

# Circle of Security-Parenting



2016 Report of Nebraska Data

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Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation  
*Collaborate. Evaluate. Improve.*

# A History of Circle of Security™-Parenting in Nebraska

Circle of Security™-Parenting is an 8-week parenting program based on years of research about how to build strong attachment relationships between parent and child. It is designed to help parents learn how to respond to their child's needs in a way that enhances the attachment between parent and child. It helps parents give their children a feeling of security and confidence so they can explore, learn, grow and build positive relationships; all essential skills for life-long success.

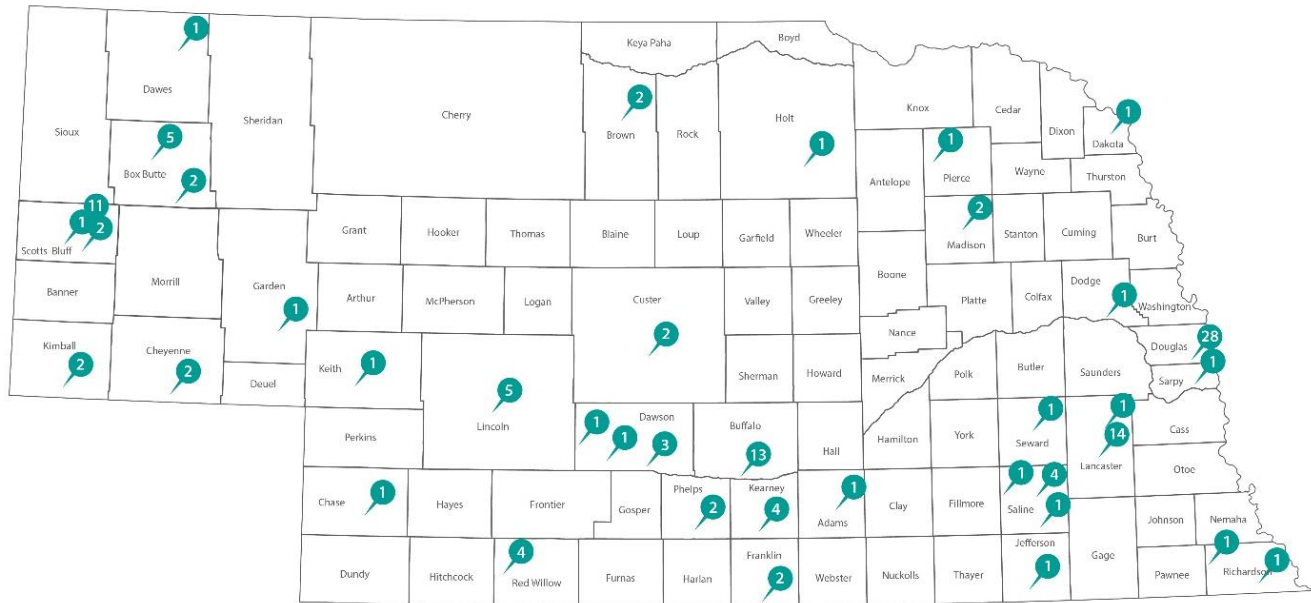


Circle of Security-Parenting (COS-P) classes have been taking place in Nebraska since 2011 when a psychologist attended the COS-P facilitator training out of state and brought his enthusiasm and belief in COS-P to his community and to statewide early childhood working groups. In 2012-13, several individuals from his region of the state went to the facilitator training and grant funding was secured to offer classes. Later in 2013, a separate group convened to discuss bringing the COS-P facilitator training to Nebraska to train a larger cohort of facilitators. The facilitator training was held in September of 2014 and 114 individuals from across Nebraska were trained, many (80) as part of community based teams that received partial scholarships to attend the training. The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education, Part C. provided funding for these scholarships. Since 2014, additional individuals have sought training out of state and there are approximately 130 COS-P Facilitators in Nebraska at this time. Following the 2014 training, facilitators were supported with webinars and conference calls as they began to offer COS-P classes in their local communities.

Currently, COS-P is being implemented statewide within agencies and by independent facilitators. In 2016, Rooted in Relationships (RIR) at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation continued to provide systems level support for COS-P. Rooted in Relationships is an initiative that partners with communities to implement evidence-based practices that enhance the social-emotional development of children, birth through age 8. Support was provided through building a stronger statewide website ([www.necosp.org](http://www.necosp.org)), developing common evaluation and marketing tools, convening a state level COS-P leadership team, distributing a quarterly newsletter, and providing a one-day facilitator booster session delivered by Deidre Quinlan, a Circle of Security

Trainer. Additionally, RIR continued to build capacity for reflective consultation to support facilitators via a pilot process approved by Circle of Security International. Full implementation of this model is expected in 2017.

## Registered COS-P Facilitators



Updated February 04, 2016

## Circle of Security™-Parenting (COS-P) Evaluation

Nebraska's evaluation process for COS-P includes the use of standardized evaluation forms and submission of data to Nebraska Children & Families Foundation or Munroe-Meyer Institute. Participants complete a pre-post retrospective survey (available in both English and Spanish) at the end of the COS-P sessions. This 9-item survey asks participants to assess their parenting stress, parent-child relationship, and parenting skills. In addition, facilitators complete a survey that describes the session logistics and provides feedback on the session and their own reflective consultation. Attendance data is submitted for each class series.

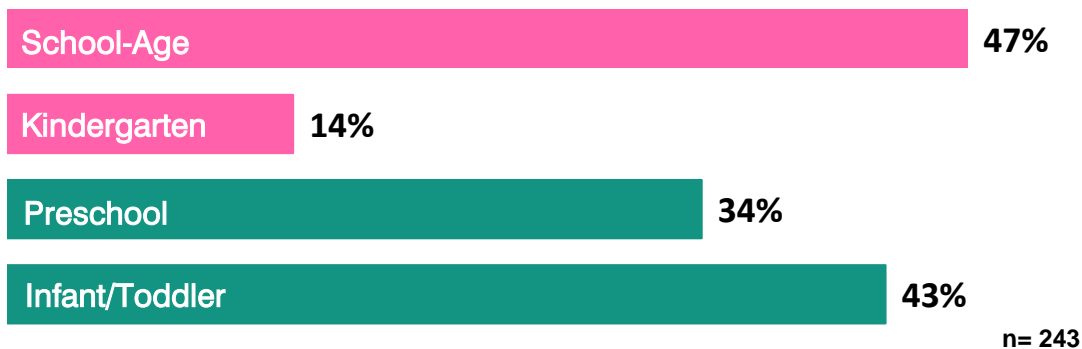
The evaluation results presented in this report are not representative of all COS-P classes that occurred in Nebraska. Classes that are funded via Nebraska Children and Families Foundation are required to submit evaluation data and other facilitators are encouraged to use the evaluation tools and submit their data to the statewide pool of data. In 2016, four initiatives (RIR, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation Community Well-Being, Learning Community, and KidSquad) and four independently working COS-P Facilitators in the state submitted data. Evaluation data was submitted for 51 COS-P class series completed in 16 counties.



## Who participated in COS–P classes?

A total of 266 participants enrolled in the 51 COS-P classes. Demographic data was completed on the post-survey at the final COS-P session. The majority (89%) of the participants in the COS-P sessions were parents. Other groups represented included: grandparents, service providers (5%), foster parents (1%) and other (2%). These participants were primarily female (79%) and were in the 19-30 (43%) and 31-50 (43%) age groups. The participants on average had 2.5 children and ranged from having 0 to 13 children. The ages of most of the children were distributed across three age groups, infants and toddlers, preschool, or school age. The majority (59%) of the children were eligible for Child Care Subsidy or Free and Reduced Lunch. A small number (13) of parents or their children were referred for additional services after participating in the COS-P class.

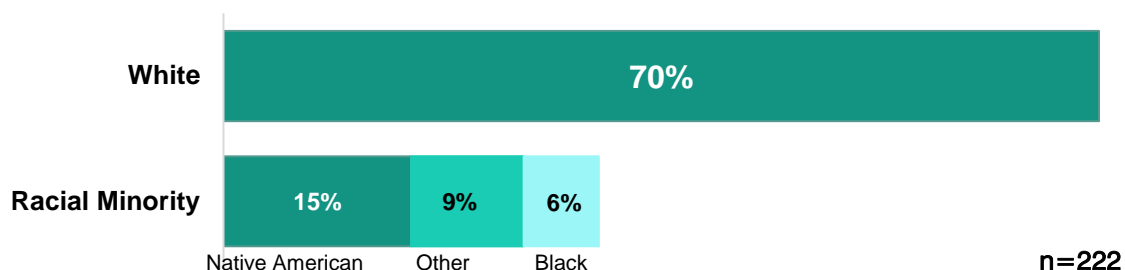
### Participants had children that spanned a wide-range of ages.



Both the race and the ethnicity of the participants were reported. Most of the participants were white (race); however, of this group, 24% noted their ethnicity was Hispanic. These results suggest that there has been good outreach to the Hispanic population as only 9% of the state population is Hispanic.

### The race of most participants was white.

Of this group, 24% of the participants indicated their ethnicity was Hispanic.





## Why did individuals participate in COS-P?

Participants joined a COS-P class for a variety of reasons. Primarily, participants were interested in improving their parenting skills or improving their relationships with their children. As one participant stated, “I need help parenting and to understand my children.” Some parents sought out the class to support them in addressing their child’s challenging behaviors. Many found out about the classes from other parents or professionals and came based on those recommendations and some joined due to a requirement by the court. As one person reported, the class was, “court ordered, but benefitted me a lot.” Several professionals participated as part of a work training or as one provider indicated, “To learn what is being taught to the parents I work with.”

Based on information from 34 of the 51 classes, facilitators reported that a variety of different supports were made available to increase participant access to COS-P, such as child care (38%), food (50%), transportation (3%) and incentives (47%) such as gas cards or gift cards.



**“I became pregnant and decided it was best to get help.”**

**....a parent**

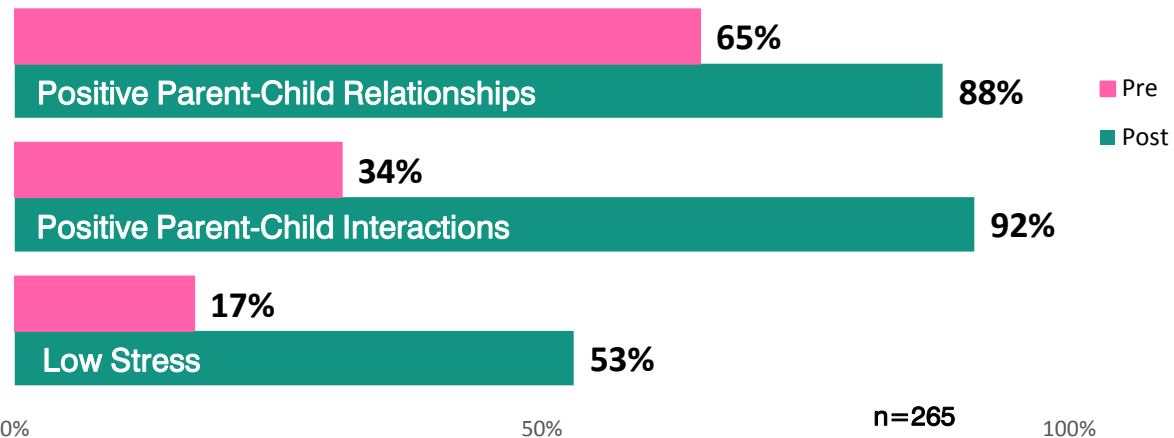
## How did participants evaluate their COS-P experience?

Participants were asked about parenting stress, their relationship with their children, and confidence in their parenting skills on a retrospective pre-post survey. A total of 261 individuals completed the survey. The results of the data were analyzed in two different ways. First, a statistical analysis (a paired t-test) was completed to determine if there was a significant change in participants’ perception by the end of the COS-P series across the program identified outcomes. There were significant positive differences found between overall scores at the beginning of the group ( $M=2.53$   $SD=1.05$ ) and scores at the groups’ conclusion ( $M=3.48$ ;  $SD=1.09$ );  $t(260)=-12.102$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $d=.749$ , two-tailed test. These results suggest a strong effect size that is in the zone of desired effects.

The second analysis examined the percentage of participants who rated their skills positively in three outcomes areas (a rating of agreed or strongly agreed), after the COS-P class series. The results found very high percentages of participants met the program goal of rating their own parenting skills and their relationship with their children very positively by the final session. Slightly over half (53%) of the parents reported low stress related to their parenting at the end of the COS-P sessions; an increase from the pre-assessment, where only 16% reported low stress related to their parenting. These results suggest a decrease in parenting related stress after participation in COS-P. The most gains were made in the areas of positive parent-child interactions.

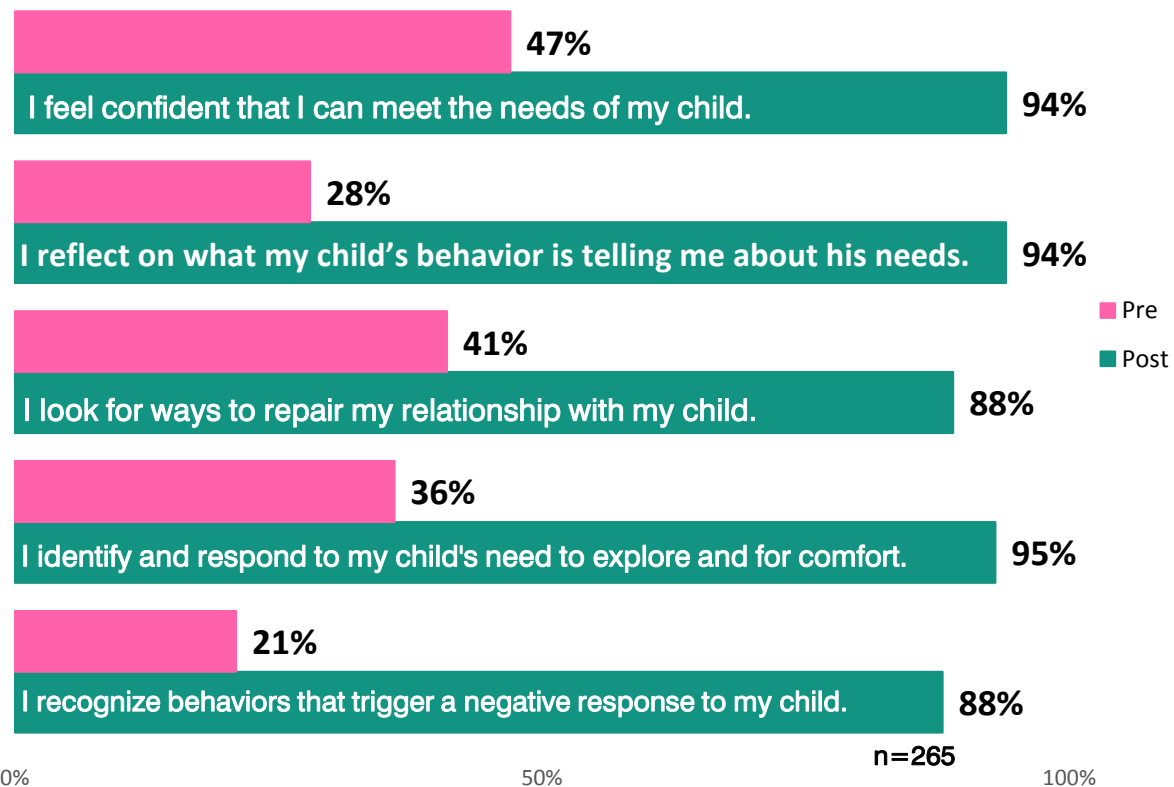
Most of the participants met the program goal in adopting positive parent--child interactions and positive parent-child relationships.

Fewer met the goal of feeling low levels of stress related to parenting.



**Positive Parent-Child Interaction Items: Parents make gains across all areas.**

The most gains were made in recognizing their triggers and understanding their child's

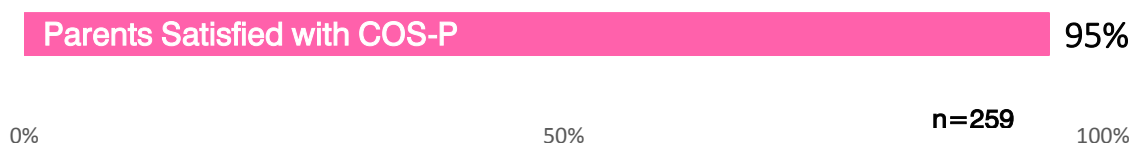


## What did participants tell us about their experience?

Participants were very positive about their COS-P experience, using descriptors such as “informative”, “learned a lot”, “loved it”, and “very helpful”. Many commented on the benefits of participating in the class, specifically how it helped them to gain parenting skills, improve their confidence, or enhance the relationship with their children.

As one parent commented, “This class really helped me with the bonding of my child during the times I am allowed visits.” Another parent pointed out, “This class was very eye opening and helped me to understand my feelings in a new way.” Most importantly, they described that they “enjoyed their child” and had a better relationship after participating in the class. Not only was it beneficial to parents, one service provider commented, “I would recommend it to anyone who works with kids.” Several recommended this group to others, including new and adoptive parents. Overall, the participants rated the group format and their facilitator very positively (95%).

**Nearly all of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the group format was helpful and the COS-P facilitator did a good job facilitating the group.**



**“Phenomenal and packed with common-sense and usable information. I enjoyed being in this class knowing we're not alone in our struggle.”**

**....a parent**

## What did COS-P facilitators tell us about their experience?

The experiences of the facilitators are based on information from 34 or 67% of the sessions that were completed due to facilitator surveys not being completed for all classes. Facilitators confirmed many of the benefits that the participants described. One predominant theme was the parents’ discovery of how important it was to “be with” their children. Additionally, they saw parents growing in their ability to share and communicate with other parents in the sessions. Facilitators also noted that one of the most surprising things to many parents was the recognition that “their own upbringing affected their parenting.” Not only did participants gain understanding of the concepts discussed, many also changed their language and behaviors. One facilitator reported, “COS-P helped (a father) understand and manage his anger issues better than any anger management class he's ever had. He is sharing it with friends.”

Facilitators were asked to describe any challenges or suggestions for improving COS-P classes. Several noted the importance of class size as there were difficulties with class size being too small (e.g., less discussion) or too large. There were some situations where the parents were less engaged due to a variety of factors (e.g., court ordered, families having difficulty accessing concrete supports, or other family issues). A small number had difficulty recognizing their role when their child was experiencing problem behavior. For some classes consistent attendance was a problem.

As an additional support designed to promote fidelity to the COS-P model and facilitator awareness of strengths and struggles, Rooted in Relationships provided reflective consultative support for facilitators in communities where their funding was being used to provide COS-P classes. The COS-P facilitators (n=10) participated in reflective consultation as part of their participation in RIR. Nearly all (90%) participated one to two times per month. High percentages of the facilitators rated the consultation as helpful (70%). Slightly fewer found the frequency of the reflective consultation to be adequate (60%).

## Conclusions

- Circle of Security™-Parenting was effectively implemented across communities with parents demonstrating significant increases in parenting skills, improved relationships with their children and decreased parenting stress.
- Parents recommended Circle of Security™-Parenting to other parents, reporting that the structure of the class and the facilitators were highly effective.
- Parents reported that Circle of Security™-Parenting benefited them by helping them to gain parenting skills, improve their confidence, and/or enhance the relationship with their children.
- Circle of Security™-Parenting facilitators reported that reflective consultation support was very helpful.



**“The class put most everything I already knew about parenting into a circle to simplify how the parent/child interaction is perceived.”**

**.....a parent**

Evaluation Report prepared by  
Barbara Jackson\*  
Interdisciplinary Center of Program Evaluation  
The University of Nebraska Medical Center's  
Munroe-Meyer Institute: A University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities

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**Nebraska**  
Medical Center