

IMPLICATIONS FROM 2005 PARENT EDUCATION LITERATURE REVIEW

This summary reflects a variety of areas in which Extension Family and Consumer Science educators and family and human development specialists work.

- providing programming; e.g., newsletters, problem behavior prevention programs, youth development, at-risk family programs, etc.
- serving on community and state advisory boards and steering committees and providing a wide range of knowledge about program design, content, implementation and evaluations
- developing and maintaining university-community collaborations

Evidence-based issues

- Evidence-based problem behavior prevention programs appear to be a win-win for Extension. They meet the goal of providing scientific information and are in demand by funders, particularly government agencies.
- When evidence-based programming cannot be implemented, at the least educators should learn about content, modes of implementation, cultural adaptations when available, and evaluation methods of efficacious or effective programs and incorporate as much as possible into programming. An understanding of developmental epidemiology (What causes what when? How is that linked to later outcomes?) is crucial in designing prevention programs.
- Extension should provide information about outcome effectiveness in programming and, when known, cost effectiveness to government agencies, private agencies, and foundations. Extension should increase community and parent awareness of programming which has not proven to be effective (e.g., D.A.R.E.) because families are missing out on the benefits of quality programs, and funds are wasted. Extension should act upon the knowledge that these ineffective programs "succeed" in terms of use because of marketing, but have no value in preventing or reducing problem behaviors.
- Extension should seriously consider Spoth & Redmond's (2002) recommendation for collaboration between CES and public schools for implementation of evidence-based programming for substance use and delinquency prevention programming.
- Comprehensive sexuality education is equally important, and Extension should address controversy over this issue. Extension has the capacity (a) to assess the quality of evaluation available for comprehensive sexuality education and for abstinence-only programming and (b) to promote evidence-based sexuality programming.

Cultural adaptation issues

- Although there is obvious progress in recognizing cultural influences on parenting and testing adaptive procedures in designing and implementing programming, there is a great deal to do. Working from a more extensive literature search across more cultural groups than are focused on in this review, Extension could contribute to that body of literature when working with local cultural groups by (a) engaging representatives of the cultural group in the planning-to-evaluation processes and (b) committing to an evaluation-revision-reevaluation cycle. The significance of this effort can only increase.
- There was more literature about African American and Hispanic/Latino families than could be completely reviewed. The people who are doing extensive programming with those cultural/ethnic groups should be invited as conference speakers (e.g., Rex Forehand and colleagues in the Parents Matter! Program).

Child outcome issues

- Findings about the effects of poverty, domestic violence, and other trauma on brain development - and subsequent neurocognitive and social development -- of young children call for both preventive and remedial responses. Recent evaluation of home visiting programs designed to prevent or reduce child abuse and neglect is notable for the finding that failure to address parental issues related to child abuse and neglect - domestic abuse, substance abuse, and poor mental health - precludes desired results. Evaluators of Hawaii's Healthy Start program concluded that **educational approaches can address parenting knowledge or skills and poor stress management**, but "psychodynamic factors, such as substance abuse, poor mental health and violence, call for professional therapeutic services" (Duggan, Fuddy, et al., 2004, pg. 639). In addition to providing a broad range of parent education services, Extension should (a) support community and state efforts to provide therapeutic services for parents and (b) help parents access needed services. Where links between Extension and agencies providing these services do not exist, they should be cultivated.
- The Buckner et al., (2003) article which discusses cognitive control as the single best predictor of resilience among high-risk children and the discussion of cognitive control in Noble et al., (2005) warrant further study for parent education implications with at-risk families.
- Dialogic reading (Whitehurst et al., 1994) noted in the Brooks-Gunn & Markman (2005) article in *The Future of Children* is a technique which has the potential both to improve children's literacy skills and enhance parent-child relationships.

Interesting points from the evaluation of the Hawaii Healthy Start home visiting program designed to prevent child abuse and neglect: (Duggan, Fuddy et al., 2004).

- Assumptions about highly publicized programs are not always correct. This program spawned replications based on the theory, but the model has not been proven to be effective.
- Implementation of the planned program fell short because home visitors (a) did not monitor incidences of domestic violence, substance abuse or mental health problems or (b) link parents to needed services to deal with these issues. Initial enrollment in the program was based on these parental risk factors.
- Had this not been a randomized study, slight declines in mental health and partner violence in the treatment group would have been attributed to the intervention even though there were similar declines in the control group.

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