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Feature Articles

Parenting Practices that can Prevent or Reduce Childhood Obesity

[Article 110602FA001]

Eldridge, Galen; Lynch, Wesley; Bailey, Sandra; Benke, Carrie; Martz, Jill; Paul, Lynn

Overweight in children is more prevalent than ever before. What can parents do to try to promote health and prevent obesity in their own children? The present paper reviews research related to parenting and childhood obesity. The review describes what food-related parenting practices may be helpful: modeling healthy eating behaviors, making time for family meals, making sure healthy food is available and accessible, becoming aware of appropriate portion sizes, encouraging children to eat breakfast, and limiting soda and fast food intake. The paper also discusses food-related parenting practices that may not work to help prevent obesity: pressure to eat, food rewards, restriction, permissiveness, and modeling of unhealthy eating behaviors. Additional parenting practices such as supporting and engaging in physical activity, encouraging an adequate amount of sleep, and limiting television and other screen-media may also help children to maintain healthy weights. Suggestions are also given for professionals working with youth.

Investigating the Utilization of Research Evidence in the 4-H Youth Development Program

[Article 110602FA002]

Bikos, Lynette H.; Kocheleva, Julia A.; Campbell, Twyla; Daryani, Ritesh; Chahil, Sandeep; Brown, Terran; Winbeg, Yolanda; Pavese, Liz

This study investigated the acquisition, interpretation, and utilization of research evidence in the 4-H Youth Development Program from the frame of Social Cognitive Theory. Utilizing Consensual Qualitative Research, we interviewed twenty 4-H faculty, staff, and volunteers from seven states. Results indicated four domains, which covered participants' definitions of research utilization, their experiences utilizing research, the process of acquiring and distributing research, and barriers and facilitators to research utilization. Participants described research use primarily in terms of improving 4-H programs. They discussed their level of confidence (i.e. self-efficacy) in finding and applying research evidence and their beliefs about the outcomes of research utilization (i.e. outcomes expectancy). Participants mentioned such barriers as not knowing where to look for research, lack of time, lack of funding, and difficulty applying research findings to their work. The facilitators included support from other 4-H colleagues and availability of 4-H specific conferences, publications, and curriculum databases.

Examining the Reasons and Relationships Between Why Youth Join, Stay in, and Leave 4-H

[Article 110602FA003]

Harrington, Rebecca; Sheehan, Trisha; Blyth, Dale

While the Minnesota 4-H Club program has grown over 29% in the last six years, annually over 25% of youth do not re-enroll. The Minnesota 4-H Retention Study asked youth who left the program why they decided to join, stay and ultimately leave 4-H. Data from 220 youth were examined to better understand the reasons for and relationship between youth joining and staying in 4-H and their reasons for leaving 4-H. Youth joined 4-H because they wanted to have fun, try new things, and participate in projects and fairs. Top reasons they stayed in 4-H were they liked

being with other kids, had fun, and learned new things. Primary reasons youth left were they lost interest in 4-H or became involved in other activities. Examining the relationships revealed that paying particular attention to youth experiences in project learning and teaching, relationships with adults, and youth having fun will increase retention.

School Sponsored Extracurricular Activities and Math Achievement among Hispanic Students [Article 110602FA004]

Espinoza, Jose A.

Differences in math achievement between Hispanic eighth grade students who participated in school sponsored extracurricular activities and Hispanic eighth grade students who did not participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities at an inner-city campus in the State of Texas were examined for the 2008-2009 academic year. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Math exam served as the measure of student achievement. Hispanic eighth grade students who were involved in extracurricular activities had statistically significantly higher scores as well as higher passing percentages than did Hispanic eighth grade students who were not involved in extracurricular activities on the TAKS Math exam. Implications are presented and recommendations for future research are made.

Factors Influencing 4-H Club Enrollment and Retention in Georgia [Article 110602FA005]

Defore, Amber B.; Fuhrman, Nicholas E.; Peake, Jason B.; Duncan, Dennis W.

Middle school aged 4-H member participation is on the decline across the nation. Research has identified reasons for declining 4-H club participation, including conflicting time commitments (with school and community activities) and opinions that the program was boring or for little kids. This study sought to gain a clearer understanding of why 4-H member involvement in Camden County, Georgia has steadily declined in recent years. The most prevalent reason listed for leaving the Camden County 4-H program was that the 4-H meeting conflicted with school and community activities. Other reasons listed included wanting to be with friends in a relaxed setting, not liking the activities and lessons at the special interest club meetings, and not feeling welcome in the 4-H club meetings. The 4-H members who continued with the program had 100% parental involvement – the number one indicator of continued 4-H participation.

Program Articles

Using Poverty Simulation for College Students: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation [Article 110602PA001]

Todd, Maureen; de Guzman, Maria Rosario T.; Zhang, Xiaoyun

This paper speaks to the potential for simulation and experience-based educational programs in delivering changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, as well as the utility of mixed-methods approaches to program evaluation. The authors discuss a mixed-methods study which evaluates the impact of a poverty simulation program on college students at three Midwestern universities. Findings suggest multiple benefits of the experience, including changes in attitudes and beliefs about how serious the experience of poverty can be, an understanding that poverty is complex and can be caused by multiple factors, and a decrease in their biases and stereotypes about people in poverty. Qualitative findings corroborate these data.

Parental Perceptions of Participation in 4-H Beef, Sheep and Swine Livestock Projects and the Fostering of Life Skill Development in Youth [Article 110602PA002]

Heavner, Janice; Hicks, Kelly; Nicodemus, Shanna

Beef, sheep and swine 4-H youth livestock projects have a great deal of hands-on learning opportunities for members. However, what are parents' perceptions about livestock projects and the development of life skills? The purpose of this research effort was to determine the life skill development gained by 4-H members participating in 4-H beef, sheep or swine projects in West Virginia. A total of 207 caregivers offered insight into the study and answered life skill development

questions. These questions were related to decision making, relating to others, developing and maintaining records, accepting responsibility, building positive self esteem, self motivation, knowledge of the livestock industry, developing organizational skills, problem solving, developing oral communication skills, setting goals, developing self-discipline, and working in teams. The findings of this study provide positive insights into the relationship between the development of valuable life skills and 4-H beef, sheep and swine projects.

Projects in a Day Develop Life Skills in At-Risk After School Youth [Article 110602PA003]

Hoffman, Katie J.

As budgets tighten and school weeks are shortened more youth are being left unattended at home. Rural youth are particularly affected by these reductions and stranded away from programs and resources. At-risk youth are acutely impacted as they lose contact time with programs that provide life skill development and a safe place for youth to connect to community, other youth and adults. 4-H Projects-in-a-Day can provide curriculum in partnership with after school programs that develop life skills and build positive social skills. In a study conducted with an Idaho After School program during the 2007-2008 and the 2008-2009 school years, six of the 12 life skills evaluated showed a significant increase after participation. Youth also reported positive self esteem and made new friends during the events held on Fridays. 4-H Project-in-a-Day curriculum has shown to be a powerful, ready to use tool in after school programming.

Resource Review

The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being [Article 110602RR001]

Dawson, Patricia

The 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being is an excellent resource for youth development professionals. The Data Book, prepared by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides national as well as state-by-state information on the conditions of America's children and families. Ten key indicators of child well-being are utilized for the state rankings. In addition, the book includes an Appendix highlighting 10 years of state-by-state rankings using key indicators of child well-being.