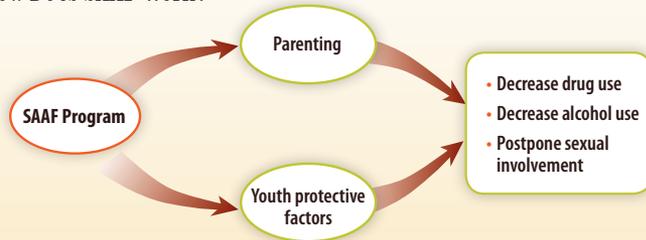


## How Does SAAF Work?



### Positive Results for Families:

- Enhanced support of youth development and goals
- Increased cultural pride
- Increased communication about sex
- Clearer expectations for alcohol and drug use

### Positive Results for Youth:

- Increased awareness of and focus on future goals
- Increased skills for resisting peer pressure
- Increased negative attitudes about drug use and sexual involvement
- Increased acceptance of parental influence
- Postponement of sexual involvement

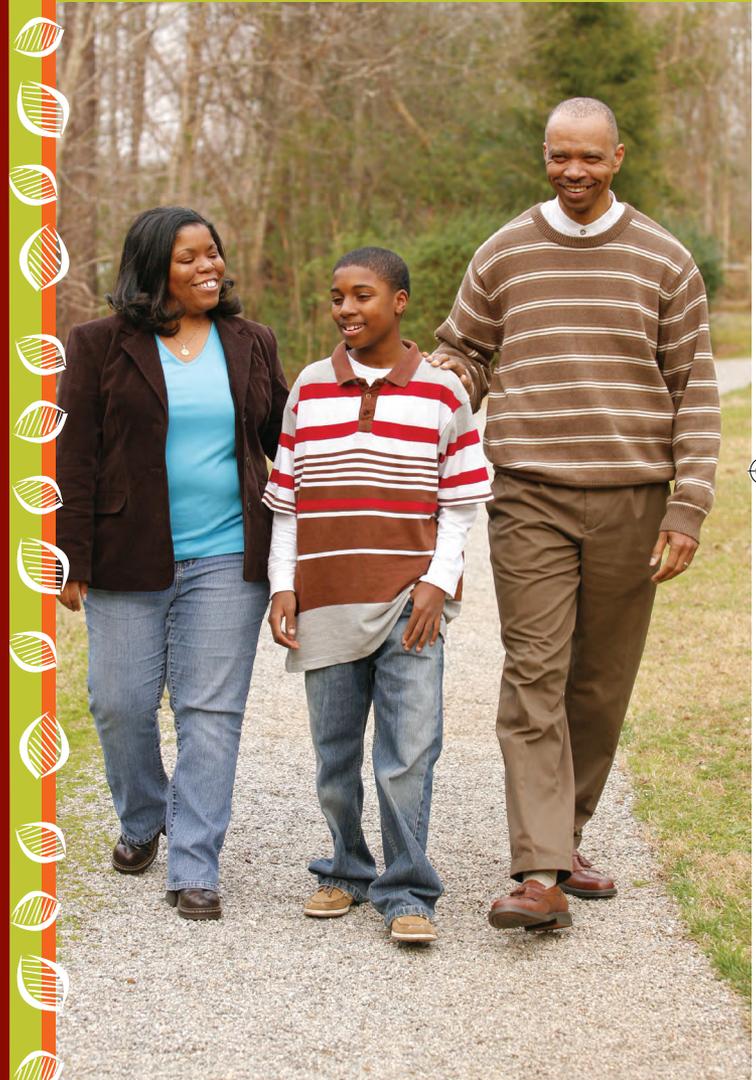
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



CENTER FOR FAMILY RESEARCH  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



# STRONG AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES *Program*



CENTER FOR FAMILY RESEARCH  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

[www.cfr.uga.edu](http://www.cfr.uga.edu)





# SAAF Mission Statement:

To advance the well-being of African American families by strengthening family relationships, parenting processes and youth competencies.

## Introduction:

All of us are concerned about the health and safety of our children, especially as they approach their teenage years. These are the years in which they become more independent and begin to make decisions for themselves. These decisions can affect their health, safety, and success as young adults. The SAAF Program is a seven-session, family-centered program designed to enhance the well-being of African American families by:

### Strengthening parents'/caregivers' ability to:

- Find a balance between firm parenting and showing love
- Support youth goals and promote independence
- Promote racial pride

### Helping youth to:

- Develop healthy goals for the future
- Resist temptation and peer pressure related to risky behaviors
- Understand their positive qualities
- Learn to manage difficult/unfair situations in a healthy way

### Supporting families in:

- Enhancing communication and support to family members
- Identifying and using community resources that support positive youth development

## What Families Can Expect:

Caregivers and youth who participate will enjoy a fun, family-centered program! Youth and caregivers meet separately during the first part of the program, then together as a family for the second component. Activities include games, discussions, arts and crafts and more. All activities focus on promoting positive youth development and positive family relationships.

## Participants May Include:

- Families with youth ages 10–14 years
- Single-parent homes
- Two-parent homes
- Foster families
- Families with grandparents as caregivers
- Multiracial families
- Blended families



Caregiver Topics	Youth Topics	Family Topics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Supporting Our Youth</li> <li>2) Making &amp; Enforcing Rules</li> <li>3) Everyday Parenting</li> <li>4) Helping Youth Succeed in School</li> <li>5) Protecting Against Dangerous Behavior</li> <li>6) Encouraging Racial Pride</li> <li>7) Staying Connected with Our Youth</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Goals for the Future</li> <li>2) Who Am I?</li> <li>3) Dealing with Temptation for Early Sex</li> <li>4) Staying True to My Values</li> <li>5) Handling Peer Pressure &amp; Understanding Caregivers</li> <li>6) Dealing with Unfair Situations</li> <li>7) What Is A Good Friend?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Family Support for Youth Goals</li> <li>2) Sharing Youth &amp; Family Values</li> <li>3) Supporting Youth Development &amp; Concerns</li> <li>4) Understanding Each Other</li> <li>5) Caregivers &amp; Young People Working Together</li> <li>6) Encouraging Racial Pride</li> <li>7) Expressing Appreciation</li> </ol>



## Strong African American Families Program Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest in the Strong African American Families Program (SAAF). Below is a list of frequently asked questions about SAAF. We hope that this list will be a resource to help you determine how SAAF can complement your agency's efforts to serve your community.

### **PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **What is the goal of SAAF?**

The goal of SAAF is to build on the strengths of African American families and support parents and youth during the transition from early adolescence to the teen years with a specific emphasis on helping young people avoid risky and dangerous behaviors.

#### **How is SAAF typically implemented?**

SAAF is organized into seven sessions, typically implemented over the course of seven weeks. Each session is two hours. During the first hour, participants meet in separate Youth and Caregiver Sessions. During the second hour, all participants come together for the Family Session. SAAF includes a total of 21 hours of program content – 7 hours of Youth content, 7 hours of Caregiver content and 7 hours of Family content.

#### **Can SAAF be implemented in an alternative time frame (e.g., weekend retreat, monthly vs. weekly)?**

Research findings associated with the SAAF program are consistent with the implementation format described above. Agencies may opt to make changes to the manner in which SAAF is implemented. However, they should do so with an understanding that deviating from the structure used in the research trial could decrease the likelihood of obtaining similar outcomes and may affect program participation.

#### **How many staff are needed to implement SAAF?**

We recommend that sites implement SAAF with a minimum of three staff (two dedicated to Youth Sessions, one dedicated to Caregiver Sessions, and all three together for Family Sessions).

#### **What is the ratio of facilitators to youth/caregivers?**

SAAF is packaged to accommodate 12 families (12 youth and their caregivers). The ratio for the Youth Sessions is one facilitator to six youth. The ratio for the Caregiver Sessions is one facilitator to 12 caregivers (possibly more if both caregivers attend). In the Family Session, the ratio is 1 facilitator per 4 families.

#### **How many individuals are in a group?**

As indicated above, SAAF is packaged to accommodate 12 families – 12 youth and their caregivers. We recommend recruiting up to 15 families to account for attrition. *Note: If families include multiple youth or caregivers, agencies may elect to decrease the number of total families per group to ensure that the individual group size is manageable.*

#### **How many groups can run simultaneously?**

The number of simultaneous groups is up to the agency. Considerations include available resources (trained facilitators, staff to recruit families/coordinate the groups, budget, a facility to host groups, etc.). Running multiple groups simultaneously will involve additional costs for the SAAF site as a result of needing multiple sets of materials.



### **What are the eligibility criteria for families to participate in SAAF?**

We recommend that families who participate in SAAF have:

- At least one child between the ages 10-14 who identifies as being African American or Black
- At least one caregiver who can attend the sessions with the youth

SAAF is not recommended for groups with youth or caregivers who have significant cognitive impairments or mental health problems that would interfere with engaging in program activities. SAAF has not been tested with youth who do not have at least one caregiver who identifies as African American. SAAF sites may determine additional inclusion criteria specific to their target populations.

### **Would it be appropriate for the targeted age range for SAAF to expand to include older adolescents (15-18) or young adults (18-21)?**

SAAF was tested with youth 11-12 years old. Given the relatively similar developmental experiences, the target group was expanded to include youth ages 10-14. The program was not tested on older adolescents or young adults.

The CFR has developed and tested another program, the SAAF-Teen program, for teens (14-16) and their caregivers. Some of the core elements of SAAF are integrated and there is an additional component addressing HIV/AIDS risk reduction. SAAF-T is also available for purchase through CFR. Contact the CFR Dissemination Office for additional information about SAAF-T.

### **Can SAAF be adapted? How much flexibility is there?**

Elements of SAAF can be adapted, but the more the program is changed from its original format the less likely it will yield outcomes similar to those obtained in the research trial. Technical assistance is available to provide guidance and support about adaptations as well as helping sites differentiate between core activities and those that can be adapted without affecting outcomes.

### **Does the program have to be implemented with fidelity?**

Fidelity is most commonly defined as the degree to which a program or method is implemented in the manner in which it is designed to be implemented. When implementing the SAAF program, it is strongly recommended that core components, highlighted in training, are implemented with fidelity. However, technical assistance is available to guide sites that may want to adapt certain elements of the program to meet specific needs of their target groups.

### **Are fidelity instruments available?**

Yes, a Fidelity Manual is provided to sites to assess adherence to the SAAF curriculum. Agencies receive the Fidelity Manual and process evaluation documents with the purchase of the SAAF Training and Program Package.

### **Does the CFR collect data from participants at sites that have adopted SAAF?**

CFR does not collect participant data from sites that adopt SAAF. The program package includes surveys for youth and caregivers that agencies can use to collect pre- and post-test data from participants.

### **What is the cost for implementing SAAF per family or group?**

A copy of the SAAF Budget Summary spreadsheet is available upon request. Please contact the CFR Dissemination Office for a copy of this document.

### **Is SAAF currently being used in communities across the country?**

SAAF has been adopted by a variety of organizations – local organizations that provide services to youth and families, school systems, Communities that Care sites and state organizations associated with the provision of mental health/counseling services and the Office of Juvenile Justice. Many of these organizations are willing to share their experiences with the SAAF Program. The SAAF Dissemination Office can provide contact information for these current SAAF Sites.



## **PROGRAM TARGET GROUP**

### **Why is it necessary to have a prevention program specifically targeting African American families?**

The Center for Family Research has been conducting research in African American communities for more than two decades. This research has revealed unique strengths and stressors for African American families that can be best addressed in a curriculum that focuses solely on these families. Of particular concern is the effect of discrimination on African American families and youth as well as the dangers of substance use and risky sexual behavior among African American youth. Offering African American families an evidence-based, culturally-relevant curriculum provides the best opportunity for ensuring that families can address issues in ways that are meaningful and effective.

### **Can SAAF be modified for use with other ethnic groups?**

SAAF was designed for and tested with African American youth and their caregivers. While we do not recommend modifying SAAF for use with youth who do not identify as African American or as being of African descent, the CFR Dissemination Office is available to discuss possible ways of implementing SAAF with groups that include families with other racial backgrounds.

### **Are there any bilingual components to the program?**

There are no bilingual components.

### **Can SAAF be used with youth in urban and suburban settings?**

SAAF has not been tested in urban settings, but has been successfully adopted by organizations that serve rural, suburban and urban populations. Technical assistance is available to work with organizations who want to modify activities or add additional activities to SAAF in order to address experiences that are more relevant to the families they serve.

## **PROGRAM CONTENT**

### **What is the parenting philosophy that guides the SAAF program?**

The SAAF parenting philosophy involves fostering *competence promoting parenting*. Related parenting components include:

- a) Involved, vigilant parenting: setting limits, monitoring adolescents' whereabouts and knowing their friends.
- b) Discussions about risk behavior: encouraging caregivers to give clear messages regarding their youth's involvement in risky behavior, particularly substance use and sex. Caregivers also learn to support their youth's ability to resist peer influences that promote risky behaviors.
- c) Encouraging academic engagement: encouraging sustained parental involvement with school activities and personnel, and parents' monitoring and support of their youth's academic achievement.
- d) Racial socialization: teaching youth about the realities of racism while emphasizing the ability to achieve success in the face of these obstacles.

### **Was there a reason why SAAF research focused on alcohol use versus other drugs?**

The research study that tested the SAAF program was initially funded to decrease alcohol use. At the time, substance use in general was relatively low for the targeted age group (11-12 year old African American youth), which made it an ideal time for prevention efforts. Of the substances that were being used at the time, alcohol was the most prevalent. The curriculum addresses general substance use, as well as other risky behaviors.



## **SAAF RESEARCH**

### **What are the major findings from the SAAF research trial?**

Compared to participants who did not participate in SAAF:

- Youth who participated in SAAF
  - Demonstrated fewer conduct problems
  - Were less likely to start using drugs
  - Delayed the onset of sexual activity
- Parents/Caregivers who participated in SAAF
  - Reported less maternal depression
  - Reported higher levels of positive racial identity

### **Are caregivers' perceptions of discipline linked to youth behavior change?**

Most of the caregiver variables are based on caregiver report. Caregiver self-reports suggest that caregivers' perceptions of their own parenting are linked to changes in youth behavior.

### **How was *rural* defined in SAAF research?**

The CFR used federal guidelines to define *rural*. The Census Bureau defines *rural* based on population density and includes territory outside places with a population of 2,500 or more or outside urbanized areas. The data reported in SAAF are based on a classification system adopted by the Office of Management and Budget, in which all counties that are not designated as a part of metropolitan areas are considered rural. Metropolitan counties contain a place or urbanized area of 50,000 people or more and a total population of at least 100,000.

## **INCLUSION ON NATIONAL REGISTRIES/LISTS**

SAAF is currently listed on the following registries:

- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development - <http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/factsheet/strong-african-american-families-program>
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Model Program Guide - <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=41>
- Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness - <http://www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/programs/strong-african-american-families-saaf>
- California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare - <https://lion.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/programs/strong-african-american-families-saaf>

**Please contact Dr. Tracy Anderson at the  
Center for Family Research Dissemination Office if you have additional questions:  
(706)425-2992 or [tnander@uga.edu](mailto:tnander@uga.edu).**



### Agency Readiness Assessment

*This readiness assessment is provided to support agency efforts to evaluate their capacity for adopting the Strong African American Families (SAAF) Programs. Please contact Tracy Anderson (SAAF) or Megan Sperr (SAAF-T) at the Center for Family Research (call 706-425-2992) if there is any additional information that we can provide about the SAAF Programs that may inform this assessment.*

	YES	NO
1. Does the SAAF Programming fit into the goals, mission, and priorities of the organization?		
2. Does the agency have access to African American families with children between the ages of 10-14 (SAAF) and between the ages of 14-16 (SAAF-T)?		
3. Has the organizational leadership given approval to fund the training, recruit facilitators, and implement the SAAF Programming?		
4. Can the SAAF Programming be integrated into to the agency's existing structure and culture?		
5. Does the agency have the funding to adopt and sustain SAAF and SAAF-T through at least the first year of implementation?		
6. Does the agency have at least 3-5 staff who can serve as program facilitators?  Considerations for facilitators include someone who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has experience working with African American families</li> <li>• Has experience teaching/leading structured group activities</li> <li>• Is comfortable discussing race related issues and who can make others feel comfortable</li> <li>• Can implement a scripted program with fidelity</li> <li>• Has good oral and written communication skills</li> <li>• Is able to adopt a strength-based orientation towards families</li> <li>• Is comfortable discussing issues related to sexual health with families and conducting a condom education unit for the SAAF-T Program</li> </ul>		
7. Does the agency have staff or other resources to help with recruiting and engaging families?		
8. Does the organization have resources to market the program to potential families, stakeholders and community partners?		
9. Does the agency have adequate space (2 large rooms) to implement the SAAF Programs (or access to this space via a partnership with other organizations)?		
10. Is there funding or other resources to purchase supplemental materials and print/copy the curriculum materials needed to implement SAAF and SAAF-T?		
11. Does the agency have a staff person who can devote time to coordinating the implementation (e.g. organizing materials for facilitators, reporting implementation information as requested)?		