



# *Blueprints Promising Programs* FACT SHEET

FS-BPP19

2006 (Updated 10/2006)

## Strong African American Families (SAAF) Program

The Strong African American Families (SAAF) Program, modeled after the Strengthening Families 10-14 program, is a family-centered program designed to prevent alcohol use and abuse among rural African American youth and improve the parenting practices of the significant caregivers responsible for them.

### Program Targets

SAAF targets rural African American youth, ages 10-12, and their primary caregivers. Early adolescence is the period in which children gain increasing control over their behavior, begin forming friendships based on similarities and common interests, and develop attitudes toward substances and substance use. The choices they make in these areas tend to send them on a trajectory that leads either toward or away from substance abuse. In addition, it has been found that families and particularly the type of caregiving practices within rural African American families exert a significant influence on the choices the child makes. Thus, the level of skill and involvement the caregiver has in his/her relationship with the child largely determines the path the child decides to take.

### Program Content

The SAAF program consists of seven consecutive weekly meetings, each being two hours in length. Youth and their caregivers begin with a meal together and then divide into separate groups. During this first hour both groups are shown a selection of videos, which provides the program content specific to their role in the relationship. The videos are followed by discussions and Q&A facilitated by the leader of each group. The caregiver content is focused on teaching an approach called “regulated-communicative” parenting. This includes skills such as limit setting, monitoring, racial socialization, clear expectations about alcohol use, communication, and inductive discipline. The youth content is focused on strengthening protective factors such as goal orientation toward the future, effective resistance skills, negative attitudes towards alcohol use, and negative images of drinking youths. These protective factors are thought to be important for the developmental stage that tends to correspond with this age group. During the second hour, caregivers and youths come together to practice the skills they learned in their individual groups with each other.

### Program Outcomes

SAAF program participants:

- Reduced initiation of alcohol use and slowed increase in use over time;
- Increased “regulated-communicative” parenting practices, which contributed to an increase in youth protective factors;
- Developed stronger youth protective factors, which are shown to decrease the likelihood of alcohol use; and
- Developed community partnerships which helped shape the curriculum and the methods used to maintain higher participation rates.

## Program Costs

Planning for dissemination of this program is currently underway. Costs for program materials, training, etc., will be determined in the near future and made available as soon as possible.

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## Strong African American Families (SAAF) Program

The Center for Family Research  
University of Georgia  
1095 College Station Road  
Athens, GA 30602  
Phone: (888) 542-3068 or (706) 425-2992  
Fax: (706) 425-2985  
Email: [zaheerah@uga.edu](mailto:zaheerah@uga.edu)  
Website: [www.cfr.uga.edu/html/saaf.html](http://www.cfr.uga.edu/html/saaf.html)