



Making a Difference

2016 – 2017

Family and Child Development Program Focus Team Building Strong and Healthy Families and Relationships

Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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Situation

Strong and resilient families are crucial to the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and society. In Kansas, 18.4 percent of children younger than 18 are living in poverty, an increase of 24.3 percent in the last decade. There are approximately 50 marriages and 27 marriage dissolutions daily in Kansas, affecting more than 9,000 minor children annually from divorce. Depression, high rates of drug use, and suicide continue to challenge Kansas families and their neighbors.

What We Did

Programs that strengthen families and build healthier relationships were implemented with schools, drug and alcohol prevention councils, mental health centers, family service agencies, ag producer groups, faith communities, youth groups, and court systems. Extension professionals implemented programs that addressed safe dating, parenting skills, family poverty, family communication, and farm family stress. These programs support the Grand Challenges of Health, Community Vitality, and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders.

Outcomes

Forty-six programs with 2,265 total participants were reported. Healthy relationships education reached 275 adolescents through in-school and after-school programs, clubs, and camps. After completing the in-school program, one youth remarked, "I didn't realize there were actual warning signs in a relationship. It helped me realize when to exit out of a relationship and why it is easier to do that in the beginning vs the end." Improved parent-child communication and positive parenting were the result of four extension units implementing Responsive Discipline, Bonding Thru Board Games, or Together We Can. Local organizations assisted in teaching, purchase of materials, and access to safety-net services to reach more people through these programs. Working with ag businesses, 163 adults became better equipped to maintain strong family relationships through farm transitions. Overall, isolation and stigma associated with asking for help during times of stress and family transition were reduced.

Success Story

Families stressed by poverty was addressed by extension-facilitated poverty alleviation programs. Nearly 40 people completed the 12-week classes to improve communication, goal-setting, coping, and resilience skills.

- "After the situation I was in, when I started the program I was very hopeless. I have learned so much since I have been in the program. I am very hopeful and believe I can achieve my goals."
- "So much community support and I have learned a lot to better my family situation."