



# IMPACT 2026

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

### Overview

This narrative summarizes the collective efforts across the Family Stability and Vitality program area that demonstrate a substantial, multi-state impact on the core of nationwide communities. Cumulatively, these essential programs were offered 2,685 times, spanning across 149 comprehensive lesson series. By leveraging a robust network of 3,802 community partners/stakeholders, these initiatives successfully engaged 205,563 in-person participants and reached an astounding 588,173 virtual participants. These figures represent a significant commitment to fostering resilient families, improving mental well-being, and equipping individuals with the life skills necessary to thrive.

### State-Specific Highlights

- **Kentucky:** Kentucky's Family Programming reached 94,312 in-person participants and a staggering 567,302 individuals virtually. Programs like *Laugh and Learn Playdates* and *Grandparents Make Grand Cooks* have become vital community fixtures, strengthening family bonds, encouraging communication, and socio-emotional health.
- **Arkansas:** The Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council (AEHC) successfully engaged 81,715 in-person participants. This initiative addresses social isolation and promotes leadership through volunteerism, with evaluations showing members gain significant knowledge and report increased social connections that enhance overall community well-being.
- **Oklahoma:** Demonstrating a high-impact virtual model, the *Co-Parenting for Resilience (CPR™)* program reached 9,718 virtual participants. The program focuses on helping children adjust after separation or divorce by improving parental communication and planning by 20%, shifting the focus from conflict to child-centered actions.

- **Arizona:** Focused on early childhood development, the Statewide Family Resource Center Programming reached 5,950 participants. This program collaborated with seven Family Resource Centers to address critical gaps in school readiness, with parents reporting significant improvements in self-care, peer networks, social-emotional skills, and skill-building.

*"The most important thing I learned was that I can use games for my mental health."  
-Cherokee County, youth participant*



### Participant Outcomes and Areas of Impact

Extension programs addressed the diverse needs of families across four core themes, delivering research-based education to improve long-term stability:

- **Family Empowerment Education (113,407 in-person; 578,472 virtual):** This key area represents the largest outreach effort, focusing on parenting skills and childhood development. In Missouri, 100% of parents in the *Building Strong Families* program reported using more positive parenting techniques, while in Wisconsin, the *Parents Forever* program helped 3 out

of 4 parents prevent high-conflict conversations from escalating.

*“Ability to actually communicate and connect with my littles. It’s not always an argument. Things get done more efficiently when you are on the same level; Helping learn and teach emotional control - because it helps with my stress level too.”*

- **Building Mental Resilience (82,464 in-person; 8,102 virtual):** Programs under this key area target the emotional health of the community. Initiatives like *Coping and Stress Management* and *My Wellbeing* help individuals navigate financial and emotional stressors. In Idaho’s Coping Stress Management program, participants’ surveys reported a 87% increase in knowledge and confidence in managing stress.
- **Relational Wellbeing (4,557 in-person; 599 virtual):** Focus is placed on strengthening the bond between couples and family members. In Georgia, the *ELEVATE* program served economically and relationally stressed couples, with over 90% of participants reporting sustained improvements in relationship satisfaction and confidence six months after completion.

*“Reminder to make my child first in the decision-making processes about them.”*

*“Allowed me to acknowledge things I did not realize I was doing in front of our child.”*

- **Life Skills (5,135 in-person; 1,000 virtual):** This key area prioritizes practical skills for everyday stability. In North Carolina, participants reported improved stress management and healthier family routines. Youth development programs like *4-H Special Interest (SPIN)* clubs also play a critical role, helping young people build the foundational skills needed for future workforce readiness and personal responsibility.



Georgia’s ELEVATE program

## Community Collaboration and Future Direction

The Family Stability and Vitality initiatives underscore the critical role of Extension in building a stronger social fabric. By reaching over 790,000 individuals through a hybrid of in-person and digital engagement, these programs provide the tools necessary for families to manage conflict, raise healthy children, and sustain mental resilience. Continued investment in these partnerships ensures that families across the nation remain vital, stable, and prepared for the future.



Iowa’s My Wellbeing program

*This report was written by Dr. Dhruti Patel, NEAFCS Vice President for Public Affairs and compiled by Dylan Gentry (University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension). For more information, please email [dhrutip@umd.edu](mailto:dhrutip@umd.edu).*

*This document was generated with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. The authors of this report have thoroughly reviewed the AI generated information to ensure the highest level of accuracy, bias, and ethical standards.*

Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart



**National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS)** provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in the areas of: Childhood Obesity Prevention; Community Health and Wellness; Diabetes Prevention and Management; Financial Management; Food and Nutrition; Food Safety; Healthy Homes and the Environment; Improving Children’s Lives; and Protecting our Resources – Family Life.