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Feature Articles

On a Pathway Towards Thriving: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Tools to Promote Positive Development and Intentional Self Regulation in Youth

[Article 130803FA001]Page

Bowers, Edmond P.; Napolitano, Christopher M.; Arbeit, Miriam R.; Chase, Paul; Glickman, Samantha A.; Lerner, Richard M.; Lerner, Jacqueline V.

This article provides initial data about the reliability and validity of tools aimed at promoting youth intentional self regulation (ISR) within mentoring programs. Based on the translation of the theory-based research about ISR and youth thriving conducted within the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), the *GPS to Success* tools use the metaphor of a car’s GPS navigational system to enhance goal-directed behaviors among youth. The core GPS tools are “growth grids,” designed to help mentors appraise ISR skill development and to link these skills to other grids assessing the Five Cs of PYD and Contribution. Data from 152 mentor and youth pairs from 4-H program sites in Oregon and North Carolina indicated that the growth grids were generally reliable. Although validity evidence was mixed, rubrics for “G” and “P” and for a global GPS score were related to a well-validated measure of ISR.

4-Health: A Programmatic Evaluation of a Parent-Based Childhood Obesity Prevention Program [Article 130803FA002]Page

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

The 4-Health Project promotes healthy lifestyles for rural families with an overall goal of reducing or preventing childhood obesity. 4-Health is an integrated research and educational outreach program delivered by agents located in Montana State University Extension offices throughout the state. The collaborative project was developed to provide healthy living programs focusing on the areas of parenting and family communication, body image, food and nutrition, and physical activity to rural parents of 8-12 year old children participating in Montana’s 4-H Youth Development programs. Evaluation outcomes of the 4-Health Educational (experimental) program and the Healthy Living Information (control) program both showed increases in participants’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to healthy living, with those participating in the 4-Health Educational program making greater gains.

Training Teens to Teach Agricultural Biotechnology: A National 4-H Science Demonstration Project [Article 130803FA003]Page

Ripberger, Chad; Blalock, Lydia B.

This article discusses a National 4-H Science agricultural biotechnology demonstration project and the impact of the pilot programs on the teenage leaders and teachers. A total of 82 teenagers were extensively trained, who in turn, engaged 620 youth participants with agricultural biotechnology education in afterschool and summer programs in five states. This article details the national and state level trainings for these teen teachers as well as the content rich partners from agribusinesses, agricultural commodity groups, and universities who supported their involvement. The impact on the content knowledge, science process and life skills, and program development

and implementation skills of the teen leaders and teachers was evaluated using multiple instruments over multiple administrations (pre-training, post-training, and post-teaching). Results indicate significant gains in most areas assessed. Project recommendations and future plans are also discussed.

A Longitudinal Comparison of Parent and Child Influence on Sports Participation

[Article 130803FA004]Page

Chang, Arena; Mahoney, Joseph L.

Drawing on expectancy-value theory, this study examines children’s motivational attributes and parental influences on how children spend their leisure time in middle childhood and adolescence. Specifically, the study examined if parent encouragement and beliefs (i.e., perceived importance of sports and perceived child ability) and child motivation (expectancy and value for sports) are predictive of sports participation over the course of middle childhood and adolescence. Parent and child reports are compared using data from the Childhood and Beyond (CAB) longitudinal study. Findings reveal that parent beliefs and encouragement and child motivation were positively associated with sports participation in middle childhood. Both parental influences and children’s motivation measured in middle childhood were predictive of time spent participating in adolescence. However, only parent influences were predictive of whether the child continued to participate in sports in adolescence.

Program Articles

The Role of Youth Program Leaders in the Use of Technology: Challenges and

Opportunities for Youth-Serving Organizations [Article 130803PA001]Page

Nichter, Mimi; Borden, Lynne; Przybyl, Veronica

Youth-serving organizations offer young people an opportunity to gain skills and advance their knowledge of current and evolving technology through experiential learning. The key to ensuring that young people have meaningful learning experiences is directly related to the youth program leader who is responsible for designing and implementing these programs. Programs conducted by well-trained and well-prepared adults are an essential component of community-based interventions. To date, there is relatively limited research on how technology such as smart phones can be used in community-based programs and the success or failure of this as a strategy for delivering information and engaging young people in a program. In this paper, we discuss how technology was introduced into eight programs conducted by youth-serving organizations in the Southwest. We discuss the training of youth program leaders and their experience using technology at their sites, highlighting what worked and what was problematic, how challenges were overcome, and lessons learned.

Mitigating Barriers to Civic Engagement for Low-Income, Minority Youth Ages 13-18: Best Practices from Environmental Youth Conferences

[Article 130803PA002]Page

Hoang, Haco

Several studies indicate that there is a civic engagement gap for low-income, minority youth even though they reside in communities grappling with deteriorating social, environmental and economic conditions. Using the annual Environmental Youth Conference (EYC) in Los Angeles as a case study, this article offers best practices for identifying: 1) factors that foster civic engagement among low-income, minority youth ages 13-18, and 2) strategies to mobilize the targeted youth populations on environmental issues. Los Angeles is a useful case study because it is a large and demographically diverse city facing extreme environmental challenges due to its significant agricultural and industrial sectors.

The Impact of Parental Involvement on a Structured Youth Program Experience: A Qualitative Inquiry [Article 130803RS001]Page

Duerden, Mat D.; Witt, Peter A.; Harrist, Christopher J.

Parental involvement is an often proposed, but rarely researched, key element of youth programs. Questions remain regarding the impact of parental involvement on program processes and outcomes. Qualitative data were collected over a one-year period with youth participants (n=46), parents (n=26), and teachers (n=5) associated with an international immersion/service learning program for adolescents. Three main research questions guided the data analysis: (1) what role does parental involvement play in the youths’ experience in the program; (2) how does parental involvement in the program influence the parent/child relationship; and (3) what role does parental involvement play in terms of the program’s long-term impact on the youth participants? Findings suggest a relationship between parental involvement in youth programs and improved parent/child communication, bonding, and perceptions of one another. Findings also suggest that having a common ground experience prolonged the experience’s positive post-participation effects.

Lack of Parental Rules for Cell Phone Use among Low Income Mexican Descendent Adolescents [Article 130803RS002]Page

Wiggs, Christine Bracamonte; Romero, Andrea J.; Orduña, Michele

Youth have access to and utilize various types of technology at a growing rate. Cell phones are a portable way for adolescents to remain in constant contact with friends, parents, and others. While White youth are more likely to have a cell phone compared to Latino youth, the trends for cell phone use are similar among all teens with text messaging serving as the most popular means of communication. Despite their high volume of communication with others via cell phones, adolescents are likely to have little or no adult supervision while using technology. With a lack of parental supervision or awareness regarding youth technology use, adolescents may be especially vulnerable to cyberbullying and other negative health impacts. The current study investigates cell phone and texting use among a community sample of Latino adolescents and examines how parental rules regarding cell phone use influences adolescents’ cell phone and texting behaviors.

Resource Review

The First Eight Years ~ Giving Kids a Foundation for a Lifetime Success Resource Review [Article 130803RR001]Page

Dawson, Patricia

“*The First Eight Years: Giving Kids a Foundation for a Lifetime Success*” is a recent KIDS COUNT policy report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The report discusses how a child’s early development from birth through age 8 is critical in one’s transition into elementary school as well as long-term academic success. The report also provides broad policy recommendations to help America’s children succeed and data on early childhood development for every state.