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Family Relationships Affect Children's Resilience

Nurturing relationships with caring adults provide essential support for children's growth and development both now and in the future. Daily stress and stress during transitions can adversely affect children unless adults build bonds that provide them with a sense of security. Land-grant universities are addressing this important need.

Examples of this work include:

- In **Vermont**, Extension professionals discovered being in nature restored attention, increased self-control, reduced irritability and improved understanding of social cues. Outdoor Family Weekend provides families two nights at a state park to help them feel closer to each other and the outdoor community. Expert-led workshops helped families gain confidence by mastering new outdoor skills. In 2022, 70 families (269 people) participated. Participants had a greater appreciation for natural resources in their vicinity and said they were more likely to engage in outdoor recreation and work/play with those different from themselves. Families grew closer, created shared memories, interacted and learned in a stress-free environment.
- In **Wisconsin**, Extension reached out to those in several periods of transition to help reduce stress, build connections and provide greater stability for the children affected. The Family Engagement and Relationships program provides parents with practical information that eases their transition into parenthood. With over 4,600 subscribers, the Just in Time Parenting e-newsletter (in English and Spanish) offers an easy guide to child development, raising healthy children and solving common parenting problems. In a reader survey, 97% of respondents said the newsletters encouraged developmentally appropriate expectations. Extension educators also work with family courts to provide co-parenting classes to parents facing separation, divorce or custody challenges. They teach parents how to reduce conflict, improve communication and support children during the uncertainty.

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Youth, Families, Community

In 2022, 15 counties offered 60 co-parenting classes to 580 people. Making Reading Memories helps families strengthen essential relationships when a loved one is incarcerated. Extension educators coach and record parents reading a children's storybook. The book and the recording are sent to the children and they are encouraged to read along. In 2022, 96 incarcerated parents or family members were recorded on 186 videos that were given to 142 children. Together, these programs are improving parenting and fostering resiliency in children.