PROGRAM OVERVIEW
Overview

Family Foundations is an 8-session series of participatory, psycho-educational classes for expectant parents. Four sessions are delivered before birth, in order to introduce expectant parents to the concepts and skills, and four sessions are delivered after birth, in order to reinforce the material after parents have experienced the issues involved. The program was developed by Dr. Mark Feinberg, and is based on research and theory in the social science fields examining family processes around marriage, coparenting, parenting, and child outcomes. Family Foundations is currently in the middle of an NIH-funded, randomized-control study. Preliminary feedback from participants is quite positive.

Family Foundations focuses most strongly on coparenting issues broadly defined (including conflict, family management, division of labor), as research indicates that coparenting is more proximal than the overall couple relationship in fostering parental self-efficacy, sensitive parenting, and positive child outcomes (For reviews of the literature, an outline of the theoretical model, and a presentation of the rationale for the current approach, see: Feinberg, 2002, 2003; Feinberg & Pettit, 2003). In addition, the curriculum covers aspects of parenting (regulation of sleeping and eating; attachment), again based on empirical research and with the consultation of experts in each field. Booster sessions are currently in development for use when the child is two years old and will focus on limit setting and family relationships.

The classes are delivered with the use of a variety of formats (short presentations of information, discussion, couple interaction exercises, written exercises, triadic couple-baby exercises, videotape clips). Classes are delivered by a male-female team, and measures of leader and observer-rated fidelity and participant satisfaction are used.
Program Goals:
- Increase parents’ ability to work together closely in the parenting role
- Enhance adaptation to parenting (lower postnatal depression; high parental confidence)
- Improve parenting sensitivity and parent-child relationships
- Decrease stresses and strains on parents’ own relationship as partners
- Increase children’s emotional security and adjustment

References

Contact
Mark Feinberg, Ph.D. Phone: 814-865-8796
Prevention Research Center Email: mfeinberg@psu.edu
Pennsylvania State University
109 S. Henderson
University Park, PA 16802