

Other Efforts to Support Strong Families

[Community Cafés](#) are a series of guided conversations facilitated by parent leaders. During a Café, participants use carefully structured questions to guide meaningful conversations, allowing individuals from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds to engage in meaningful discussions that increase community wisdom, build parent voice, and facilitate action to improve the lives of children.

In September, NYSPEP funded 18 Community Teams to participate in regional orientations held in Rochester, Ithaca, Albany, and New York City. Community Teams were composed of parent leaders and organizational support staff. Supporting organizations included Head Start programs, Cooperative Extension Offices, Child Care Coordinating Councils, and Family Resource Centers. Funds to support travel and provide seed funds to teams were provided by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Project and the NYS Children and Family Trust Fund, NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Recently, Robin Higa, parent leader consultant with the National Alliance of Children Trust and Prevention Funds conducted mid-project interviews with 13 teams, which are summarized in a report that can be found at <http://www.ccf.ny.gov/ECAC/WG/StrongFam/index.cfm>.

Currently community teams are hosting cafes, with many cafés including kids' cafés, which offer creative and educational activities for children of all ages. Highlights of the Teams' work include:

- The John E. Gavras Center in Auburn has linked with the local Early Intervention Program to identify strong parent leadership. This team has also generated publicity through a local newspaper and an [Auburn Community Cafe Facebook Page](#).
- The Hunts Point Alliance for Children held cafés to help their community address issues of safety and clean streets. Their recent café led to a community clean-up day held on January 21st.

To capitalize on the project's momentum and to build awareness, NYSPEP hosted Community Café panel, led by Parent Leaders at the Prevent Child Abuse New York annual conference in April 2013.