.96 years (range 16-86 years, SD=8.573)
- **Children:** average age of 8.53 (range 3-17 years, SD=2.676)

Ethnic group, as reported by parents:

| | Parents | | Children | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Valid % | Frequency | Valid % |
| Black | 1,054 | 32.6% | 1,034 | 32.2% |
| White | 1,039 | 32.1% | 936 | 29.2% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 750 | 23.2% | 734 | 22.9% |
| Mixed Ethnicity | 115 | 3.6% | 229 | 7.1% |
| Other | 108 | 3.3% | 122 | 3.8% |
| American Indian/Native American | 104 | 3.2% | 99 | 1.2% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 50 | 1.5% | 38 | 1.2% |
| Alaskan native | 12 | 0.4% | 18 | 0.6% |
| Total Reporting | 3,232 | 100% | 3,210 | 100% |

Marital status, as reported by parents:

| | Frequency | Valid % |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Married | 1,550 | 48.0% |
| Divorced | 423 | 13.1% |
| Separated | 257 | 8.0% |
| Never Been Married | 706 | 21.9% |
| Unmarried Couple | 219 | 6.8% |
| Widowed | 74 | 2.3% |
| Total Reporting | 3,229 | 100% |

Church attendance, as reported by parents:

| | Frequency | Valid % |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 1,807 | 57.9% |
| No | 1,312 | 42.1% |
| Total Reporting | 3,119 | 100% |

Highest grade completed:

| | Frequency | Valid % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Grades 1 through 8 (elementary) | 216 | 6.8% |
| Some high school | 467 | 14.7% |
| High school graduate or GED | 1,008 | 31.7% |
| Junior or vocational college | 297 | 9.3% |
| Some college (not junior/vocational) | 625 | 19.6% |
| College graduate | 332 | 10.4% |
| Some graduate or professional school | 110 | 3.5% |
| Graduate/professional school degree | 127 | 4.0% |
| Total Reporting | 3,182 | 100% |

Total income in last year:

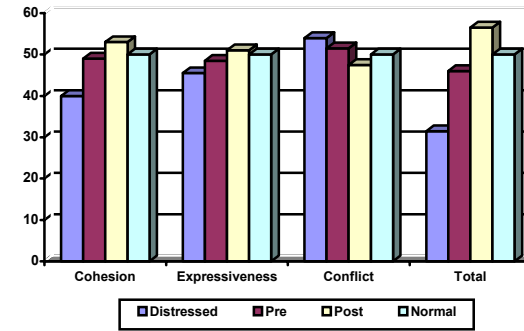
| | Frequency | Valid % |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Less than \$10,000 | 643 | 21.2% |
| \$10,000-\$14,999 | 446 | 14.7% |
| \$15,000-\$24,999 | 633 | 20.9% |
| \$25,000-\$34,999 | 483 | 16% |
| \$35,000-\$49,999 | 376 | 12.4% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | 282 | 9.3% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | 94 | 3.1% |
| \$100,000 or more | 69 | 2.3% |
| Total Reporting | 3,026 | 100% |

Quantitative Outcome Data

Parent Data

| Family Environment Scale | % Change | p-value |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Cohesion (n=2,836) | +9.4% | .000 |
| Expressiveness (n=2,839) | +7.0% | .000 |
| Conflict (n=2,840) | -19.4% | .000 |
| Total Family Relationships (n=2,814) | +19.4% | .000 |

Figure 1. Family Environment Scale Reported by Parents



Social Relationships Questionnaire

| | % Change | p-value |
|---|----------|---------|
| Community Social Relationship (n=2,837) | +8.9% | .000 |
| Parent-Child Relationships (n=2,902) | +11.4% | .000 |
| Total Social Relationships (n=2,934) | +10.0% | .000 |

Reciprocal Support

| | % Change | p-value |
|---|----------|---------|
| Support Received from Other Parents (n=2,785) | +52.0% | .000 |
| Support Given to Other Parents (n=2,813) | +59.3% | .000 |

Social Support

| | % Change | p-value |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Tangible Support (n=2,851) | +9.5% | .000 |
| Affectionate Support (n=2,885) | +6.8% | .000 |
| Emotional Support (n=2,877) | +8.8% | .000 |
| Total Support (n=2,860) | +9.0% | .000 |

Strengths and Difficulties

| | % Change | p-value |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Prosocial Behaviors (n=2,848) | +5.4% | .000 |
| Emotional Symptoms (n=2,846) | -18.6% | .000 |
| Conduct Problems (n=2,837) | -18.6% | .000 |
| Hyperactivity (n=2,833) | -11.2% | .000 |
| Peer Problems | -10.0% | .000 |
| Total Difficulties (n=2,824) | -14.1% | .000 |
| Impact of Difficulties (n=1,691) | -32.1% | .000 |

Parent Involvement in Education

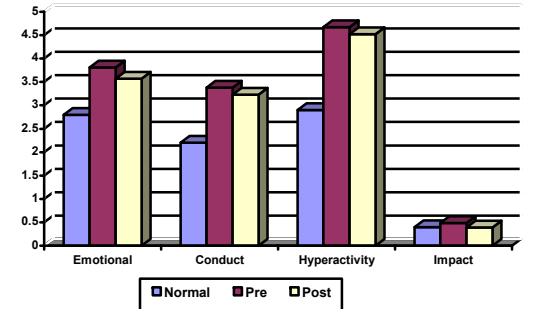
| | % Change | p-value |
|---|----------|---------|
| Parent Involvement in School (n=2,716) | +8.2% | .000 |
| Parent to School Contact (n=2,611) | +14.6% | .000 |
| School to Parent Contact (n=2,653) | +12.0% | .000 |
| Total Parent Involvement (n=2,504) | +11.2% | .000 |
| Parent Impressions of Involvement (n=2,850) | +11.9% | .000 |

FAST was developed in 1988 by Lynn McDonald & has received numerous awards & honors, including becoming a SAMHSA model program in 2002 & an OJJDP/CSAP best practice family strengthening model program in 1999. FAST is implemented in 45 states & 5 countries & is effective across languages, cultures, socio-economic strata, & in urban & rural settings. Dr. McDonald is a senior scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

Youth Data

| | % Change | p-value |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Family Environment Scale | | |
| Cohesion (n=638) | +6.1% | .000 |
| Conflict (n=637) | -9.7% | .000 |
| Total Family Relationships (n=631) | +12.6% | .000 |
| Coping Responses Checklist | | |
| Positive Coping Skills (n=568) | +8.7% | .004 |
| Strengths and Difficulties | | |
| Emotional Symptoms (n=624) | -5.3% | .055 |
| Conduct Problems (n=623) | -44.6% | .033 |
| Hyperactivity (n=626) | -3.2% | .000 |
| Total Difficulties (n=622) | -4.1% | .006 |
| Impact of Difficulties (n=465) | -20.4% | .039 |

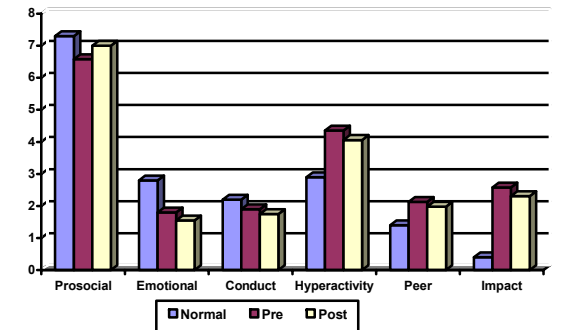
Figure 2. Strengths and Difficulties Reported by Youth



Teacher Data

| | % Change | p-value |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Strengths and Difficulties | | |
| Prosocial Behaviors (n=2,305) | +6.4% | .000 |
| Emotional Symptoms (n=2,306) | -13.9% | .000 |
| Conduct Problems (n=2,304) | -7.9% | .000 |
| Hyperactivity (n=2,306) | -6.7% | .000 |
| Peer Problems (n=2,302) | -7.0% | .000 |
| Total Difficulties (n=2,299) | -8.2% | .000 |
| Impact of Difficulties (n=2,332) | -10.5% | .000 |

Figure 3. Strengths and Difficulties Reported by Teachers



Parent Involvement in Education

| | % Change | p-value |
|--|----------|---------|
| Relationship with Parents (n=2,147) | +2.7% | .000 |
| School to Parent Contact (n=2,289) | +1.9% | .000 |
| Parent Involvement in School (n=1,961) | +3.5% | .000 |
| Negative Reports about Child (n=2,265) | -3.82% | .000 |