



EXTENSION IMPACT

Supportive Relationships between Children and Caregivers

Parents with knowledge of child development can better protect children from the negative impacts of adverse childhood experiences. If caregivers know how to build supportive relationships, they can help reduce stress for themselves and children. This can minimize situations like child abuse and neglect. In general, a responsive relationship with a caregiver sets the foundation for healthy brain development in children, buffers against chronic stress, and supports positive parent-child interaction. Throughout the pandemic, Extension's community partners have expressed that parents need resources and education to build these positive relationships.

Extension supports parents and caregivers with the knowledge and skills to patiently and positively shape child growth and development.

In response, Extension educators offer classes and short videos that teach practical skills for interacting with children. Parenting classes and seminars have the added benefit of providing a supportive, thoughtful community for parents and caregivers.

For example, our Parent Connect program brought parents together for weekly Zoom parenting sessions that were offered by a rotating team of 10 Extension educators. These 1-hour parenting sessions were a direct response to community requests for supportive, virtual parenting education during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also developed a series of 3–5 minute

videos called Parenting Behind the Behavior that were delivered via social media two to four times per month. These videos highlighted positive parenting skills and reached new caregiver audiences, including early childhood educators and the families they serve. Over the course of the year, 10 Extension colleagues recorded 27 short videos posted on Facebook and YouTube and reached over 26,570 individuals through virtual social networks.

Across our programming, evaluations showed that Extension promoted stable, positive relationships between children and caregivers. 90% of participants in Parent Connect reported both more awareness of the importance of developing social/emotional skills in children and a better understanding of the skills necessary to teach these skills. This means that through these programs caregivers will respond more positively within their caregiver-child relationship.

Extension parenting sessions also helped parents and caregivers reduce feelings of isolation, feel connected to other families experiencing similar issues, and increase their confidence as parents. For example, 100% of our program participants in the Triple P parenting program reported that they learned new ways to respond to stressful or challenging parent-child interaction.

Positive outcomes also were reported from the social media videos; 70% of respondents said the videos caused them to acknowledge their child's feelings before responding to their challenging behavior and that they would be more thoughtful about how they respond to their child's challenging behavior.

in 2021



26,000+
individuals reached
through social networks



670+
educational contacts
through parenting programs



Parenting & Family Relationships is part of Extension's Human Development & Relationships Institute. Learn more by visiting parenting.extension.wisc.edu.



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