



# IMPACT 2023

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators provide a multitude of Educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

## Family Stability and Vitality

Sixty-four thousand six hundred twenty-eighth people participated in parenting or child development programs offered through Extension FCS.

**Nebraska** supported 32 CDA Credential observations in English and Spanish. The childcare industry continues to face significant challenges in hiring, retention, and turnover. Ten of those being at Offutt Air Force Base which is a critical and vital state employer. This program provides age-appropriate, engaging activities for children birth-age 8 indirectly reaching 6,969 children. Post evaluation data reveals 100% of users are extremely likely to recommend the lessons and that they will use additional activities in the future.

The **West Virginia Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship** program is four semesters long and offered to childcare providers. Participants must submit homework, pass exams, and be observed to complete the course. Approximately 200 successfully advanced in the program. The participants receive wage increases and continuing education credit.



**Kansas Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is a program designed to reduce caregiver burnout, participants were encouraged to adopt self-care practices centered around managing stress, increasing communication, and tackling tough situations. As a result, 100% reported learning a new strategy including relaxation techniques, setting goals, and seeking help from others.

In **North Dakota**, 26% of North Dakota residents 45+ provide unpaid help to someone, yet most receive little training to care for themselves. After attending the *Powerful Tool for Caregivers* program, participants reported: 60% increase in finding positive ways to cope, 49% increase in understanding emotions, 50% increase in finding resources.

The **Michigan Parent Talk System** is a 6-week series for parents designed to improve communication and provide practical verbal strategies for raising confident, caring, responsible children. Topics include eliminating unwanted behavior, setting limits, teaching about consequences, giving effective feedback, promoting independence, and developing character. In addition, *Extra Parenting Hour* is offered as free, online parenting workshops to provide guidance for parents of young children as they navigate the challenges, concerns, and joys of parenting. Participants may register for as few or as many workshops as they wish. **Wisconsin** had 1,285 parents subscribe to *Just In Time* newsletters this past year to learn about child development and parenting information.

**Kentucky's Laugh and Learn Playdates** address early childhood development and kindergarten readiness skills. After the program: 90% of children knew their name or were able to write it, over 90% continued challenging tasks and 80% reported an increase in their child trying healthy and a variety of foods.

"Our children are willing to try healthy foods now and their love of reading time with family has increased. Creative play is at a new high and they repeat many activities they have participated in at Laugh and Learn Playdates!"

Separation or divorce is a period of adjustment for families. Effective communication skills are necessary during this time.

The *Successful Co-Parenting Online* program in **Ohio** familiarizes parents with information, skills, and techniques to minimize negative effects of separation/divorce on children. Over half of participants showed positive change in their knowledge of using healthy communication techniques such as problem-solving with their co-parent. **Wisconsin** had 593 parents participate in similar programs with 95% reflecting they were more confident they would keep the kids out of the middle of parenting issues. After attending **Oklahoma's** *Co-Parenting for Resilience* class, 91% of participants revealed they are more likely to encourage their child to have positive relationship with the other parent. One participant stated *"I appreciate that this class was offered, and I am glad I attended. I feel my relationship with my children and their mother has gotten stronger."*

The *Gray for a Day* program in **Mississippi** helps public and healthcare workers better understand the challenges associated with aging. Following the program, 98% reported increased awareness of sensory and functional decline and the impact on daily life; 95% increased knowledge of interacting with older adults.

Parents who participated in **Arizona's** *Positive Discipline* program are 20% less likely to yell at their children, have 23% better understanding of the belief behind their child's behavior, and 27% more likely to take care of themselves when feeling stressed. Fifty-two percent reported more empathy for child's needs. *Strengthening Families* programs focus on enhancing parenting practices and behavior, such as developing and practicing positive discipline techniques, learning age-appropriate child development skills and milestones, and promoting positive play and interaction between parents and children.

*"Our family learned the tools needed to better communicate with each other. Learning about developmental milestones has allowed me to be more realistic in my expectations. We spend more time together as a family and enjoy being around each other."*

Almost 20% of **Indiana** high school students report drinking alcohol in the last month and 11% using alcohol or drugs to relax. *Strengthening Families for Parents* ages 10-14 encourages communication to create and open dialogue between kids and caregivers. Following the program nearly 50% of caregivers noted working together

to solve problems; nearly 50% of youth noted increased communication.

With **Indiana's** population (especially rural communities) aging, health in all areas is needed.

*Train Your Brain* participants showed a nearly 90% increase in knowledge on ways to maintain brain function through physical, mental, and social connection. One participant stated *"I never thought to take into consideration what my brain needs to be healthy"*.

In **Pennsylvania**, kinship caregivers need training related to legal issues, school application, positive parenting, and physical and mental health. *Relatives As Parents Program* provides resources on its website, presentations by experts on the field, and programs for respite and bonding for kinship caregivers. *Making Reading Memories* allowed 62 incarcerated parents to record reading videos for their children. Ninety percent of those recording for the first time felt more confident reading to their children after participation in the program.

**Kansas** extension educators offered babysitting clinics across the state of Kansas using the *Suddenly in Charge* curriculum, which is designed to help teens and tweens with their roles in taking care of younger children.

*"That being a caregiver is not an easy task, it's natural to have worries/doubts/stress and the most important part is addressing that and coping with it in a healthy way."*

**Utah** Extension's *Remote Online Initiative* program created the Certified Remote Work Professional (CRWP) course to provide Utah's rural workforce with education and training for online opportunities in remote employment. Four hundred three Utah certificate holders found remote work since completing the course.

*This report was compiled by Sonya McDaniel, Oklahoma State University, Public Affairs Education Committee members and Jennifer Bridge, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension and NEAFCS Vice President Public Affairs. For more information, email [Jennifer.Bridge@uky.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Bridge@uky.edu).*

*Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart*

