

# SCIENCE & EDUCATION Impact

Benefits from USDA/Land-Grant Partnership

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## Proud Parents

Strengthening families leads to productive parenting.

*Today's families face all sorts of challenges and stresses. From child care worries to low literacy and from child abuse to poor parenting, American families are dealing with many issues. USDA and the Land-Grant University System provide research and educational programs that help clients strengthen parenting, caregiver and social skills.*

### Payoff

- **Partners in parenting.** Nevada Extension established Partners in Parenting after research showed the state has one of the highest rates of child abuse in the country — one case reported for every 40 children. Reports show a 9 percent decrease of child abuse or neglect cases among high-risk mothers participating in the program. The program serves 700 Las Vegas families. Georgia Extension helps parents in Glynn County combat skyrocketing teen violence. A 10-week parenting class helped 20 parents strengthen bonds with their children, leading to improved school attendance, better grade-point averages and minimal disciplinary problems.
- **Educational TIPS are important.** Louisiana State Extension uses Teaching Interactive Parenting Skills or TIPS to help parents with children from infancy to 12 years old understand normal child development and adolescent behavior. One parent in the program said, "I raised my older children and they turned out fine, but with this younger generation I can use some help. TIPS is providing me with the help I can use." In Texas, Prairie View A&M Extension provides information to support and assist 90 grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren in five counties. At least 80 percent of these grandparents use the information and contact agencies referred to them for assistance.
- **Dads make a difference.** Researchers at Maryland Extension found data to indicate that the state's teenage birth rate ranks 25<sup>th</sup> nationally. Dads Make a Difference helps male and female teens, 16 to 18, learn about father and child interaction, abstinence from sex to avoid teenage pregnancy and the responsibility of child rearing. To date, 29 adults and 142 teens have been trained with

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this curriculum, and the teens have also trained 629 middle school youth. Research from **Tennessee State** Extension shows that 85 percent of all U.S. children with behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes. Extension agents are providing parenting education programs to some male and female inmates in Shelby and Davidson counties to help improve their parenting skills. As a result, inmates write more letters to their children and encourage their kids to study hard and do well in school.

- **Storytelling is a family affair.** Families at risk for low literacy receive help from **Nevada's** Family Storyteller program, which encourages and trains parents to play a vital role in the literacy development of their children. Follow-up surveys show participating parents spend at least 15 minutes daily reading with their children. **West Virginia's** efforts to help parents with children ages 5 to 8 guide their children's development include a *Family Times* newsletter, with a section that recommends books to read with children. Newsletters are distributed to parents of kindergarten students in five counties, and 19 counties throughout the state now are replicating the newsletter series. As a result, participating parents are complimenting their children's positive behavior, limiting television viewing time and encouraging their children to be responsible.
- **Nurturing homes provide best child care.** **Mississippi State** Extension and **Alcorn State** work together to help the state's low-income children receive adequate child care through the Nurturing Homes Initiative. Many low-income children stay in unlicensed, home-based child care facilities. Forty-one child care providers enrolled in Nurturing Homes completed lessons on safety, health issues and developmentally appropriate activities for children. Participants say the program puts them in contact with others who offer home child care, allowing them to solve problems together and share techniques. **West Virginia** Extension teamed with **Penn State's** Better Kid Care program staff to provide educational resources to child care providers and parents across West Virginia. Child care

providers attended classes and received information on different topics through this program. Providers say they now use this information with children in their care.

- **Promoting healthy families.** **Oklahoma** Extension administers its Healthy Families program to first-time parents from the prenatal stage to three months, and some continue the program until their child is 5 years old. Services include home visits, health care referral providers and collaboration with community agencies. Surveys show that enrolled families are far less likely to mistreat their children than comparable families not enrolled.
- **Parenting piece by piece.** **North Carolina A&T** Extension uses its Parenting Piece by Piece curriculum to help parents who have been mandated or referred to the Department of Social Services for parenting training to regain custody of their children. In one county, 15 families completed requirements for the curriculum, and 83 percent of them regained custody of their children. **Nebraska** Extension provides Parents Forever workshops to help parents and children deal with divorce and other family changes. As a result of participating in the workshops, parents report that their children show less confusion about divorce and are better able to talk about their feelings.



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