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## Extension Online: Early Childhood Educator Training Program

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### **Brief Description:**

Texas AgriLife Extension Service's online training program for early childhood educators offers research-based, online learning opportunities for center- and home-based child care professionals. All self-paced courses meet child care licensing requirements for professional development and can be counted toward the national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

### **Objectives of Program:**

- Provide early childhood educators (ECE) with research-based online learning opportunities.
- Assess pre and post knowledge levels of participants related to topics relevant to caring for young children.
- Establish an online learning system that meets state and national requirements for ECE continued professional development.

### **Description:**

Texas AgriLife Extension Service's online training program for early childhood educators offers research-based, online learning opportunities for center- and home-based child care professionals. The program, available online at <http://childcare.tamu.edu>, was initially designed to reach child care professionals in Texas; however, due to its availability on the Internet, the program is now regularly accessed by ECEs nationally and internationally.

The courses that are included in the program are developed by Extension specialists with subject matter expertise in the field of early childhood education. Currently, there are twenty-five 1-2 hour courses available to ECEs covering a variety of topics (e.g., infant and toddler development, supporting children's social-emotional development, positive guidance and discipline, preventing the spread of infectious illness, etc.). The online training program was developed through internal funding over a period of several years. Recently, however,

Texas AgriLife Extension has begun to work in partnership with other state agencies (e.g., Department of State Health Services, Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Care Licensing) to secure funding for the development of additional courses.

All courses are self-paced and include learning objectives, pre- and post-tests, course content (e.g., text, graphics, downloadable handouts, and for certain courses, PowerPoint voice narration), and activities. The courses meet child care licensing requirements for professional development in Texas and can be counted toward the national Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

ECEs register for the program by creating a password-protected user account. Online transcripts, containing users' contact information, courses registered in and completed, and post-test scores, are generated for each participant and are accessible to the individual users and Extension faculty. All course content is free; however, there is a small certificate fee (\$5 for 1-hour course, \$10 for 2-hour course) associated with each course. To date, ECEs have enrolled in and/or completed over 5,000 online courses since 2008.

## Guía para padres de adolescentes (Teen Talk Series in Spanish)

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### **Additional Authors:**

Andrew Behnke, Ph.D. Human Development Specialist, North Carolina State University  
Colleen Gengler, M.Ed. Family Relations Educator and Extension Professor, University of Minnesota Extension

### **Brief Description:**

Building on strategies for helping parents overcome obstacles of parent-teen communication, the *Teen Talk* fact sheets focus on teaching parents strategies that facilitate open communication and provide parents with the knowledge and confidence to talk with their teens about challenging topics. *Guía para padres de adolescentes* is a cultural adaptation and translation of *Teen Talk* for Spanish speaking families.

### **Objectives of the Program:**

- Normalize parents' experiences of stress and challenge that often accompany pre-adolescence.
- Provide parents with strategies for maintaining strong family relationships during pre-adolescence.
- Provide parents with strategies for communicating with youth around daily activities and health risk behaviors.

### **Description:**

- **Target audience** - Spanish speaking families with pre- and early adolescents.
- **Program scope (local, regional, statewide, national, etc.)** - National
- **Program partners/collaborators** - This project is a collaboration between University of Minnesota Extension and North Carolina Extension.
- **Program content area or area of research (e.g., parenting, child care, couple relationships, intergenerational initiatives, etc.)** - Parenting
- **How is the program or research implemented (e.g., direct, train the trainer, mass media, mailed survey, observation, CoP, other)?** - This program can be implemented directly to parents, via mail, as a complement to another program, or be used as a starting point for a workshop.
- **Level of evaluation support or evidence base or outcomes of research** - Evaluation of *Teen Talk* in English (pre/post design) with parents of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders revealed that as a result of reading *Teen Talk*, parents gained information and skills to better communicate with their teen and felt less worried and less frustrated as a parent.
- **Are supplemental resources available?** - The fact sheets are also available in English. In addition, there are Take and Teach lessons around four of the content areas - [www.extension.umn.edu/FamiliesWithTeens/order.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/FamiliesWithTeens/order.html)
- **Are evaluation instruments provided?** - If a group were interested in evaluation, we would make the English version of the evaluation measures available.
- **Is training required to use this program?** - No
- **If training is required, how is it accessed and what is the cost?** - N/A
- **What is the cost for program materials and how can they be acquired?** - There is no cost for Spanish *Teen Talk*, they are available as PDF documents on the web: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/FamiliesWithTeens/order.html#spanish>

## Idaho's Journey for Diversity and Human Rights

**Primary Contact Person:** Harriet Shaklee, PhD; Professor and Extension Family Development Specialist University of Idaho Extension, 322 E Front Street, Suite 180; Boise, ID 83706, [hshaklee@uidaho.edu](mailto:hshaklee@uidaho.edu), (208) 364-4016

### **Brief Description:**

*Idaho's Journey for Diversity and Human Rights* is a traveling workshop in which participants visit sites relevant to key events for human rights, both past and present. At each site, experts and community hosts provide insights on the events and people that shaped today's Idaho.

### **Objectives of Program:**

*Idaho's Journey* is designed to train community members in the diverse history of their local region and in the strategies that have been successful to enhance inclusiveness and protect human rights. The program is a leadership development program and has a goal of strengthening the human rights network in the region and in the state.

### **Description:**

*Idaho's Journey* is a traveling workshop, featuring sites and stories relevant to issues of diversity and human rights in a region. The Journey is a two day tour, often including an overnight stay along the way. We have completed seven different Journeys since 2005, each in a different corner of the state. Journeys have covered topics such as the history of Hispanic populations in Idaho, the role of Chinese in Idaho's mining camps, the Minidoka Internment camp for Japanese-Americans during WWII, current challenges of education and income for immigrant and refugee populations, African-Americans in Idaho Territory, the boarding experience for tribal youth, Idaho's early leaders in worker rights and women's suffrage, and environmental sustainability as a human right.

After the *Idaho's Journey* experience, participants report that they have gained knowledge about Idaho's challenges of diversity and human rights, and strategies to address such issues. They also learned how Idaho's history can help address present day challenges for Idaho, and felt stronger in their ability and commitment to speak up and take action on issues of diversity and human rights. Finally, participants feel better connected to others in the state concerned about diversity and human rights.

A recent long term evaluation shows that these lessons are present in the thoughts and behavior of Idaho's Journey alumni long after the program. Those contacted between nine months and four years after their Journey report continued impact on their knowledge, attitudes and behavior on issues of human rights and diversity. Idaho's Journey alumni report reading further about human rights (50%), speaking up or taking action on human rights and diversity (61%), and joining or continuing memberships in human rights organizations (19%). Some participants took on new leadership roles in human rights and diversity since their Journey (19%), while others continued previous roles (11%).

We asked respondents to report how the Idaho's Journey experience has affected others around them. Combining their estimates, the 26 respondents report speaking out or taking action on human rights 135 times, attending 61 human rights events, and reading 81 books and articles on human rights and diversity since their Journey. Participants also reconnected with the people and sites they encountered on the Journey a total of 72 times. Considering all of these effects, these 26 people estimate that their Idaho's Journey experience has affected more than 1100 people. Now that's impact!

## Home Is Where the Health Is

**Primary Contact Person:** Carole A. Gnatuk, Ed.D.; Senior Specialist for Child Development, Kentucky Cooperative Extension, University of Kentucky; [cgnatuk@email.uky.edu](mailto:cgnatuk@email.uky.edu), (859) 257-5083

### **Brief Description:**

*Home Is Where the Health Is* offers a one to two session program for parents of younger children on building healthy habits while creating “family glue,” open and warm communication and affection among family members that facilitate acceptance of changes in eating and lifestyle habits. Included is a colorful, easy-reading, eight-page parent publication, facilitator’s guide with PowerPoint presentation and teaching notes, session planning guide, video, evaluation tools, active play suggestions, media examples, research rationale, logic model, and supplemental resources including kid-friendly recipes. Program can be extended beyond two sessions.

### **Objectives of Program:**

- Strengthen parenting skills of those who parent babies, preschoolers, and school-age children;
- Increase children’s and adults’ healthy habits;
- Develop awareness and empowerment to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity

### **Description:**

Principles of nurturing parenting and child development are essential in building harmonious human relationships and responsible living. In addition to tips for creating “family glue,” this program applies those principles to building life-long habits of good health and nutrition, with the goal of attaining and maintaining healthy weight in family members. The program is solidly built on family science, child development, nutrition, and health research studies, discussed in the research rationale included with curriculum materials. A kit of program resources based on *Home Is Where the Health Is* for health professionals to discuss with and hand out to families they serve is also available electronically by contacting Dr. Carole Gnatuk.

This program is planned for delivery to groups of limited resource parents, grandparents, or other primary caregivers of children from birth to around nine years of age. It is also suitable for general audiences. It is intended for one or two group sessions of one to two hours in length. Learning activities make up the majority of the session time, with optional food preparation for group snack and family game making in addition. Facilitators can easily extend the content and activities to more sessions, drawing upon additional family life, nutrition, and health program resources of Kentucky Cooperative Extension as well as those of other community agencies.

## Just in Time Parenting: E-xtension's Online Parenting Resources

**Primary Contact Person:** Pat Tanner Nelson, Ed.D.; Extension Family & Human Development Specialist, University of Delaware; [ptnelson@udel.edu](mailto:ptnelson@udel.edu) ; (302) 831-1329

### Brief Description:

*Just in Time Parenting's (JITP)* online resources help educators reach families with information at the time it can be most useful and make the biggest difference in children's lives. JITP can be teamed with intervention efforts such as home visitation programs to provide ongoing contact and encouragement.

### Objectives of the Program:

- Provide Extension professionals with easily accessible parenting resources.
- Educate parents on positive parenting skills and behaviors.
- Promote healthy growth and development of children.

### Description:

Free national resources available at [www.extension.org/parenting](http://www.extension.org/parenting)

- Newsletters: electronic subscriptions for parents, printable and customizable PDF printed versions for educators, English and Spanish, prenatal to year 5, evaluation reports automated and customized to state and county.
- School aged children and teens (Parenting 24/7)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) answered by family professionals
- Featured news stories; Podcasts

Sister website available to Extension colleagues [www.parentinginfo.org](http://www.parentinginfo.org) with marketing materials, flyers to adapt to your location, press releases to publicize JITP, evaluation guide and toolbox, print-ready letters with customizable space for state logo that can be distributed by mail or electronically.

### JITP Informational Webinar:

For specialists or state contacts- December 10, 2009 at 12pm EST

For agents, educators, and special guests- January 21 or 22, 2010 at 2pm EST

For more information- [www.parentinginfo.org](http://www.parentinginfo.org)



## Parenting Piece by Piece (4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2009)

**Primary Contact Person:** Judith A. Myers-Walls, Ph.D., CFLE; Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Child Development and Family Studies, Purdue University, [jmyerswa@purdue.edu](mailto:jmyerswa@purdue.edu)  
765-494-2959

**Brief Description:** *Parenting Piece by Piece* is a curriculum guide for a series of eight parenting education sessions and three optional sessions. It was originally designed for use with parents who have been mandated to attend parenting training due to their identification as abusive and/or neglectful parents. The current edition also includes guidelines for adapting the program for use with incarcerated parents or with the caregivers of children whose parents have lost custody.

### Objectives of Program:

The program attempts to help parents to:

- recognize personal and parenting strengths
- celebrate life with their children
- observe and understand their children and their development
- manage stress in themselves and in their children
- listen and attend to their children's feelings and ideas
- model appropriate desired behavior for children and use other positive behavior-management techniques
- learn problem-solving skills and teach them to their children
- establish and maintain reasonable limits
- find, use, and create community resources when needed to benefit their children and the community of children
- recognize the benefits of building relationships with family, neighborhood, and community groups

### Description:

*Parenting Piece by Piece* is a curriculum guide for a series of eight to ten parenting education sessions and additional resources. It was designed for use with parents who have been mandated to attend parenting training due to their identification as physically or emotionally abusive and/or neglectful parents and has been adapted for use with incarcerated parents and other high-risk groups. The overall goal of *Parenting Piece by Piece* is to reduce or eliminate instances of child maltreatment by participating parents. The method for achieving this goal is providing educational and social experiences that increase the use of positive parenting practices, which create an environment that facilitates the development of caring, competent, and healthy children. All sessions include active learning experiences and discussion, and many sessions use metaphors that facilitate the learning and remembering of concepts.

## Parents and Teens Talking about Alcohol Program

**Primary Contact Person:** Colleen H. Gengler, M.Ed., Family Relations Educator and Extension Professor, University of Minnesota Extension, [cgengler@umn.edu](mailto:cgengler@umn.edu), 507-372-3907

### Additional Authors:

Jodi Dworkin, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Family Social Science and University of Minnesota Extension

Kathleen A. Olson, M.S., Family Relations Educator and Extension Professor, University of Minnesota Extension

### Brief Description:

*Parents and Teens Talking about Alcohol* was developed to help parent or parent/teen groups discuss teen alcohol use. All materials needed to facilitate are on one CD including: facilitator's guide, research background, presentations, and handouts. This self-explanatory lesson can be facilitated by a variety of professionals including Extension staff.

### Objectives of the Program:

To help parents;

- identify reasons teens use alcohol,
- talk about their family's values related to alcohol and identify ways in which families influence teen alcohol use,
- consider strategies for supporting teens in making healthy decisions.

### Description:

- **Target audience** – Parents of early to middle adolescents or parent-teen groups
- **Program scope** – The program is available to anyone who wishes to purchase the CD containing all the program materials
- **Program partners/collaborators** – University of Minnesota Extension and Department of Family Social Science
- **Program content area** – Parenting
- **How is the program implemented** – Direct with parent or parent-teen groups
- **Level of evaluation support**– We are looking for partners to conduct evaluation with this topic as well as potentially others. We'll provide all evaluation materials with detailed instructions for administering them. We will manage the data and provide an evaluation report for your use. All evaluation data will be combined and de-identified for use in a more comprehensive evaluation of the lesson materials.
- **Evidence base** – A thorough research background including citations is provided.
- **Are supplemental resources available?** – Yes. We have three other topics (decision making, peer relationships, bullying) available in a similar format as well as other resources for parents of teens. We would be interested in partnering on evaluation for these as well.
- **Are evaluation instruments provided?** – Yes. See above.
- **Is training required to use this program?** – No, it is intended to be self-explanatory with all materials included
- **What is the cost for program materials and how can they be acquired?** - \$25.00, <http://shop.extension.umn.edu/> or <http://www.parenting.umn.edu>

## Partnering for School Success

**Primary Contact Person:** Kathleen A. Olson; Extension Educator, Family Relations, University of Minnesota Extension; kaolson@umn.edu; 507-536-6306

### **Additional Authors:**

Colleen Gengler, Patricia Stoppa, Joanne Musich;  
Extension Educators, Family Relations, University of Minnesota Extension

### **Brief Description:**

The “*Partnering for School Success*” project provides parents with practical ideas that support school success. Focus groups were conducted with Latino, African American, Hmong and Somali parents to assist them in building effective parent-school partnerships. Cultural guides were utilized throughout the process to develop cultural versions for parents.

### **Objectives of the Program:**

- Provide an overview of the research on School Success and role of parents and schools.
- Provide research based information on cultural aspects of school success, with cultural version for parents.

### **Description:**

A major effort of Extension is to strengthen existent community relationships and establish new ones with culturally and ethnically diverse populations. The “*Partnering for Schools Success*” (PSS) project provides parents with practical ideas that support school success and forges better working relationships between parents and schools. The PSS project team is a collaboration of the University’s Extension system and Children, Youth & Family Consortium. Following focus groups early in the project to gain insight for a generic English parent guide, “*Parenting for School Success*”, a second series were conducted with Latino, African American, Hmong, and Somali parents. Cultural versions were important as Minnesota ranks 37<sup>th</sup> in graduation rates for students of color. Eight cultural guides (two from each group) helped the PSS team navigate their communities, gather data and put context to understanding and interpreting the results. The cultural guide process is a unique approach that provides valuable insight and connection when preparing cultural versions of resources.

Focus group results indicated how difficult it is for students of color to attend school and not see their cultural identity reflected in school leadership, teaching staff, curriculum, textbooks, values and expectations of behavior, or in school/parent interaction. Parents have a different way of helping their kids “survive” in the sometimes “hostile” school environment. Latino and Somali parents typically expect that schools have the primary role in children’s education with parents not interfering and that “teachers know best”. In the U. S., parent involvement is expected, and often Latino and Somali parents need to have that explained. Parents new to U.S. education must be taught how to navigate the system. With the African American parents, much needs to be accomplished in terms of schools acknowledging a history of institutional racism.

The project team is working with the cultural guides to develop cultural versions of PSS to assist parents in helping their children succeed in school. Of the four groups, PSS for Latino families is farthest along. A series of classes for parents taught in Spanish has been developed, piloted, and evaluated, using a parent guide/workbook in Spanish. Versions for the other groups are being adapted. Train the trainer is planned to share this model and cultural versions with other parents and school staff across the state. A website is being continually updated with resources that parents and professionals can use to assist with school success. The team’s work has done much to provide insight into working with diversity that can apply to other program teams in Extension as well as other states who are working with culturally diverse audiences.



## ***National Future Scientists & Educators of Extension***

**Who We Are:** The National Future Scientists and Educators of Extension strive to inform and recruit students to learn more about career choices and research opportunities in the Cooperative Extension System.

**Our Vision:** "National Future Scientists and Educators of Extension" ~NFSEE~ Our vision is to serve as an integral part of the educational mission of Extension: to enhance Extension programming in the behavioral and social sciences by providing opportunities for student development through educational experiences, research and application, volunteer services and self-directed activities. The NFSEE aims to make a positive difference in the lives of students by supporting their leadership potential, personal growth, and professional success through Extension careers. Students in the NFSEE will serve as a unifying force -- a point of intellectual knowledge, support, professional development and identification for the National Future Scientists and Educators of Extension.

**Our Target Audience:** Students at land-grant universities nationwide

**Our Program Scope:** Available nationally

**Program Partners/Collaborators:** Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service

**The Purpose of NFSEE:**

- Inform and recruit students to learn more about career choices and research opportunities in the Cooperative Extension System.
  - Provide professional development opportunities for students through programs and connections to relevant professional organizations and external partnerships.
  - Provide opportunities to work closely with CSREES national program staff, university-based specialists and local agents on critical initiatives, as well as student-led outreach, research projects, and CSREES Visiting Scholar opportunities.
  - Foster innovation through peer support.
- These Goals Will be Achieved Through:**
- Student-led strategic planning meetings at several conferences in our 2009 Launch Year, including the Extension Family Science Network (EFSN) Biennial Conference in April 2009 to develop a blueprint to serve as a guide for developing and sustaining NFSEE.
  - Peer-to-peer mentorship.
  - A dedicated listserv where agents and specialists can post information so students can learn about new projects in their areas of interest, and students can inform or share ideas with other students.
  - An innovative and informative website (<http://www.NFSEE.org> to be completed January 2009) designed to keep students abreast of new and upcoming outreach prospects and opportunities to attend and present at national conferences.
  - Regular monthly teleconferences or online meetings allowing students to collaborate and share innovative outreach ideas, and gain feedback from their peers and those specialists who become involved.

**The Benefits of NFSEE Membership:** Students who join NFSEE will experience the benefits of membership the moment they join. NFSEE seeks to bring students together with Extension professionals who are making a difference in the quality of life for the citizens of the United States. Across the country, Extension agents positively impact millions through service, education, program development, and research. Given that Extension has a presence in all counties in this country, this organization is able to boast a clear commitment and proven record in outreach efforts targeting the most critical issues in our states. Membership in NFSEE will offer students exposure to a world of unique opportunities that will enhance professional development in terms of academic engagement, university service, and community outreach.

**Looking Toward the Future of NFSEE:** As the Cooperative Extension Service enters the next hundred years of service, it is imperative that a new generation of motivated, talented and compassionate professionals begin the next century of service in order to continue the legacy of the land-grant mission. NFSEE can provide students with the unique opportunity to learn about Extension and all it offers young professionals on their path to choosing a lifelong career.

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## **Divorce Education: A National Extension Survey of Educational Programs for Parents and Children Experiencing Divorce**

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### **Additional Authors:**

Denise Brandon, PhD, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (Parenting and Divorce workgroup convener)  
Maureen Mulroy, PhD, University of Connecticut

### **Brief Description:**

Building on discussions of the Divorce Education work group during the EHSN Spring Conference, 3 Family Specialists created, piloted and launched a national survey to gather information about existing parent and child education for divorcing couples. This session will share process and results, allow colleagues to respond to the survey, and consider next steps.

### **Objectives of Program:**

- Share research questions, content and development process for survey.
- Share preliminary results received to date about the following areas:
  - **State requirements and mandates** for parent and child divorce education.
  - **Specific curricula and program materials** being used through Extension or other educational providers.
  - **Existing Extension programs and resources.**
  - **Interest in developing programs, websites, evaluations** or other divorce education resources.
- Discuss next steps in using this information for developing Extension Divorce Education programs.

### **Description:**

- **Target audience:** Extension Specialists and county faculty
- **Program scope:** Nation-wide – all Extension Services
- **Program partners/collaborators:** Family Extension Specialists: West Virginia University, University of Connecticut, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Divorce Education Work Group
- **Program content area** Parenting Skills for Divorcing Couples, Child Education about Divorce
- **How the program or research is implemented**
- The survey was distributed to the EHSN listserv. Subscribers were encouraged to share it in their states with appropriate colleagues.
- **Level of evaluation support or evidence base or outcomes of research**
- Substantial impact studies indicate that skill focused parenting classes can reduce parental conflict, decrease relitigation, and improve communication between parents. Documented benefits to children include: decrease in school absences, decreased anxiety.
- **Are supplemental resources available?** No
- **Are evaluation instruments provided?** Yes
- **Is training required to use this program?** N/A
- **If training is required, how is it accessed and what is the cost?** N/A
- **What is the cost for program materials and how can they be acquired?** N/A