



## Families & Schools Together

**Target Risk Factor:**

Healthy Eating

**Target Population:**

All age groups

**Project Lead(s):**

Johanna Petrowski, Facilitator  
Debbie Asham, Community Partner  
Heather Murray, Parent Partner  
Karl Laubmann, Addictions Partner

**Community:**

Wapanohk Community School

**RHA:**

Burntwood

**Project Partners:**

Staff, students and families from Wapanohk, Addiction Foundation of Manitoba, Manitoba Justice (Turnabout Project), Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Center, University College of the North, Building Students Success Among Aboriginal Parents and CDPI.

**Project Details:**

Multiple event or ongoing project

**Description:**

Families & Schools Together (F&ST) is a two-year proven prevention and parental involvement program which strives to help children succeed academically and socially. F&ST uses a non-hierarchical collaborative, team approach to strengthen the family unit, increase parental involvement in the school and develop healthy social support networks. The follow up component to F&ST is F&STWORKS which involved monthly multifamily activities coordinated by a Parent Partner and Community Partner.

**Time:**

Recruiting of volunteers and families began in September. Training of volunteers is one day usually at the end of November and interviewing and selection of the families begins in December. The actual F&ST program is an 8 week program that is once week. This year's F&ST began on January 14, 2010 with F&ST graduation on March 2, 2010. There are weekly debriefing meetings for the F&ST committee and an evening to meet to plan graduation, make the family scrapbooks and parent affirmations. There is also a day for the parents to come after graduation to fill out evaluations and provide feedback on the program. The committee also meets after graduation for evaluations, feedback and affirmations.

**Objectives:**

Families & Children:

1. Become involved in and empowered to take a leadership role in their community.
2. Become actively involved in the school including membership on the Parent Advisory Council for School Leadership
3. Demonstrate improved family relationships and parenting skills.
4. Demonstrate continued progress in academic, behavioural and social programming

**Planning Supports:**

This evidence-based program has been running from 2005 here at Wapanohk Community School and has been proven to be successful each year because of the number of family participants and family graduates, number of volunteers and partners, and the positive feedback from the volunteers and participants. The model's structure embodies a unique and complex interplay of tested family therapy practices, delinquency and substance abuse prevention strategies, parent education techniques and communications theory.

F&ST has been recognized in Canada and the United States as a best-practice program for preventing substance abuse problems among young people and for building emotional intelligence. F&ST provides maximum impact in a short period of time – all based on credible theory, proven research and rigorous evaluation.

**Results:**

The F&ST session that took place from January-March 2010 had 11 families participate in the program with 9 of those families graduating from the program. Last year we had 13 families with 11 graduate families. Many of these families are still meeting as part of the F&ST works program and three of the parents are active parent council members and two other parents have been a part of our lunch program.

**What worked:**

Having weekly debriefing meetings with the F&ST team allowed us to keep on top of the program and to make changes when needed or talk about what was working. Keeping in contact with the families and the student's to inform of the next sessions and to keep them interested in the program to encourage attendance. Also to offer resources to those families who are in need.

**What didn't work and any changes made:**

We found our families had really busy children and we had to adjust our evening by having time for the children before the meal was ready to expend some energy. One F&ST parent volunteered to play an active game with the children. We also had drawing materials, puzzles to help keep the children at their tables while they waited for their family to enjoy their meals.

**Unexpected Outcomes:**

Because we had our weekly meetings and we had a great team we were ready for any unexpected outcomes such as volunteers not being able to make it one evening.

**Resources****Volunteers:**

As mentioned above in project partners. We had an F&ST committee of about 40 volunteers to run this program.

**Facilities:**

We used our own Community Room for the preparing of the meals. The Gym was used for meal time, family time, closing. Classrooms were used for children's time and the library was for the parent time and special play.

**Equipment:**

Our Community Room's kitchen appliances, and cooking equipment. Tables, chairs, stereo, microphone, photocopier, computer, printer, overhead, disposable plates, cups and cutlery, projector and various arts & crafts supplies.

**Total Costs:**

\$5500.00 for F&ST 8 week program

\$4000.00 for F&ST Works program

**Materials developed for your program:**

Visit the website: [www.familiesandschool.org](http://www.familiesandschool.org) for more information and resources.

**Contact Information:**

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