

DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County
Department of Human Services



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Be Strong Parent Cafés encourage discussion, unity

Parents and caregivers in Allegheny County now have a place to share experiences and learn tips to strengthen their families, thanks to Be Strong Parent Cafés, a model created in 2007 by Strengthening Families Illinois. Locally, the model is supported by the LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grant.

Be Strong Parent Cafés educate parents and caregivers of children ages 0-8 on five research-based protective factors that keep children safe and families strong: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional wellbeing. With the support of peers and facilitators, participants examine their families' strengths and explore opportunities for improvement. Currently, Be Strong Parent Cafés are being hosted in Penn Hills, Sharpsburg, Point Breeze, Lincoln-Larimer, Wilksburg, Mt. Oliver, Oakland, and Braddock, and have reached hundreds of caregivers.

"At DHS, we always want to approach families with the idea that they know what is best for them," said Kim Eckel, Young Child Wellness Coordinator for Project LAUNCH. "Be Strong Parent Cafés are an opportunity for parents and caregivers to meet others in similar situations and expand their natural supports. Overall, we believe that the knowledge and connections gained, as well as the strength-based focus of Be Strong Parent Cafés, can create stronger families and help to decrease instances of abuse and neglect."

To learn more about Be Strong Parent Cafés, contact Kim at Kimberly.Eckel@AlleghenyCounty.US.