



Resiliency and Thriving in Families and Youth

March 2003

Volume 4, Number 1

Hello:

This issue of the newsletter is the first issue in this newsletter's fourth volume. As in the past, this newsletter will provide information about several topics related to family and youth resiliency.

In addition to this newsletter, though, I will be sending out a topical information and policy brief entitled: *Knowing the fact ...*. The development of this new resource is in direct response to the request made by several educators during the Curriculum Caravan. This resource will be published as topics present themselves. The first brief will deal with school readiness and will be out by May of this year.

As always, I welcome suggestions and information for this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Daniel F. Perkins
Associate Professor



... What's Inside ...

Family Activity
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FAMILY ACTIVITY

Expanding the mind activity: Spend twenty minutes this week with your child using a brainteaser. Have your child draw solutions to imaginative problems. For example, ask your child to invent a machine that washes your dog. Get into detail about the machine; maybe even have the child draw something. Another example is asking your child how he or she would measure a giraffe. Still another idea is to brainstorm with your child a new book about 101 uses for ... whatever (e.g., coffee cans, broken bikes, turnips).

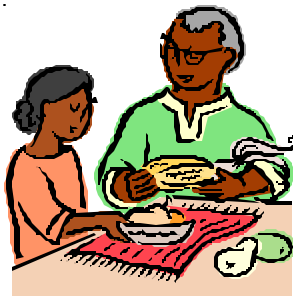


RESEARCH BRIEFS

Nonresidential Fathers

Research has reported that approximately 50% of all children will live in a single-parent home at some point in their childhood. Most commonly, mothers head single-parent households. This leaves fathers to take on the role of nonresidential parenting. Because this is a fairly common phenomenon, researchers are focusing on the impact of nonresidential fathers' involvement on a child's well-being.

Several studies by Valerie King focused on the impact of father visitation and payment of child support on child well-being. These studies analyzed data from the child supplement to the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. Information from this supplement suggests that black fathers are most likely to visit children every day. Also, compared to white and Hispanic children, black children are least likely to have a father who never visits. Despite evidence of father visitation, results of each study indicate little evidence to support that father visitation positively impacts children.



Study results do, however, show payment of child support to have the most positive impact on child well-being. White children and/or children born within a marriage relationship were most likely to receive child support. The likelihood of receiving child support also increased with fathers' level of education.



Payment of child support most strongly affected the academic achievement of children. This finding has been supported by other research that has shown a relationship exists between academic achievement and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, child support can provide children with money for educational activities and materials. Child support money can also help to provide better health care for a child, which can positively impact academic achievement.

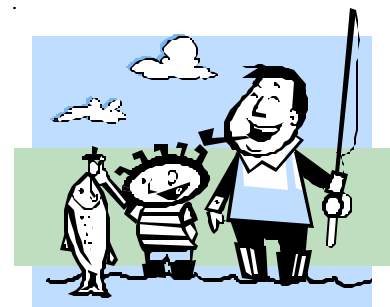
Payment of child support can also have an indirect effect on a child's well-being by reducing a mother's stress over financial concerns. This could, in turn, improve the interpersonal relationships between the mother, father, and child.

King suggests that further research should focus on the impact of parental conflict and the quality of the father-child relationship on father visitation. More focused research could reveal more information about the positive or negative effects of father visitation and child well-being.

Found in:

King, V. (1994). Nonresidential father involvement and child well-being: Can dads make a difference. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 78-96.

King, V. (1994). Variation in the consequences of nonresident father involvement for children's well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 963-972.



Nonresidential Fathers, Parent Conflict, and Maternal Satisfaction

A recent study examined the interrelationship of visitation by nonresidential fathers with mothers' satisfaction with visitation, and parental conflict. Because single-parent households and non-traditional family structures are more and more common, researchers are interested in learning the implications of these factors on child adjustment and well-being.

This study reported that the frequency of a father's visitation is likely to decline with geographic distance, time since separation, and the remarriage of one or both parents. Satisfied fathers are more likely to remain in contact with their children.

The effect of maternal satisfaction was more difficult to identify. Many mothers want fathers to remain involved with children. Generally, maternal satisfaction in these women was high even when parental conflict occurs. Other mothers reported higher satisfaction when fathers were uninvolved with children. Still other mothers were unsatisfied when father visitation was high. Well-being and adjustment of children was worse in homes where mothers were unsatisfied with high father involvement. Child well-being did not appear to be impacted by parent conflict.

The authors of this study suggest that further research should focus on the sources of parental satisfaction to discover how satisfaction differs among men and women. Also, further research should attempt to understand how maternal satisfaction impacts child adjustment and well-being.



Found in: King, V., & Heard, H. E. (1999). Nonresidential father visitation, parental conflict, and mother's satisfaction: What's best for the child? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61, 385-396.

Parenting With Humor

A recent article in *Better Homes and Gardens* highlighted the use of humor as a parenting tool. Experts on children and families identified humor as an effective resource for diffusing tense situations. For example, a simple joke, a silly song, or even a crazy stunt may change the mood of a potentially tense situation. Humor is also useful for avoiding parent-child power struggles or gaining a child's cooperation. Professor Charles Smith from Kansas State University suggested using humor in the form of pretense, puppets, or props. By using these tools, parents can make children laugh; this in turn makes them more receptive to a parent's direction. A sense of humor also can help parents to keep situations in perspective.



Humor can also be used as a method of facilitating family bonding. Michele Borba, an educational consultant for California, suggested creating family traditions such as writing down funny family stories and jokes or regularly sharing embarrassing moments.

Finally, experts surveyed in this article were careful to warn parents to use humor wisely. Humor or sarcasm should not be used to deliver critical messages to children because it may be detrimental to their self-esteem or confidence. Moreover, in situations where emotions are high, the use of humor may be more harmful than beneficial. For example, if humor is used in the midst of an emotionally explosive argument it may result in more intense anger rather than diffusion of tension. Finally, parents should never use humor at the expense of their child.

Found in: Adams, C.J. (2000, March). Parenting with a Sense of Humor. *Better Homes and Gardens*, 98-100.



New Strategies for Keeping Teens Involved

Today's teenagers spend more time alone than any other generation in recent history. Community Youth Development extended-day programs have been successful in starting to address this problem, but programs often have trouble encouraging youth to keep participating in programs as they reach adolescence, and in meeting the changing needs of youth as they go through this turbulent period. One solution is Project Effort, an extended-day physical activity program, which helps elementary and middle school children develop personal and social responsibility skills through values-based sports programs. The program participants primarily live in the "Grove" area of southeast Greensboro, known for its high poverty and crime rates. After youth graduate from middle school, Project Effort strives to keep them involved by allowing them participate in the Project Effort Youth Leader Corps. The Leader Corps program lets youth take on new leadership roles such as choosing activities and coaching. The participants in the Leader Corps program benefit by gaining leadership skills and self-confidence, and the children they coach benefit from being around younger role models.

Source: Schilling, T., & Martinek, T. (2000). Learning through leading in the project effort youth leader corps. *CYD Journal*, 1(3), 24-30.

WEB RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONALS

Like Now: Changing the Future Today with Youth Advisory Boards

www.emkf.org/pages/296.cfm

Designed as an introduction to youth advisory boards, this report explains why the Kauffman Foundation started one and what they have learned in the process. The report discusses how to organize a board and get youth involved in their communities.



Digital Literacy — What It Means and How Kids Get It

<http://www.bc.edu/research/intasc/jtla/journal/v1n4.shtml>

Children with easy access to computers at home learn the basic of digital literacy early, while those in households without computers or Internet connections may miss out on the skills they need for learning and finding jobs in the information economy. This article, "Investigating Children's Emerging Digital Literacies," defines the components of digital literacy to help teachers bring these critical skills to all kids.



Education Resources

<http://www.nwrel.org/sky/>

The mission of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) is to improve educational results for children, youth, and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high quality educational programs. A private, nonprofit corporation, NWREL provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business and labor. NWREL affirms the belief that strong public schools, strong communities, strong families, and strong children make a strong nation. NWREL's "Library in the Sky" contains over 15,000 links to some of the Internet's best educational resources for students, parents, librarians, and community members.

Action Kits Now Available

http://www.nlc.org/nlc_org/site/programs/institute_for_youth_education_and_families/institute_programs.cfm

National League of Cities has a series of Action Kits now available on-line that showcase steps local government can take to improve the quality of public education, prevent child abuse, enhance out-of-school opportunities for youth, help working families, and more.

Adult Literacy

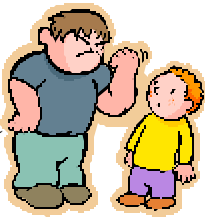
<http://www.pbs.org/literacy>

PBS LiteracyLink offers a catalog of peer-reviewed instructional websites. State-of-the-art materials can be searched by instructional area, and a bimonthly question and answer forum, adult education and literacy success stories, and other video & online resources can help adult students advance their GED and workplace skills. LiteracyLink is funded by the United States Department of Education's Star Schools Program.

New Research on Children & Violent Media

<http://www.mediaandthefamily.org/press/20020807-1.shtml>

New research from the National Institute on Media and the Family finds that kids who watch violent media treat other kids with rudeness and mean behavior. Two hundred-nineteen third, fourth, and fifth grade students and their teachers were surveyed over six months.



What Parents Want Most for Their Kids During Summer

http://www.aed.org/news/news_release_FunRelaxSurvey.html

A new survey by the Academy for Educational Development reports that nearly half of American parents (43%) just want their their children to relax and have fun in the summer, regardless of pressures to meet educational standards, high-stakes testing, and "getting ahead."

History and the Environment

<http://www.nps.gov/>

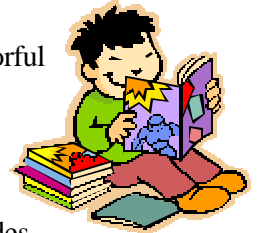
The National Parks Service's website contains a wide variety of education resources and environmental information. "Links to the Past: Histories, Cultures, and Places" currently features "Our Shared History: African American Heritage." "Nature Net" explores the many natural resources of National Parks. "Park Smart" features the Learning Place for youth, parents and educators. Use this site to explore environmental history of your area and find a National Park near you.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Children's Book on Line

<http://www.icdlbooks.org/>

Children's books may seem to be unlikely candidates for a digital makeover. Full of rich illustrations, their pages conjure traditional images of cookies, milk and bedtime. But the International Children's Digital Library, which recently opened, wants to add the power of computers to the mix. The library, which can be reached on the Web at icdlbooks.org, plans to offer digital copies of 10,000 colorful books from 100 cultures over the next five years.



So far, 200 books are available for browsing. The selection includes books with detailed woodcut images that have long been out of print and books from dozens of countries in 20 languages. Some current popular favorites, like Jane Yolen's "How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?," are also available.

The library is being assembled by the Human-Computer Interaction Lab at the University of Maryland and the Internet Archive, an on-line archive of Web sites and other historical digital material. Visitors to the library need a high-speed Internet connection and a Java plug-in that is available free. Adobe eBook software, also free and downloadable, is needed to view most of the more current books. The bulk of the \$3.3 million project is financed by the National Science Foundation, the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Kahle/Austin Foundation and the Markle Foundation.

Parents' Guide to Girls' Sports

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/familyarticle.html?record=699>

Want a better sense of the pros and cons of your daughter's participation in sports? The Women's Sports Foundation has written a booklet that provides parents with realistic ways to help their daughters enjoy sports, not only while they're young, but throughout their lifetime.



POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Target Stores Offer Funding to Local Communities

http://target.com/common/page.jhtml?content=target_cg_grant_guidelines

Target stores in communities across the United States are now accepting applications for the company's community giving grant program. The program currently awards grants in three areas: arts, education, and family violence prevention. To be eligible for funding, an applicant organization must be a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status, a school, or a unit of government; be located in a community where Target does business; and do work in the areas of arts, education, or family violence prevention.

Target will accept grant applications between February 1 and July 31, 2003. Applications will be received and reviewed by local Target store team leaders, who will make funding recommendations. Applications will be reviewed as they are received; applicants are therefore encouraged to apply early. Most grants will average between \$1,000 and \$5,000. Complete guidelines and applications can be downloaded at Target's Web site or picked up at local Target stores. The deadline for submission is July 31, 2003.



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

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Candle Foundation

http://www.candle.com/www1/cnd/portal/CNDportal_Channel_Master/0,2258,2683_2933,00.html

The Candle Foundation, a philanthropy supported by the Candle Corporation software and services company, is now accepting proposals for the 2003 funding cycle. The foundation seeks to fund innovative, high-impact, low-overhead projects for which beneficiaries are chosen on a non-religious, non-political, and non-ethnic basis.

Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 will be awarded in five categories: community investment; education and information dissemination; hunger and homelessness; medical research; and preventive health services. For complete funding guidelines, an application form, and a list of projects recently funded by the foundation. The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2003.

Presidential Initiative for E-Grants

<http://www.grants.gov/pmo.html>

The E-Grants Program Management Office, which is managing the Presidential Initiative for E-Grants, has released a new website called Grants.gov. This site will be the electronic storefront for Federal grants, and features links to find Federal Financial Assistance. Starting in October 2003 this site will feature E-Apply to submit applications.

