

What is the Parent Project?

Parent Project is a nationally acclaimed parenting program specifically designed for the parents of strong-willed or out of control kids. Parents learn and practice specific prevention and intervention strategies for specific behaviors – truancy, alcohol and other drug use, gangs, running away, violence and suicide. Additional information is available on to the Parent Project website at www.parentproject.com.

What is the need for it in Santa Clara County?

The level of violence and destructive behavior that we are seeing among youth in our County has reached new heights. While the age that children are engaging in destructive behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use or gang involvement, has decreased (starting often in middle school and sometimes earlier), the intensity of these behavior has increased (resulting in increased gang-related homicides).

School sites have to deal not only with issues of education, but also the safety of their children. For example, at the District Attorney Truancy Mediation in the Eastside Union High School District, where 300-600 parents attend, the question most frequently asked by parents is how they can control their kids. Some parents simply do not know how to discipline. Other parents try but are unsuccessful. Other parents fear their kids. All of these parents are searching for tools, and the Parent Project can provide them.

Whether it is in the context of truancy or juvenile delinquency, what we repeatedly see is that children will often improve while working with CBOs (on a 30-60-90 day contract) or while on probation, but as soon as they are returned home, they fall into their old habits. We need to be able to give the parents the tools to work with their own children and keep them from the destructive behavior that leads to the criminal justice system.

Why is this program different than other parenting classes?

While parenting courses exist, none are so specifically catered to helping parents obtain tools to deal with their out of control kids. Other programs stress communication, while this program goes beyond that. The truth is that for many strong-willed children, effective communication *is not enough*. Parent Project teaches *strategies to change behavior*, including drug and alcohol use, gang affiliation, truancy, violence, family conflict and running away. The straightforward, step by step action plans presented in the curriculum allow parents to take immediate steps toward preventing or intervening in their children's negative choices.

What are some of the results in other Cities and Counties that have Implemented the Parent Project?

A study of this program in Minidoka, Idaho found that after implementing the Parent Project, the number of petitions filed for juvenile offenses fell 33%, the numbers of

minors on probation fell more than 30%, the number of drug related probation violations down 20%, the number of days spent by youth in detention fell 24%, and school drop outs and expulsions dropped 65%. In Roseville, California, a study found a 73% reduction in juvenile related law enforcement calls for services after Parent Project was implemented. Moreover, because of its success in preventing, identifying and intervening in the most destructive of adolescent behaviors, the Parent Project has won 3 state awards in California and has been successfully adopted for use by hundreds of schools and community-based organizations throughout the nation.

Parent Project Course in Santa Clara County

The Parent Project course in Santa Clara County will be conducted one evening a week for twelve weeks, three hours a night. In Fall, the course will be offered at five different locations in San Jose (one in each police division and a fifth course offered in Spanish). In addition, in Fall, classes will also be offered in Palo Alto (English and Spanish), Mountain View and Sunnyvale. In Spring, classes will expand to be offered in Morgan Hill and Gilroy, Milpitas, Santa Clara, and Los Gatos/Monte Sereno.

In Part I, "Laying the Foundation for Change" (first 6 sessions), parents learn identification, prevention and intervention techniques for the most destructive adolescent behaviors and criminal activity (gangs, violence, etc). Part II, "Changing Behavior and Rebuilding Family Relationships" (2nd six sessions) consists of topic-focused parent support group sessions. Each session is designed to provide parents practical and emotional support as they continue the process of change in their home. These sessions also include an activity based parenting skills component.

The course is facilitated by two facilitators, ideally one from law-enforcement and one from non-law enforcement. This project will be a collaborative effort between the District Attorney's Office, the City of San Jose and the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, School Districts countywide, CHAC (Community Health Awareness Council) and other counseling services, adult education, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies throughout the County.

The District Attorney's Office will be sponsoring the training and paying for the cost of training for all facilitators (\$750/person). The training consists of a 40-hour training the week of September 8, 2008, located at Hayes Mansion. All facilitators will be trained and certified through the National Parent Project program.

Parents will pay \$120/person (\$155 for family) to attend the 12 week session (approximately \$10/week per session). In most locations, food will be provided for the families since classes are offered in the evenings (usually 6-9 pm). Some locations offer childcare. Payment plans and a limited number of scholarships will be offered for those with financial need.

Palo Alto Police Department has successfully completed two sessions. In San Jose, the District Attorney's Office in collaboration with San Jose Police Department, the Eastside

Union High School District, Foothill High School and the City of San Jose conducted a pilot program this spring with great success. Mountain View has also completed a session in Spring.

Parents who have recently completed the class say:

“Thank you, thank you, thank you for your great support and guidance. The class has been *very* helpful. Your creative suggestions and practical instruction has provided courage and inspiration, as well as faith we can get through the challenging teens.” –JK

“Yes, I would absolutely recommend a friend to attend the parenting class. The reason is that we are not alone, and it can really help you deal with your children’s concerns.” –TM

Quotes are from CHAC (Community Health Awareness Council)/Mountain View Parenting Your Teen Class (April-June 2008)