



YOUTH, FAMILY, COMMUNITIES

Families Become Stronger by Focusing on the Kids

Educating families about positive parenting practices and healthy family functioning is essential to improving overall child and family health and well-being. Helping the child learn to read and write are positive parenting practices and essential skills that lead to a child's success in school and later life. Extension experts at land-grant universities have developed educational programs to encourage healthy families and youths.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- **Missouri** Extension's Focus on Kids program helped reduce the level of conflict between parents and therefore reduced the level of stress on children. This leads to more children being raised in healthy, low-conflict environments potentially reducing the need for community health services for children of divorce.
- The Families Reading Every Day (FRED) program in **Texas** targets fathers but is open to mothers, too. Parents read to their children each day and document the number of books and the amount of time spent with them. FRED increased parent satisfaction levels and helped them become more involved in their child's education.
- Parenting classes in **North Carolina** lowered foster care costs in the state with workshops that introduced a variety of topics and skills, such as: Parenting Challenges, You're a Role Model, Taking Care of Yourself: To Better Take Care of Your Child, Understanding Your Child's Behavior, Discipline vs Punishment, Avoiding Power Struggles, Strengthening Families and Coping with Parenting Stress.
- To decrease the number of child abuse and neglect cases in the state, the **Kentucky** Cooperative Extension Program designed SKY Families to help parents prevent child abuse and neglect. The program intervenes in familial crisis situations that often lead to child abuse and neglect. It also teaches skills that help parents model healthy behaviors such as anger management, conflict resolution, alternatives to discipline, family nutrition, communicating with respect, building self-worth in children and understanding feelings among others.
- Low-income parents in **Arkansas** are better able to continue their education, seek gainful employment and maintain a higher standard of living when they can afford dependable child care services through the Early Head Start-Child Care project. Parents are in a better position to secure higher-paying jobs and relocate to more adequate housing. With the program currently at full enrollment, Arkansas families are taking advantage of the opportunity to work or continue their education with the peace of mind that their children are being adequately prepared for pre-school and beyond.

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