



STORIES OF IMPACT: *Family Strengthening*

Stories of Impact was developed to discover and share the results of early childhood efforts in Adams County. This edition explores how parents are empowered and children are enriched through family strengthening.

What it is ...



Parenthood doesn't come with directions, but ECPAC's parenting resources are the next best thing. ECPAC works to provide Family Strengthening opportunities on topics and in areas of the county where there is potential for the greatest impact.

Implemented as a two-generation (2Gen) approach, Family Strengthening helps participants explore how they can become better parents, better families and more engaged members of the community. The skills and knowledge acquired support them as both parents and people, which in turn supports their children and families.

"We want parents to feel they've increased their knowledge and skills, and children to develop on target and be prepared for kindergarten. If they are engaged in multiple opportunities [for resources], we have a better chance to see [families] thrive." —Rebecca Snowden, Family Initiatives Coordinator

What is involved ...

PARENTING CLASSES

- Focus on topics **supporting family wellbeing and development**
- Are offered in **English, Spanish** or both concurrently. This creates an opportunity for people who speak different languages to connect

COMMUNITY CAFÉS

- Are structured gatherings, facilitated in both English and Spanish, that provide opportunities for **family engagement and leadership**
- Are hosted and led by parents, who are trained to facilitate and share info on resources

RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Ensure **countywide access to written information** on how to best support child development, strengthen families, support maternal mental health and connect to community resources. Offered in both **English and Spanish**.

What the numbers show...



Since 2015, over **40 parent enrichment classes** have been offered. **Eighty-seven parents have attended an early literacy class**, impacting a total of 256 children in Adams County. Overall, there has been a **26% increase in literacy skills and knowledge** among parents involved.

Approximately **90% of parents** who participated in the Partners in Parenting Education (PIPE) class **felt it helped improve how they parented**, including how to read their child's emotional signals and better understand and respond appropriately.

Over 80% of parents who participated in PIPE **noticed a positive change in their child's behavior** and how their child expresses their feelings.



"The resources have made things easier. Not everything is solved, but it has helped a lot and I am very grateful."

—HEIDY, MOTHER OF THREE

What people are saying...

"Having social connections outside of the classes, you learn that it takes a community to raise a child," Melissa, a mother of three, says of ECPAC's family strengthening opportunities.

"It can't be done alone, and there is no shame in asking for resources and asking for help before a crisis hits."

She adds, "I love how they explain risk factors but they say that you don't have to fall under those statistics. I don't come from a great family, but that doesn't determine the type of parent I will be. **You can be a better parent than your parents were.**"

Speaking to the power of engaging with external resources, Heather, a mother of two, shares "Everything you know about parenting is passed down in your family, and **at trainings and cafés you learn different things that you maybe wouldn't have known otherwise. It makes you feel a little more confident and empowered.**"



Melissa adds, "Community Cafés are the best way to touch base with the community and get to know other moms in the area. Some questions and discussions are intense and really help us go deep. Even though this can be difficult, discussions open the door to creating connection and reach a certain level of intimacy and stronger connections with other moms."

Through post-participation surveys, parents overwhelmingly report that the social-emotional program offered support and information that helped to strengthen their relationship with their child. Heidy, also a mother of three, shares, **"Children don't come with an instruction manual. I have a child with special needs and another one just got diagnosed with autism. The resources have made things easier. Not everything is solved, but it has helped a lot, and I am very grateful."**

THE BIG TAKEAWAY



When families are strong, they have the capacity and capability to effectively deal with challenges as they come up, thereby increasing resilience and overall success.

How you can get involved...



—SHARE—

If you know someone who could benefit from ECPAC's services, or would be interested in learning more, pass it on!



—GIVE—

Help ECPAC continue to be able to provide Adams County with quality early childhood services and resources.