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Feature Articles

Examining Youth Camping Outcomes Across Multiple States: the National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC) [Article 110601FA001]

Garst, Barry; Nichols, Allison; Martz, Jill; McNeely, Niki Nestor; Bovitz, Laura; Frebertshauser, Denise; Garton, Martha; Le Menestrel, Suzanne; Walahoski, Jill

The impact of residential camp participation is needed for camps focused on a variety of outcomes including education, summer fun, prevention, and youth development. One system, the Cooperative Extension Service, conducts 4-H residential camps in most states nationwide every year. These camps, though offering educational enhancement and fun activities, are focused on youth development, incorporating a framework called the essential elements of positive youth development. The National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC), a group of Extension specialists and county-level educators, designed and piloted assessment tools for 4-H camps that can be used at any camp that focuses on youth development. The camp context questionnaire measures three essential elements of youth development: relationship with a caring adult, self-determination and mastery, and safe and inclusive environments. The life skill questionnaire measures three life skills: accepting self and others, accomplishing goals, and taking responsibility. Logic models and evaluation guidelines help camp directors plan camps that work for youth.

Fertile Ground: Assessing the Public Library as a Context for Preparing Youth for Community Engagement [Article 110601FA002]

Jones, Kenneth R.; Delahanty, Terrence J.

Libraries provide settings where youth can experience positive development. However, many young people and their families do not access the potential these institutions afford their communities. In addition, library staff are seldom presented with opportunities to work more intimately with young people visiting the library. This article provides data on library staff and their feelings toward youth and their experiences interacting with young people in their local libraries. The findings of the study reveal that library staff members have an array of perceptions toward young people and how youth can be affected.

Does Marital Status of Parents Relate to Family Communication Regarding Finances? [Article 110601FA003]

Mauldin, Teresa A.; Mimura, Yoko; Kabaci, M.J.; Koonce, Joan C.; Rupured, Michael; Jordan, Jennifer W.

How do youth and parents perceive their communication with each other? How do they perceive communication about money with each other? Are there differences between married-parent families and single-parent families? The reported study examined the discrepancies in perception between parents and youth and compares these differences between married and single-parent families. Although single-parent families had greater discrepancies in perceptions regarding communication in general, there was no evidence of such differences in discrepancies regarding communication about money. The finding suggests the importance of youth development programs to provide information and encouragement to both youth and their parents.

Combating Youth Violence Through Anti-Violence Coalitions in Three West Virginia Counties [Article 110601FA004]

Sturgill, Ronda; Barnett, Bob; Barnett, Lysbeth

Kids Win was funded by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) for Cabell, Mason and Wayne Counties in West Virginia. The goal of the project was to develop anti-violence coalitions in the three counties and to develop a strategic plan for a pilot program combating youth violence. The pilot program was designed to use the Second Step and Hazelden Anti-Bullying curricula at the three middle schools. Evaluation methods included a survey of teachers, a survey of students, and a comparison of results of a state mandated school discipline report. All three data sources support the conclusion that violence was reduced significantly because of the Kids Win Program. Kids Win has demonstrated what can be accomplished by teaching students the behavioral skills needed to resolve problems without escalating violence. This program merits replication and expansion and can serve as a model for other programs.

The Influence of Past Experiences on the Motivation of Adult Volunteers [Article 110601FA005]

Eason, Marcus; Morgan, A.Christian; Duncan, Dennis W.; Ricketts, John C.

From its' conception, 4-H has encouraged volunteerism and utilized volunteers to accomplish its' mission - to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the factors that motivated [state] 4-H camp volunteers to volunteer with 4-H youth. The Volunteer Functions Inventory was used as the theoretical base for this study. The Values construct (M=3.68) of the VFI was the highest motivating factor of adult 4-H volunteers. The Understanding construct (M=3.39) ranked the second highest motivational factor in volunteerism followed by Social construct (M=3.28), the Enhancement construct (M = 3.05) and the Protective construct (M=2.78). The Career construct (M=2.61) was the least motivating factor to adult volunteers. It was also found that participants that were not involved with 4-H as a youth volunteered more days per year than did participants who were former 4-H members.

Perceptions of Empowerment of Participants within Youth Development Programs [Article 110601FA006]

Busing, Kyle

Highlighted in this paper is a study designed to investigate perceptions of empowerment among young 4-H club members. Participants included 90 boys and girls (mean age 10.61). Perceptions of the autonomy supportive nature of 4-H leaders and the general climate of 4-H clubs were assessed. MANCOVA analyses revealed participants perceived 4-H leaders and the general climate to be empowering. Although the young participants in this study confirmed some of the positive views found elsewhere in the literature, considerable disparities in their responses to various surveys were noted. There appeared to be uncertainty or misunderstanding among youngsters when asked to respond to questions about these concepts. The need for more useful quantitative measures of programmatic impact was accentuated.

Program Articles

The Healing Species: Animal-Assisted Character Education for Improving Student Behavior [Article 110601PA001]

Pearson, Wanda J.

The Healing Species program aims to reduce disruptive behaviors at school by increasing students' abilities to avoid conflict when possible and to resolve conflicts peaceably when they occur. The program's 11 lessons incorporate elements of behavior theory that postulate behavior follows belief. This study hypothesized that 5th and 6th grade students who completed the Healing Species curriculum would show fewer normative beliefs favoring aggression, greater empathy, and

fewer disciplinary infractions, than a comparable group of students who did not receive the Healing Species program. Lessons included the participation of rescued dogs to emphasize compassion, empathy, responsibility, and forgiveness. Study results offered evidence of improved overall behavior and specific reductions in violence and aggression.

Research and Evaluation Strategies

Integrative Literature Review of Adolescent Risk and Health Compromising Behaviors Guided by the Problem Behavior Theory [Article 110601RS001]

March, Alice L.

Twenty percent of the world's population is adolescents. Although generally healthy, risky behaviors result in premature death from injury and establish lifestyle choices which may give rise to poor health and disability during adult life. This integrative review presents the state of the literature related to adolescent health risk behaviors as framed by the problem behavior theory. The key word search using the databases of ERIC, CINAHL Plus with full text, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO yielded an internationally representative group of articles consistent with the guiding framework. Fifteen articles related to risk factors, protective factors, risk behaviors, and health-compromising behaviors of adolescents were retained from the past five years. Although the literature is replete with research involving adolescents, gaps are identified, and recommendations for future research are considered.

Developing a Life Skills Evaluation Tool for Assessing Children Ages 9-12 [Article 110601RS002]

Luckey, Kristina L.; Nadelson, Louis S.

Efforts that attend to the developmental needs of children, enhance their capacity to learn, and support their potential for becoming successful, have tremendous merit. Therefore, it is critical that steps are taken to evaluate the effectiveness of such endeavors. The purpose of this study was to create and validate a life skill outcomes instrument for use in extension youth programs. This instrument validation study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to establish the validity and reliability of a life skills instrument for nine to twelve year olds. The data collected from 111 participants suggests that the instrument is both valid and reliable for the intended age group. Study results, limitations, and ideas for future research are discussed.

Resource Review

Design It! Design Engineering in After School Programs (2002), and Explore It! Science Investigations in Out-of-School Programs (2006) [Article 110601RR001]

Myers, Phillipa

Science programming can be daunting for after school educators and para-educators. These two resources insure science is fun for both youth and educators! *Design It! Design Engineering in After School Programs (2002)*, and *Explore It! Science Investigations in Out-of-School Programs (2006)* encourage the love of science learning through an exploratory format that is grounded in cooperative learning. Each of the two programs contain multiple projects using readily available and affordable materials. *Design It!* includes project topics such as Gliders, Spinning Toys, and Trebuchets. *Explore It!* includes project topics such as Wiring a House, Soda Science, and Balancing Toys.