



# IMPACT 2024

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

211,979 people participated in parenting or child development programs offered through Extension Family and Consumer Sciences.

Many topics are delivered through traditional in-person delivery classes; however, **Alabama** evaluation results show that over 94% of adults' own smart phones and 96% are online. *Just In Time Parenting* program reached 44,802 parents through website views, along with 5,606 subscribers across multiple states. Parents and caregivers find the National Extension online *Just in Time Parenting* newsletter useful. The newsletter shares tips to inform caregivers and support families' needs as a collective entity.

### Early Intervention Programs

Preparing parents and children before the age of five for school leads to higher success in school academically and socially.

73,020 **Kentucky** children and families gained kindergarten readiness skills through *Laugh & Learn Playdates*. Parent evaluation revealed: 94% of children followed routines without reminders; 97% increased social skills; and 90% reported increased willingness of children to try new healthy foods.

**Arizona's** Family Resource Centers developmental screenings assisted parents in helping their child(ren) control their impulses and demonstrated improved impulse control from 54% to 96%.

*"Laugh & Learn was a wonderful educational, fun, and interactive experience for my 4-year-old. He was able to gain so many skills to prepare him for kindergarten, both academically and socially."* – Kentucky Laugh and Learn

### Effective Parenting

Statistics show around 50% of children in the US will experience parents getting divorced. Divorce is a difficult and emotional time of adjustment, but it can be especially distressing when couples are in conflict. Effective communication skills are necessary during this time. Research suggests parents who attend co-parenting classes better address challenges with conflict and communication and can better help their children through the divorce process.

Almost 4,000 parents and children in **Oklahoma, Ohio,** and **Indiana** have benefited from Co-Parenting programming. Evaluation data from Oklahoma shows 88% of participants are more likely to communicate directly with their co-parent instead of through their child.

*"I learned I was stressing my kids by telling them everything. I will make sure my kids know mom and dad love them and they will be safe even if we are not in the same house together."*

Parenting programs like **Michigan's** Parent Talk System, **Utah's** Common-Sense Parenting, and **Missouri's** Building Strong Families programs help build parenting skills and teach easy-to-learn techniques that address communication, discipline, decision-making, relationships, self-control, and school success. Perception of parenting efficacy measures showed positive change, with the greatest improvement demonstrated in the area of "my family can talk about problems" (124% increase pre-post) and "my family is able to solve our problems" (71% increase showed the second greatest improvement).

*"I am glad to have a wide variety of new approaches. Giving information rather than expressing disapproval is transformative. I enjoyed the many examples of healthy ways to interact with my child!"*

**North Carolina** reached 4,473 adults with information about ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). Understanding resilient adults can protect children against ACEs. 31% of parents/caregivers increased knowledge of positive parenting practices, and 29% adopted positive practices.

*"After learning new parenting strategies and with your support, I am able to be the best mama I can be. Having three children of varying ages, I feel more prepared for the behavior challenges and other issues that may come."*



Extension continues to meet the needs of vulnerable parent populations. In **Georgia**, required training delivered by Extension professionals for Foster Care parents provides cost-saving training for the Department of Family and Child Services (\$29,000).

**Minnesota** and **Oklahoma** provide unique programming to support fathers. One in four American children live without a father in the home. These programs seek to enhance a father's sense of self and increase his engagement with his children. 126 fathers were impacted

by the *Strong Dads* program within the first three months. The *Devoted Dads* program focuses on incarcerated fathers to support their parenting goals and manage parent-child relationships. This impact has a ripple effect on the entire family.

*"I'm pursuing full-time custody of my child. The group helped me become comfortable sharing my challenges and provides encouragement. At a recent court appearance, the judge removed some of the barriers I am facing after hearing what I've learned."* Strong Dads Participant

## Mental Health

**Arkansas, Kansas** and **Iowa** address mental health and suicide prevention. Mental illness can affect persons of any age and occur in any family. They are not caused by bad parenting and not evidence of weakness of character.

*"The part that stuck out for me the most was the words that you use. Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide or killing themselves, rather than harming or hurting themselves."* Iowa QRP Participant

Educators equipped participants with the proper knowledge to have conversations about suicide and encourage individuals to get the help they need. Survey results indicated that 94% would recommend QRP training to others. After completing the QRP training, 96% of participants said they had the knowledge on how to get help from someone with suicidal ideations.

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