

PENNSSTATE



Resiliency and Thriving in Families and Youth

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Sabona!

I want to thank all of you for providing me with feedback about the newsletter. I thought I would share a summary of the information gathered. As I mentioned last time, we had 62 feedback forms returned, giving us a 47% return rate. Thirty-nine percent of those who returned the feedback forms were 4-H Youth Development Educators, followed by Family and Consumer Sciences Educators (27%), extension agents (27%), 6% program assistants, and other (1%). Web resources were the information most often named as being useful, at 57%. This was followed by research briefs, family activities, and funding sources. I am pleased to report that 71% of you indicate you are sharing this information through various mediums, such as newsletters, radio, workshops, and word of mouth. A large number of you indicated that you are sharing this information with other professionals and your clientele (parents and youth). In addition, there were a lot of great suggestions for future topics, such as: divorce, eating disorders, chronic illness, disabilities and associated family dynamics, and impact of greater time pressures on kids and families. In order to draw attention to those issues, I will indicate with a star (j) when information I present is addressing an identified issue.

Hope you all have a safe and fun summer! Best regards.

Sincerely,

Daniel F. Perkins
Associate Professor
Family and Youth Resiliency and Policy



... What's Inside ...

Family Activity

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FAMILY ACTIVITY

"All About Me Books" are a great activity for families with children of all ages. Have each child select various colors of construction paper, or use blank notebooks. On each page a different title should be written, such as "My name is...", "This is my family," "I like to...", "I don't like...", "When I grow up..." etc. Have each child write, draw or glue pictures onto each page in response to the title. Once the books are completed, share them with your family. This is a fun and creative way for family members to express themselves and learn more about one another.

RESEARCH BRIEFS



Early Childhood Intervention Programs

A recent University of Wisconsin study reported that early intervention programs have a positive impact on children's cognitive development. The study compared infants from low-income families who received high-quality early intervention to infants who received less intensive intervention. High-quality intervention was defined as year-round care beginning in early infancy and continuing for the five years prior to the beginning of elementary school. Individualized educational activities that focused on cognitive, social, emotional, and language development were designed for each child. Families participating in the early intervention program received social support services, pediatric referrals and medical care, and supplemental snacks and meals.

Children participating in the study were monitored until they were 21 years old. Results showed that participants of the early intervention program had higher IQ scores and improved language development. Learning performance, measured by scores on standardized math and reading tests, was also higher. Results also showed higher levels of education, delayed parenthood, and decreased need for special education in children who completed the early intervention program.

Researchers identified several components of the early intervention program that benefit children in poverty. Interventions that start early and last until the beginning of formal schooling appear to be most effective. Furthermore, programs that are more intensive--including more hours per day and days per week--are more beneficial. Finally, individualization of programming to account for each child's developmental, social, and cultural needs benefit children more than generalized intervention programs.

Found in: Ramey, C. (2000). Helping Children Get Started Right: The Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention. In K. Bogenschneider & J. Mills (Eds.), *Helping poor kids succeed: Welfare, tax, and early intervention policies*. Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars Briefing.



The Effect of Stepfather and Non-custodial Father Involvement

This study assessed the effects of relationships with both fathers on child outcomes. Data were drawn from 189 adolescents who have a living biological father and a resident stepfather. Adolescents' reports on their relationships with non-custodial fathers and stepfathers were employed to predict child outcomes.

No relationship was found between the quality of a child's relationship with his or her stepfather and that with the biological father. In other words, it does not seem children's good relationships with their stepfathers come at the expense of relationships with their natural fathers. In addition, children who got along with one father did not necessarily get along with the other.

When children reported better relationships with their stepfathers, parents reported the children had fewer problems. The quality of the stepfather relationship was found to be especially important to child outcomes when he was a cohabiting rather than a married stepfather. The association between a child's relationship with the stepfather and the child's problems was not affected significantly by age, gender, years in stepfamily, years apart from non-custodial father, financial contribution of or contact with the non-custodial father, or the child's relationship with the mother or non-custodial father. Moreover, children who had good relationships with their non-custodial fathers also were less likely to have problems, but the correlation was weaker than that for relationships with stepfathers. Having a weak relationship with the non-custodial father did not necessarily increase the chances of children having problems.

The results of this article suggest that children benefit from good relationships with both stepfathers and non-custodial fathers. However, the authors note that effective parenting requires not simply the parent's presence or even specific behaviors, but an affective bond between parent and child.

Found in: White, L., & Gilbreth, J. G. (2001). When Children Have Two Fathers: Effects of Relationships with Stepfathers and Noncustodial Fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 155-167.

Teenage Sex

What's behind the decline in the teen birth rate? Are more teens abstaining from sex? Are more using contraception? In their latest research brief, Child Trends, a research organization, examined national data related to teenage sexual activity and contraceptive use. The information from their research provides us with a mix of both positive and negative news.

They find that there is a decrease in the percentage of teens that have ever had sex. However, the percentage of very young teens (14 and under) that have had sex is increasing. Among teens, contraceptive use at first sex had increased. Nevertheless, they also discovered that teens are inconsistent users of contraception, with an increasing percentage failing to use contraception at most recent sex. Hispanic teens are less likely than either black or white teens to have used contraception at most recent sex.

Found in: Terry, E., & Manlove, J. (2001). Trends in Sexual Activity and Contraceptive Use Among Teens. *Child Trends Research Brief*. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Available on line at: <http://www.childtrends.org/>

WEB RESOURCES

WW Used Reading Books
<http://www.literacyempowerment.org/lef/recycling.html>

The Literacy Empowerment Foundation's Reading Recycling Project is an ongoing program that distributes new and gently used books free of charge to organizations serving children. Recipients pay shipping, handling, and administrative costs of \$60 per set of 100 books. Books are chosen to match the reading levels you select and are shipped within four to six weeks.



WW Youth Led Social Change/Gun Violence
<http://www.comotionmakers.org/>

Co/Motion: Engaging Youth in Action to Stop Gun Violence offers a free guide to youth-led social change. The guide presents young people with the tools, skills, and strategies to work for change in their communities. This 250-page training manual outlines the dynamic process of strategizing and action planning, including research and guides for campaign planning, organizing meetings, coalition and community building, making and meeting a budget, working with the media, and evaluation. The site also features information about gun violence and prevention along with matching grants for gun violence prevention advocacy programs.

WW Parent Education and Support
<http://ag.udel.edu/fam/best/contents.html>

This website is divided into several sections: (1) parenting education and support, which addresses parenting issues, limitations to parenting education, and an overview of effective programming; (2) programs focusing on specific parenting issues, which address discipline, child development, delinquency, and sexuality; and (3) programs focusing on specific groups of parents, including divorced parents, single parents, grandparents as parents, teen parents, etc. This site also includes criteria for parenting programs and a guide to writing program proposals.

WW Parents' Guide to Talking to Kids
www.talkingwithkids.org
www.everythingnick.com
www.nick.com/your_world

Developed through a partnership between Nickelodeon and Talking with Kids, an on-going campaign of the Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now, these free parent guides encourage families to talk together about "tough issues," including sex and puberty, violence, alcohol and drug use, and discrimination. They have also developed new multimedia resources to help parents and kids start talking. Parents can get age-appropriate guidance and tips for raising difficult topics with kids. In addition, kids can take a "Talk Challenge" and share experiences with each other.

WW The Role of the Internet in Children's Lives
<http://www.nsf.org/safe-smart/index.html>

The National School Boards Foundation and Grunwald Associates, a well-known marketing research firm specializing in technology, released a report entitled *Safe & Smart: Research and Guidelines for Children's Use of the Internet*. The report contains valuable information regarding: the role of parents as guides to good content on the Web; bridging the digital divide; how girls' and boys' use of the Internet is similar and different; and connectivity vs. isolation.

WW American Teens After School Survey
<http://www.ymca.net/presrm/news/2001/unsupervisedTeensInSchool.htm>

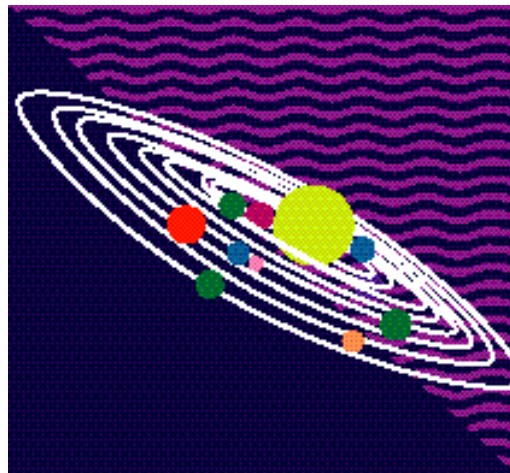
In January 2001, the YMCA of the USA commissioned the After School for America's Teens survey. Not surprisingly, the survey found that "teens who are unsupervised during the after-school hours of 3 to 6 p.m. are more likely to engage in risky behaviors than youth who are supervised by a parent or other adult. In response to these findings, the YMCA has launched its Teen Action Agenda, a nationwide campaign to double the number of teens it serves to 5 million by 2005." A full copy of the survey findings is also available. This survey might be useful for those of you seeking funding for after-school programming.

WW Science that is Fun: Kinetic City for Children and Youth
<http://www.kineticcity.com/movie.html>

Kinetic City is an all-around fun site for involving kids in science learning in after-school or summer-camp settings. Produced by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, with support from the National Science Foundation, the free site gets kids to "save Kinetic City from the terrible Deep Delete virus unleashed on Planet Veearth by Count Sonos!" Kids perform science experiments and conduct scientific research, and then play on-line games to show what they've learned.

National Geographic for Children, Youth, and Adults
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

WW The National Geographic Society maintains a great Web site that is full of fascinating facts and pictures about our world, just like the magazine. It has great interactive features — be sure to check out the Map Machine! It lets you create custom maps based on a huge range of choices — you can even see maps of Mars. There's also a Trip Finder that can help you plan a really interesting and educational summer. Kids will enjoy the Creature Feature and National Geographic World sections.



POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES



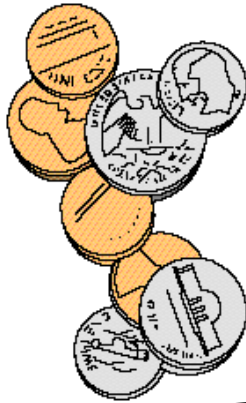
Alan November Guide to Grant Writing
<http://www.edrenplanners.com/grants.html>

The Alan November Renaissance Learning Corporation has made their guide to grant writing available for download from this website. This informative guide provides step-by-step directions to assist individuals with the development and writing of grant proposals. Topics discussed in this guide include understanding a grant proposal's audience, the importance of resubmitting failed grants, and understanding the technical requirements of a grant application. This useful resource can help grant writers improve their chances of receiving funds.



JC Penney Grants
<http://www.jcpenneyinc.com/company/commrel/guidelin.htm>

This website provides information on the variety of funding opportunities offered by the JC Penney Corporation. Grants are considered for organizations that provide direct services to communities or individual clients. Funding is most often approved in the areas of health & welfare, education, civic betterment, or arts and culture. Target Issues given priority by the JC Penney Corporation include: K-12th grade education programs, associate volunteerism, and United Way programs. Application information and materials are available on this website.



*Please check out the links for strengths-based programs
on the FYRP Website:*

<http://AgExtEd.cas.psu.edu/fcs/dp/fyfp.html>



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