Outcomes of Participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension Parent Education Programs, 2023-2024

By Julia Chapman & Kimberly Kopko

The Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) system offers a variety of programs for parents and caregivers. Offered at CCE associations throughout New York, these programs reach a wide range of families and seek to promote positive parenting and, ultimately, healthy family and child development. This report presents data collected from participants in CCE parent education programs between September 2023 and September 2024. Participants included parents and caregivers taking part in programs that comprised at least six hours of content delivery. Data were collected from participants at the first session (a pre-test) and at the last session (a post-test). Results of the analysis of these data are shown below.

Demographics of Participants in CCE Parent Education Programs

A total of nine parent education programs were evaluated, as shown below. The largest number of participants took part in the PS It Works! Program (27%) and the Home Visitation Program (20%).
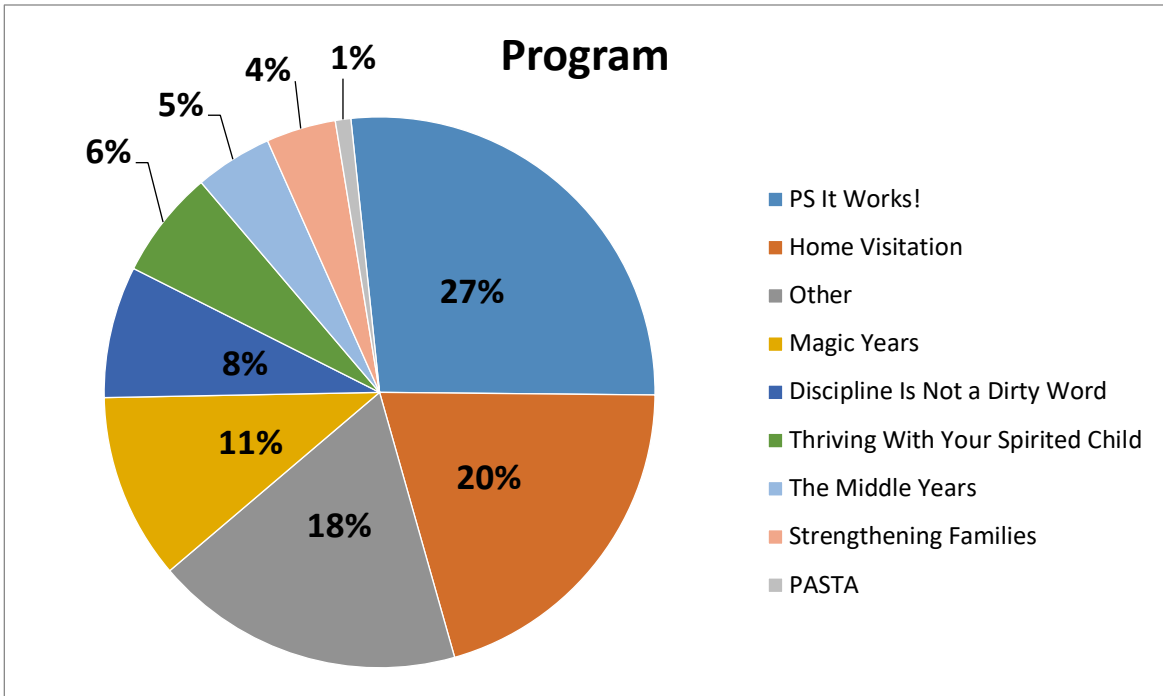
Outcomes at a Glance

In 2023-2024, **220 participants** attended CCE parenting programs across New York State. Participants took part in one of **nine parenting programs** in **five counties** across the state.

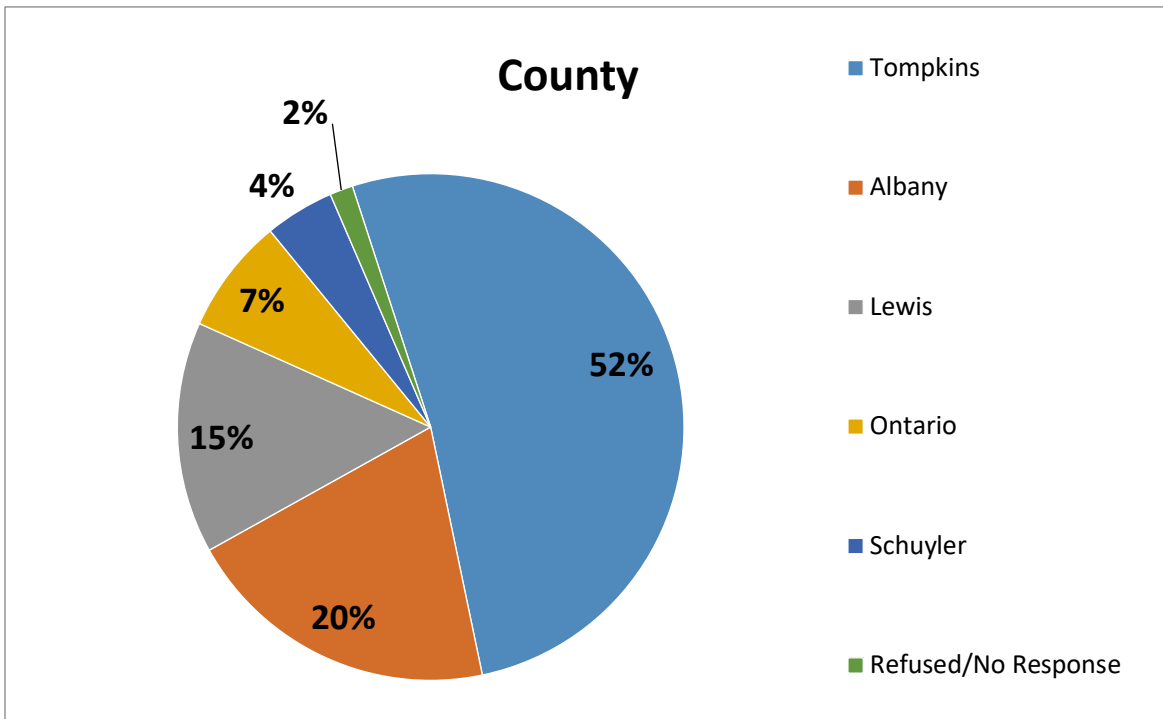The majority of participants in the parenting education classes were:
- **Female (69%)**
- **White (64%)**
- **Single (43%)**

A total of **139 participants** attended their final class and **5 out of 10 items on the survey showed significant improvements** between the pre- and post-test.

Program

Legend:
- PS It Works! — 27%
- Home Visitation — 20%
- Other — 18%
- Magic Years — 11%
- Discipline Is Not a Dirty Word — 8%
- Thriving With Your Spirited Child — 6%
- The Middle Years — 5%
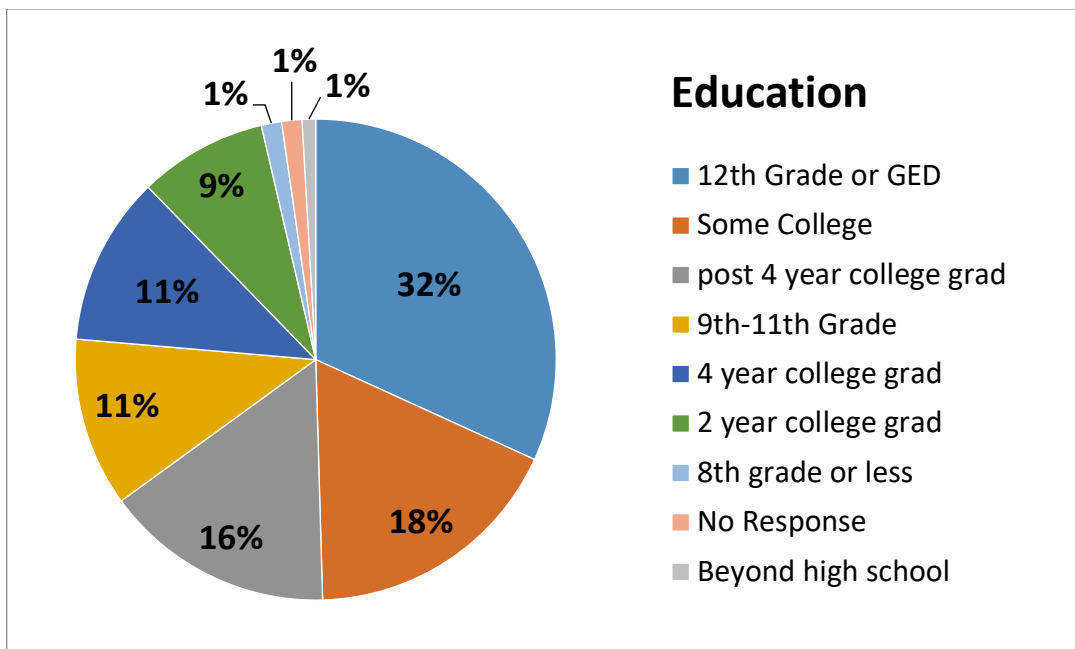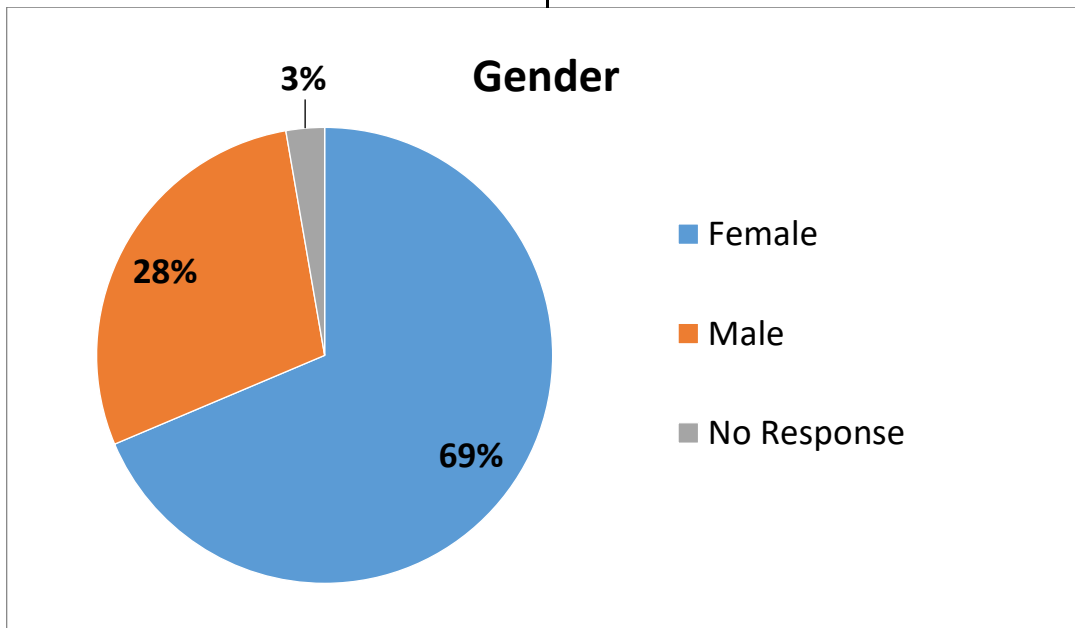- Strengthening Families — 4%
- PASTA — 1%

The following summaries use data from 220 participants who completed a pre-test survey given at the first session of their parent education class. In total, data was collected from five counties throughout the state. Tompkins County had the largest share of participants (52%) followed by Albany County (20%) and Lewis County (15%).

County

Legend:
- Tompkins — 52%
- Albany — 20%
- Lewis — 15%
- Ontario — 7%
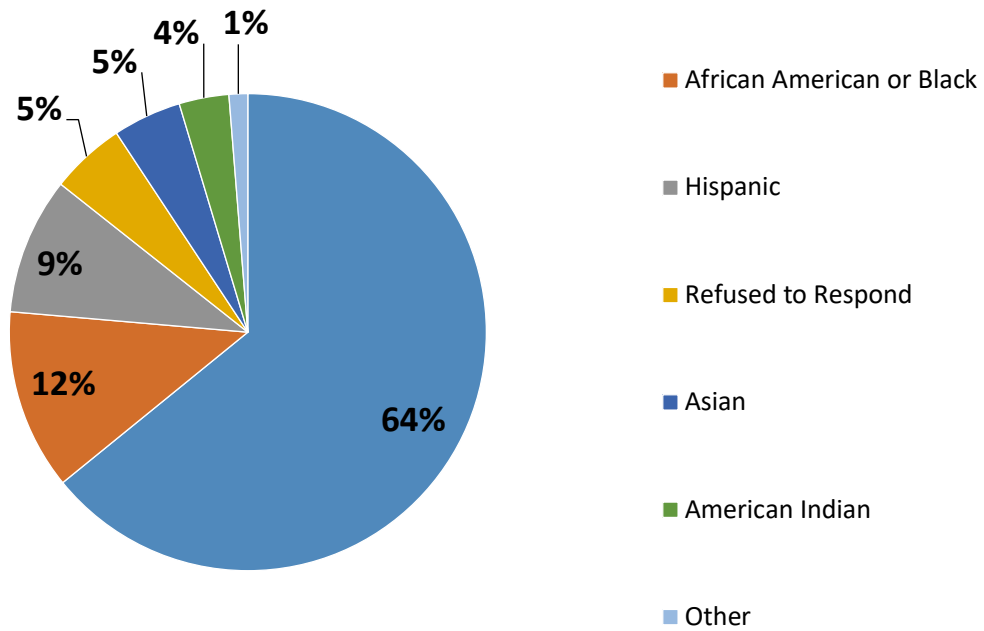- Schuyler — 4%
- Refused/No Response — 2%

The majority (69%) of participants in parent education classes were female. The highest level of educational attainment reached among the participants varied widely, with the greatest number of participants reaching 12th grade or a GED (32%)
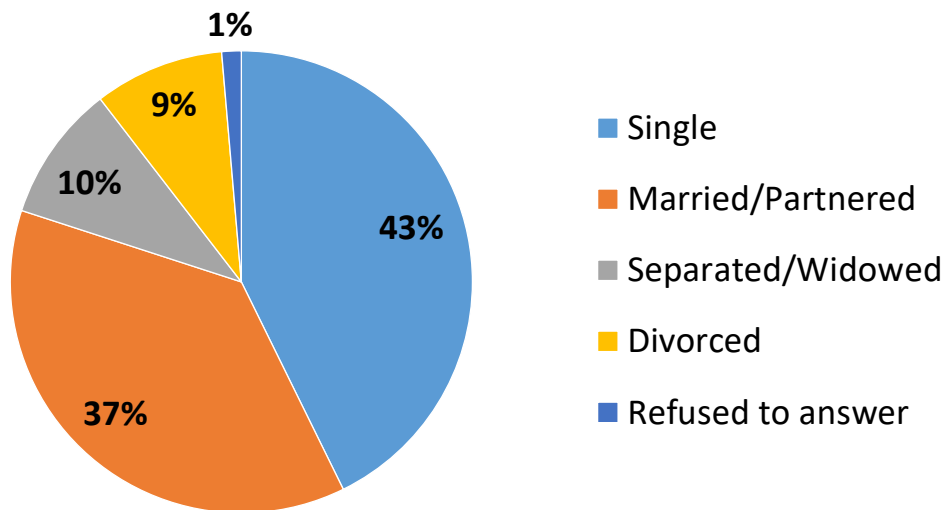
followed by those having attended, but not graduated from college (18%), and those having completed more than 4 years of college (16%). The majority of the participants in parent education classes were white (64%), and 43% of the participants were single.

Gender

3%

28%

69%

- Female
- Male
- No Response

Education

1% 1% 1%
1%
9%
11%
11%
32%
16%
18%

- 12th Grade or GED
- Some College
- post 4 year college grad
- 9th-11th Grade
- 4 year college grad
- 2 year college grad
- 8th grade or less
- No Response
- Beyond high school

Race

■	White
■	African American or Black
■	Hispanic
■	Refused to Respond
■	Asian
■	American Indian
■	Other

64%
12%
9%
5%
5%
4%
1%

Marital Status

■	Single
■	Married/Partnered
■	Separated/Widowed
■	Divorced
■	Refused to answer

43%
37%
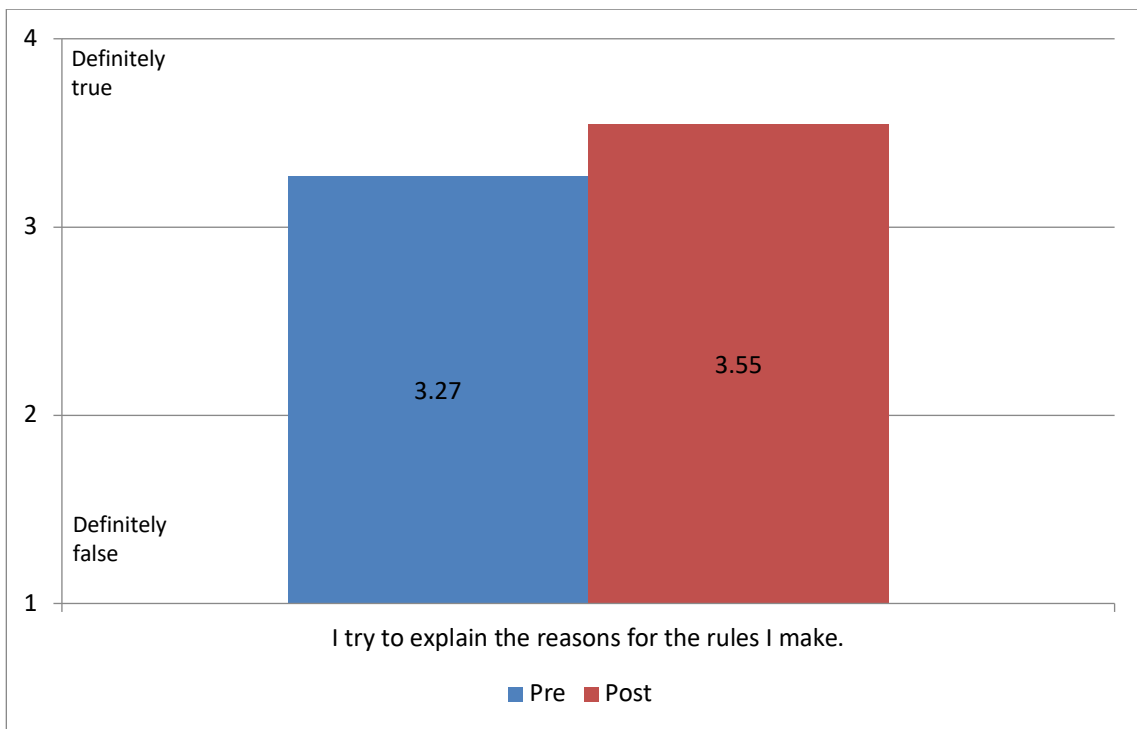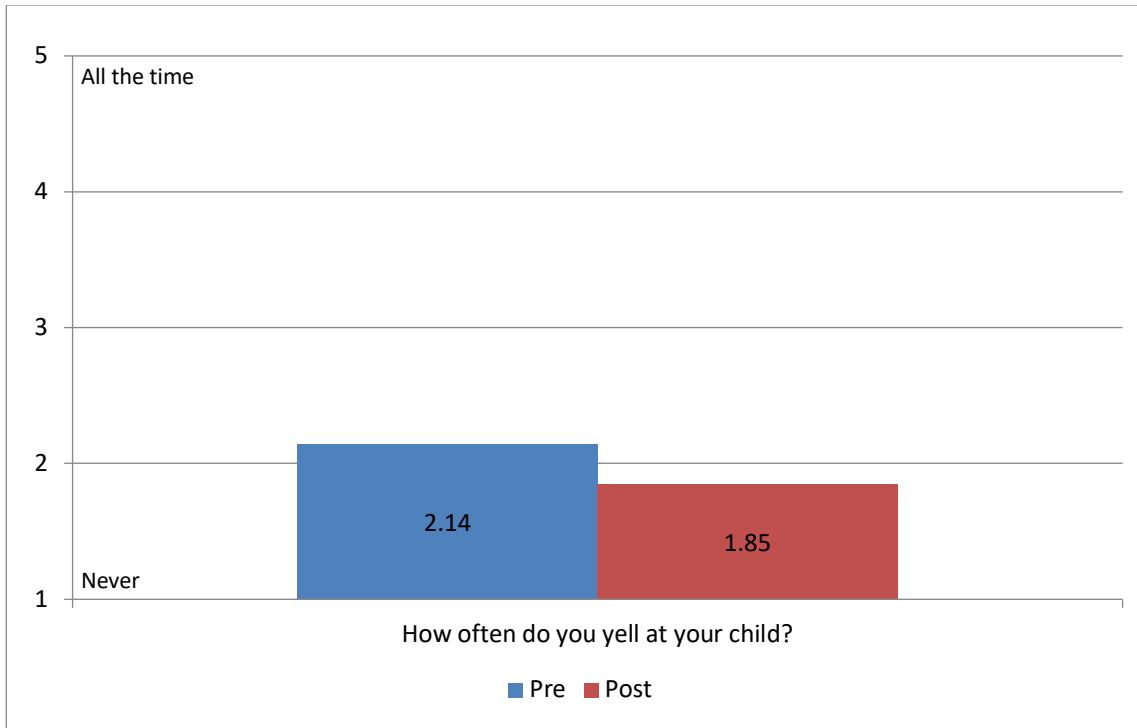10%
9%
1%

Pre-Post Survey Results

This study used a pre- and post-test evaluation, in which the participants were asked to answer two identical surveys—one given at the first session of the class and another given after the completion of the last parenting class. The survey included ten questions about parenting attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge. The pre/post study design allows researchers to see if participants' attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge change during the course of the parenting programs. Using this type of research design does not allow a determination of whether taking part in the parent education class *caused* a change in knowledge, attitude or behaviors as such changes could occur for other reasons outside of the program. However, it is possible that any significant pre-to-post changes in parenting attitudes, behaviors and knowledge that are observed may have resulted from taking part in the program.

The following evaluation is based on information provided by 168 participants, who completed a parent education program and completed both a pre- and a post-test survey. Five out of ten items on the survey showed significant improvements from the pre- to the post-test. Specifically, CCE parent education participants reported decreased frequency in yelling at their child and increased: confidence in explaining the reasons for rules, belief in their skills to be a good caregiver, confidence in making rules that take their child's needs into consideration, and patience with their child.
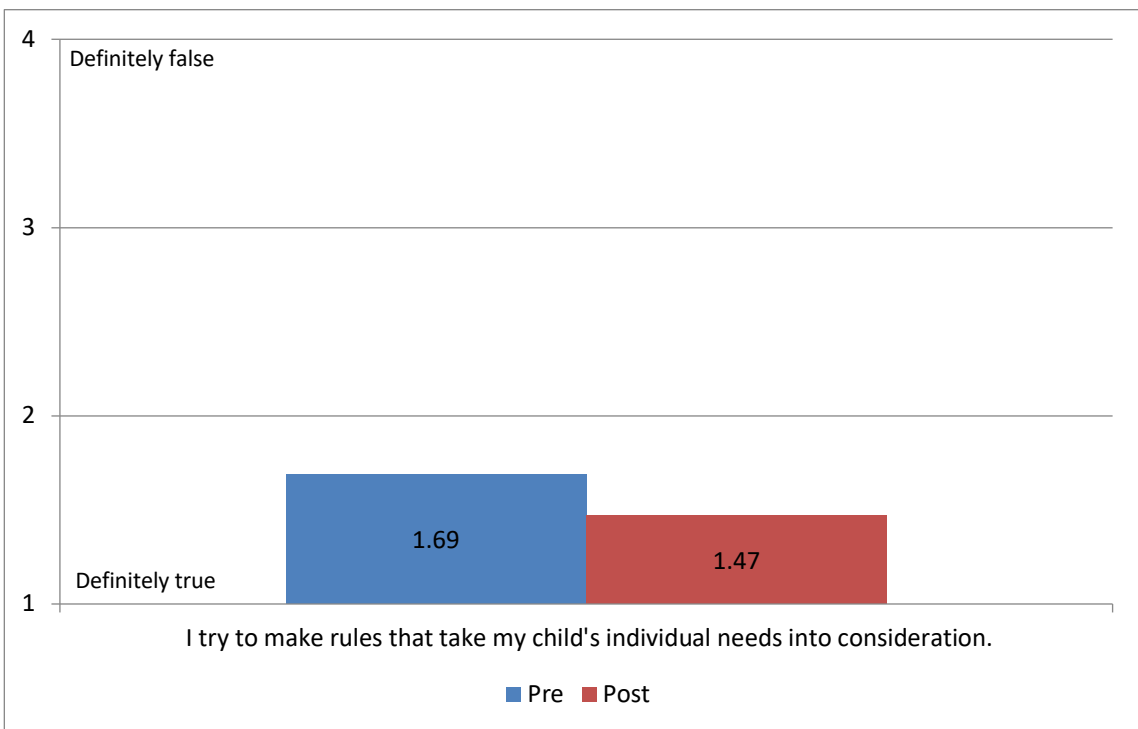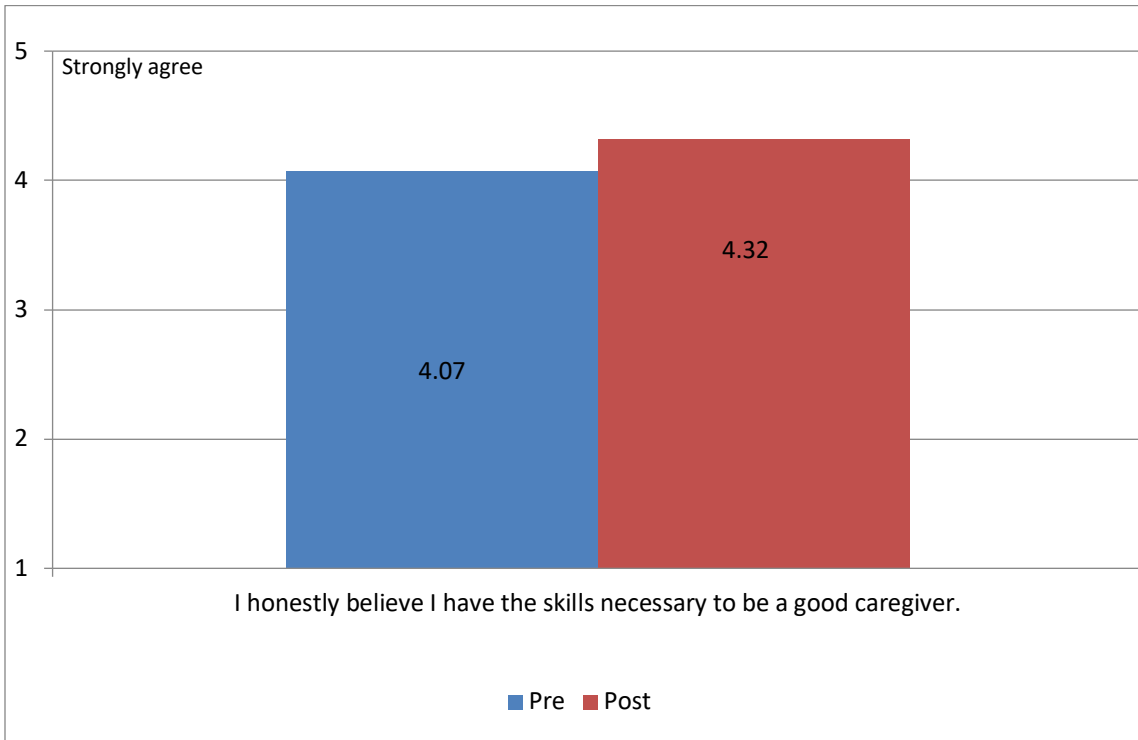
A p-value generated from a paired t-test was used as a statistical measure to determine whether a change in a given survey question between the pre- and post-test was significant. A p-value of .10 or less was considered statistically significant. This means that we can say with 90% certainty that the pre-to-post changes in participant responses are not due to chance.

In comparing participants' pre- and post-test survey results, the following two questions showed statistically significant changes at the 1% level.

How often do you yell at your child?

Scale	
5	All the time
1	Never

Pre: 2.14
Post: 1.85

I try to explain the reasons for the rules I make.

| Scale	
4	Definitely true
1	Definitely false

Pre: 3.27
Post: 3.55

In comparing participants' pre- and post-test survey results, the following two questions showed statistically significant changes at the 5% level.

Chart 1: Bar chart comparing Pre (4.07) and Post (4.32) responses to "I honestly believe I have the skills necessary to be a good caregiver." Scale from 1 to 5, with 5 labeled "Strongly agree." Legend: Pre, Post.

Chart 2: Bar chart comparing Pre (1.69) and Post (1.47) responses to "I try to make rules that take my child's individual needs into consideration." Scale from 1 to 4, with 4 labeled "Definitely false" and 1 labeled "Definitely true." Legend: Pre, Post.

In comparing participants' pre- and post-test survey results, the following question showed statistically significant changes at the 10% level.
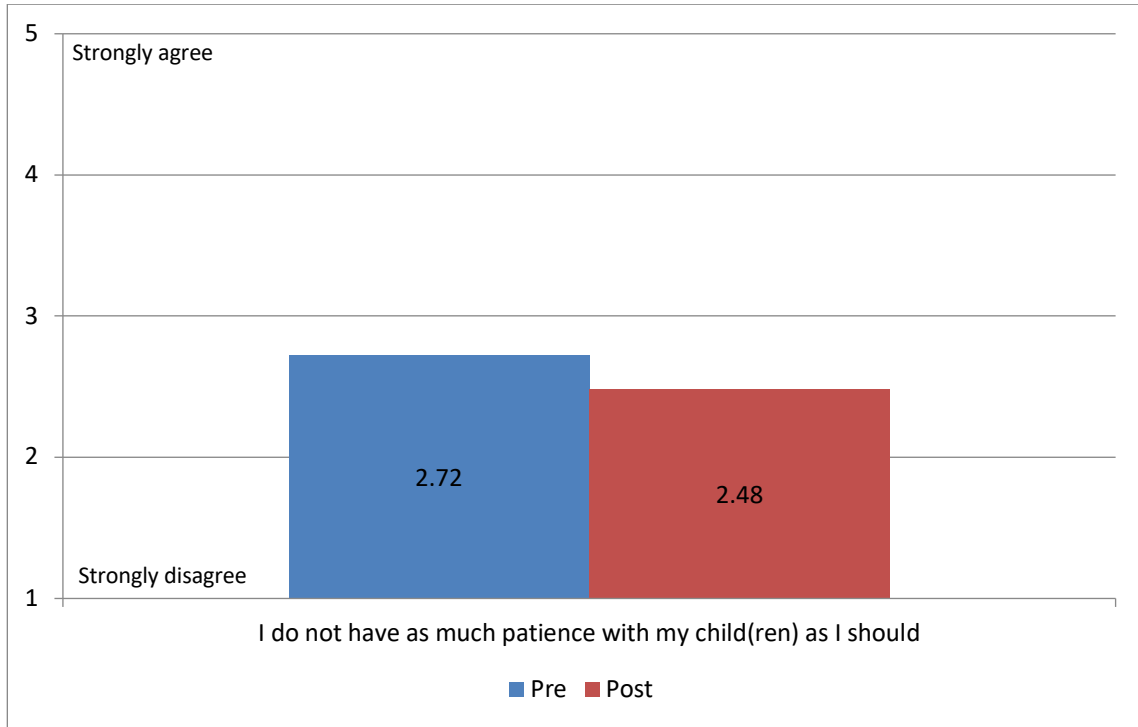
These results indicate that five out of ten measures of parenting attitudes, behaviors and knowledge improved significantly from the pre- to the post-test.

This suggests that, across the state, CCE parent education programs may have had a positive impact on their participants.

Visit the *[Parenting Project](#)* website

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