5.0 4-H Youth Development / Children, Youth, and Families

Brief Summary of Program

This plan frames applied research and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) programs connected to 4-H Youth Development/Children, Youth and Families.

Youth development is defined as an ongoing process that enables individuals to lead a healthy, satisfying, and productive life as youth and later as adults, because they gain the competence to earn a living, to engage in civic activities, to nurture others and to participate in social relations and cultural activities; Youth development is also defined as an approach emphasizing active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations, and institutions, especially at the community level. The practice of youth development refers to the application of principles to a planned set of practices, or activities, that foster the developmental process in young people (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2003). Positive youth development is an approach that assumes all young people have assets regardless of their socio-economic status, race/ethnicity and gender.

The Youth Development program applies positive youth development including life skill development to the 4-H national mission mandates of science, technology engineering and math (STEM), civic engagement (citizenship), and healthy living (Components of the latter focused on healthy eating and active living are described in the Childhood Obesity and Nutrition Plan of Work). Each Youth Development mandate has NYS and national logic models to guide program priorities and to identify youth outcomes.

The family emphases in this plan include human development and social wellbeing, economic wellbeing, and quality of home and work environments. This emphasis area includes parenting and care practices, and care programs and policies affect the quality of life for children, youth, elders and their families. Cornell Cooperative Extension parenting and dependent care programs are designed to integrate research with community education on parenting and infant/child care-giving practices and policies. Current research focuses include behavioral and psychological development from conception through later life.

Also included in this plan is an emphasis on family economic security. This emphasis aims to increase our service to and empower low and moderate-income households who are especially vulnerable to financial setbacks and have less disposable income to commit to savings. The effort includes education to low-income households where housing may have a greater incidence of indoor air issues: high levels of radon, carbon monoxide, lead, asbestos, and basement mold. Research draws on a broad-based and diverse set of social science and design methodologies to understand how planning, design and management of the built environment affects individuals, groups, organizations and communities, and how this knowledge can generate innovative design solutions for pressing social and cultural issues.

Situation and Priorities Statement

Youth development through experiential learning is the foundation of 4-H programming. Participation in high quality out-of-school programs is linked with a lower incidence of problem behaviors, such as decreased academic failure, substance abuse, and delinquency (Lerner, Lerner, & Phelps, 2008). Relative to science literacy, in international comparisons, U.S. student performance in mathematics and science is at or below levels attained by students in other countries in the developed world (Provasnik et al 2012). Science (or STEM) literacy is routinely identified as a key to our economic future and a significant public value of 4-H STEM

Effective parenting practices differ across several developmental stages of childhood, and include a range of outcomes, some of which can be customized to meet special needs, address cultural differences and still be sensitive to the needs of particular family structures. There is a continuing need for education on what constitutes high quality child care to help parents and guardians select and monitor their children’s care, and targeted education for other stakeholders and decision-makers affecting these issues. Economic security, financial and other household resource management are educational priorities. There are a multitude of economic challenges facing communities in New York State and the nation as well.

Assumptions

Youth
- Curricula, programs, and learning experiences incorporate evidence and best practices for building life skill competencies (i.e., college and career readiness). Best practices related to specific delivery methods provide rich opportunities for deep impact.
- Program educators and volunteers working with youth receive professional development and support on how to incorporate research findings and evaluation plans into program design. These efforts focus on best practices to meet the needs of youth at various stages of their development.
- Youth have different interests and needs; therefore, they may respond differently to the same opportunities. Youth should have choices about activities in which they participate, including the chance to help shape those activities.
- Many opportunities exist to connect youth to the educational resources of Cornell University and other Land Grant Universities in the area of STEM, Healthy Living, and Civic Engagement.

Family
- Most parents and relative caregivers want to do the best they can for their children.
- Parenting and child development knowledge and skills are applicable to many family situations and can improve parent-child interactions and child nurturance over time.
- Selection of high quality childcare can be improved through education.
- Increased household disposable income and improved indoor environments will result in improved quality of life for individuals, more prosperous communities and overall improvement in the NYS economy.

Ultimate Goals of the Program

Youth
- Facilitate programming that promotes positive youth development
- Prepare youth for success in 1) postsecondary education and 2) career pursuits by engaging children and youth in a variety of learning opportunities
- Youth lead healthy, satisfying, and productive lives
- Youth become caring and contributing members of society
- Youth become life-long learners
- Youth become knowledgeable, contributing participants in STEM, Healthy Living, and Civic Engagement issues in their communities

Family
- Improve parenting practices that result in better child and youth outcomes.
• Improve parent/caregiving practices resulting in parents and caregivers reporting increased confidence in their roles.
• Improve financial status of targeted NYS residents.
• Improve indoor air quality in low income households resulting in better health outcomes.

Activities

Youth: 4-H Youth Development is a comprehensive, statewide positive youth development program. 4-H entails a wide variety of applied research and educational methods based on need and local context. Campus-based faculty and Extension Associates, Program Work Teams (PWTs), State Office staff, the New York State Association of CCE 4-H Educators (NYSACCE4-HE), and county-based educators are all involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating program efforts.

A variety of educational strategies are used to support county educators and volunteers. Professional development goals include assisting colleagues in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to assess the ranges of possibilities that exist within and among initiatives (i.e., Mission Mandates). Trained 4-H educators and staff, volunteers, youth, schoolteachers, community agency staff and others lead youth in 4-H projects.

4-H projects are a planned series of experiential learning opportunities in a variety of settings. Through their projects, youth develop knowledge, practical skills, and life skills (e.g., robotics, self-awareness, public presentation, responsible decision-making).

Delivery Modes

4-H takes place in a variety of settings including: after-school programming, camps, 4-H clubs, school enrichment activities, camps, and community events.

Family: This is a comprehensive, statewide educational program entailing multiple education methods depending on local context and need. Campus-based faculty and Extension Associates and county-based educators are involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating tailored (as well as state-wide) educational efforts depending on the focus and scope of their role.

Sample Statewide Program Initiatives that fall within this Plan of Work:

• 4-H and NYS Library Partnership
• 4-H National Mentoring Program
• 4-H Youth Development Program (clubs, events, camps, afterschool, school enrichment)
• ACT (Assets Coming Together) for Youth
• Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Program (CYFAR)
• Cornell Early Childhood Program
• Cornell Research Program on Self-Injurious Behavior
• Design & Environmental Analysis: knowledge, ideas, and designs that contribute to improving the places in which we work, live, learn, heal, and play
• Events: 4-H Career Explorations Conference, Capital Days, State Teen Action Representative Retreat (STARR), National 4-H Conference, Dairy Discovery Days, Animal Crackers, Public Presentations, State Fair, etc.
• Family Economics and Resource Management
• Operation Military Kids
Target Audiences

Youth
- Young people ages 5-19: Cloverbuds (5-8), pre-teens (9-12), and teens (13-19)
- Youth development educators, staff, and volunteers
- Families, parents, and guardians
- Youth-serving organizations
- Teachers and schools (elementary, middle, high school)
- Community leaders
- Priority audiences include youth not formerly served and military youth and families

Family
- Parents, grandparents and other caregivers
- Child care providers
- Community stakeholders such as employers, leaders and policy makers at local/state levels
- Low and moderate-income households who are especially vulnerable to financial setbacks and have less disposable income to commit to savings
- Low-income households living in poor-quality housing
Output and Outcome Indicators

Highlighted indicators are collected and reported annually. Others are shown in logic model format to demonstrate the progression from typical planned programs (outputs) → skill & knowledge development (near-term) → behavior changes (mid-term) → societal changes (long-term). Staff are expected to use program evaluations report on selected indicators.

5.1 Human Development: Positive Youth Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth program educators and adult volunteers participating in programs on positive youth development</td>
<td>Number of youth participants who demonstrate gains in vocational/citizenship skills – knowledge, attitudes, and/or aspirations</td>
<td>(5.1b) Number of youth participants who demonstrate ability to express ideas confidently and competently</td>
<td>(5.1e) Number of youth who increased number of youth organizations/programs documented as incorporating youth voice in programming to reflect youth needs, interests, and excitement for learning (i.e. increased number of youth-adult partnerships, increased number of youth taking political action, increased number of mentors, and increased youth voice in communities being served.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth participating in projects related to vocational skills and/or citizenship</td>
<td>(5.1a) Number of youth participants who learn life skills (e.g., self-motivation, goal-setting, conflict resolution, resilience, empathy, decision-making)</td>
<td>(5.1c) Number of adult volunteers documented to mentor and advise youth and other adult volunteers in an effective and positive manner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth participating in projects related to healthy eating, active living, and social-emotional wellness</td>
<td>Number of youth program educators and adult volunteers who demonstrate knowledge and/or skill gains in meeting the needs of youth at various stages of development</td>
<td>(5.1d) Number of youth participants documented as serving in age-appropriate leadership roles engaged in youth voice (i.e. youth engaged in youth-led opportunities, youth participants solving community issues, participants who work with elected officials on community issues)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For 4-H Healthy Living outcomes (i.e., related to nutrition and fitness), please refer to the Plan of Work 4.0: Nutrition, Food Safety and Security, and Obesity Prevention. Specifically: outcomes 4.1a-d
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants enrolled in 4-H STEM project areas</td>
<td>(5.2a) Number of participants demonstrating increased awareness of STEM, interest in STEM,</td>
<td>(5.2b) Number of participants that report improved school achievement or have been observed</td>
<td>Number of participants who increased number and diversity of 4-H youth pursuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth reached through STEM school enrichment, special interest, camp,</td>
<td>improved STEM abilities, and/or increased awareness of opportunities to contribute to society</td>
<td>to improve academic improvement and/or success in school science.</td>
<td>and careers in STEM-related fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and after school programs</td>
<td>using STEM skills.</td>
<td>(5.2c) Number of youth applying STEM learning to contexts outside 4-H programs, e.g., school</td>
<td>Number of participants who increased and more diverse pool of trained educators, engineers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and diversity of 4-H and other youth program educators and adult</td>
<td></td>
<td>classes, science fairs, invention contests, etc.</td>
<td>and other scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteers participating in programs on STEM for youth</td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.2d) Number of youth expressing interest/demonstrating aspirations towards STEM careers,</td>
<td>Number of participants who increased STEM literacy and application of STEM knowledge and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e.g., career fairs, job shadowing, volunteer work or internships.</td>
<td>skills to civic engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.2e) Number of youth adopting and using new scientific methods or improved technology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of youth and adult volunteers documented to become contributing participants in STEM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>related issues in their communities and/or choose STEM related professions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.3 Human Development: Youth Civic Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth participating in education programs leading to civic engagement initiatives</td>
<td>Number of youth and adults demonstrating knowledge gains related to Youth/Adult Partnerships and civic engagement initiatives</td>
<td>(5.3a) Number of youth documented to have practiced life skills in authentic decision-making partnerships with adults.</td>
<td>(5.3d) Number of youth documented instances in which youth and adults partner to improve quality of life within a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth participating in train-the-trainer programs related to civic engagement</td>
<td>Increased number of youth organizations/programs documented as incorporating youth voice in programming to reflect youth needs, interests, and excitement for learning (i.e., youth-adult partnerships, youth taking political action, mentors, and youth voice in communities)</td>
<td>(5.3b) Number of youth who demonstrate application of skills to civic life, within and beyond the 4-H context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of adults participating train-the-trainer programs related civic engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.3c) Number of youth who demonstrate improved or advanced workforce skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of communities participating in 4-H civic engagement initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family

### 5.4 Human Development: Parenting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of adults who complete parent education programs.</td>
<td>Number of parents, grandparents and other adults providing parental care who demonstrate knowledge or skills gains in developmentally appropriate and effective parenting behaviors and methods.</td>
<td>(5.4a) Number of parents and other adults providing parental care who adopt developmentally appropriate and effective parenting behaviors and methods.</td>
<td>(5.4b) Number of parents/relative caregivers who report experiencing positive changes in parent-child relationships and parenting skills that they attribute to implementing new parenting behaviors and methods learned in parent education programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.5 Human Development: Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of infant and child caregivers completing non-formal education programs about quality dependent care giving.</th>
<th>Number of participating infant and child caregivers who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains related care-giving practices.</th>
<th>(5.5a) Number of participating infant and child caregivers reporting to have applied positive care-giving practices.</th>
<th>(5.5c) Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents reporting positive change in childcare as a result of participating in educational programs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons with care-requiring dependents completing non-formal education programs on selection of care-giving individuals and facilities.</td>
<td>Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents who demonstrate ability to evaluate the quality of care programs.</td>
<td>(5.5b) Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents reporting to have used childcare quality characteristics in their care selection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.6 Human Development: Community Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of organizations, agencies, and institutions participating in non-formal educational programs about social and public policy issues to enhance opportunities for safe, economical, and developmentally appropriate care-giving programs for infants, children and youth.</td>
<td>Number of program participants who demonstrate knowledge or skills gains regarding community approaches to family care.</td>
<td>(5.6a) Number of program participants reporting to have been involved in community level assessments of family care needs.</td>
<td>(5.6b) Number of communities documented to have taken action to address family needs that can be related to educational programs and/or critical community collaborations provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Economic Security</td>
<td>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</td>
<td>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</td>
<td>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Number of persons completing education programs on age-appropriate topics like spending and saving concepts, appropriate use of money, financial goals, tracking expenses, budgeting, credit management, financial planning, and/or wealth generation strategies.</td>
<td>Number of participants who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains and/or can articulate specific actions they will take related to spending and saving concepts, appropriate use of money, setting financial goals, tracking expenses, budgeting, credit management, financial planning, and/or wealth generation strategies.</td>
<td>(5.7a) Number of program participants reporting they are practicing improved money management skills such as comparison shopping, paying bills on time, paying more than minimum payment, checking credit report, and reviewing and understanding bills/statements as a means to meeting financial goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Number of persons completing education programs on age-appropriate topics like spending and saving concepts, appropriate use of money, financial goals, tracking expenses, budgeting, credit management, financial planning, and/or wealth generation strategies.</td>
<td>Number of participants who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains and/or can articulate specific actions they will take related to spending and saving concepts, appropriate use of money, setting financial goals, tracking expenses, budgeting, credit management, financial planning, and/or wealth generation strategies.</td>
<td>(5.7a) Number of program participants reporting they are practicing improved money management skills such as comparison shopping, paying bills on time, paying more than minimum payment, checking credit report, and reviewing and understanding bills/statements as a means to meeting financial goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Number of consumers and property managers completing programs on indoor air quality issues.</td>
<td>Number of consumers and property managers gaining awareness and knowledge of indoor air quality issues and remediation options.</td>
<td>(5.8a) Number of program participants documented to have taken measures to prevent or remediate indoor air quality issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### External Factors

#### Youth

Fiscal pressures internal to Extension and among community organizations influence the scope and quality of programming available to youth. The increasing diversity of our populations creates the need for an array of program materials, strategies, and a dedication to multicultural competencies. Changing educational standards influence the acceptability or credibility of existing curricula. Regional and community demographic differences influence both program strategies and professional development needs.
Family

The economic, political and governmental sectors affect the quality, availability and accessibility of childcare. The growth of aging and minority populations in the US means more diverse cultures and values related to parenting, childcare, and family care giving. Natural disasters and the economy affect household financial status and impact energy issues. They also affect the quality of the indoor air environment. Government regulation and policies driven by public priorities can change the circumstances of personal finances, the energy market and the quality of the indoor household environment. Public and private funders and CCE may have fewer fiscal resources and other resources to devote to the quality of life in financial, energy and indoor air quality matters.

Evaluation Methods

Each of the plans addresses a broad combination of applied research and extension initiatives spanning multiple audiences, methods, and intended outcomes. A combination of routine program monitoring and documentation, near-term outcome assessment, and targeted follow-up activities provides comprehensive assessment. We work towards this goal by doing two things – professional development to enhance evaluation capacity of our system and looking for program documentation of local, regional and statewide programs.

Evaluation Capacity Building: The CORE Evaluation Capacity-Building project with CCE came to a close at the close of the 2015 fiscal year. CCE staff continue to have full use of the web-based Netway program for program modeling and evaluation planning, and that the Netway includes online training components and resources such as the measures archive. Additional staff training in evaluation planning and practices to meet system wide outcomes will continue.

Regional/Statewide documentation examples. Many of our regional and statewide programs are receiving federal capacity funds. Documentation of outcomes will continue to be a requirement of funding. Results shape future program efforts and impact program design.

There is also a requirement for our local and regional programs to report on statewide outcomes/indicators: Program documentation results are aggregated in a statewide accountability database which includes both qualitative and quantitative data for reporting and helping us to better understand impacts.

In 2016, we will continue to review the national outcome framework and connect it, as possible, to our statewide outcome framework.

Recent Example – from the Parenting In Context program – use of pre-post survey

The Parenting In Context CCE statewide program has an online Data Collection System for program evaluation. A program work team of faculty, associates and extension professionals developed, piloted and revised a pre-and post-survey for statewide use. This information now feeds into our State Defined Outcomes related to parenting education.
family and child development. Data were collected from CCE parent education program participants between July 2013 to July 2014 at the first session (a pre-test) and at the last session (a post-test). Participants included parents and caregivers taking part in programs that comprised at least six hours of content delivery.

**Demographics of Participants in CCE Parent Education Programs**
A total of thirteen parent education programs were evaluated. The largest number of participants took part in Parenting A Second Time Around (PASTA) (21% of all participants) and the Parenting Skills Workshop Series (17%).

The majority (71%) of participants in parent education classes were female. The highest level of educational attainment reached among the participants varied widely, with the greatest number of participants reaching 12th grade or a GED (32%) followed by those having attended, but not graduated from, college (24%). The vast majority of the participants in parent education classes were white (63%), and 40% of the participants were married or partnered.

**Pre-Post Survey Results**
This study used a pre- and post-test evaluation, in which the participants were asked to answer two identical surveys—one given at the first session of the class and another given after the completion of the last parenting class. The survey included ten questions about parenting attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge. The pre/post study design allows researchers to see if participants’ attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge change during the course of the parenting programs. Using this type of research design does not allow one to determine whether taking part in the parent education class *caused* a change in knowledge, attitude or behaviors; such changes could occur for other reasons outside of the program. However, it is possible that any significant pre-to-post changes in parenting attitudes, behaviors and knowledge that are observed may have resulted from taking part in the program.

The following evaluation is based on information provided by 385 participants, who completed a parent education program and completed both a pre- and a post-test survey. Six of the ten items on the survey showed significant improvements from the pre-to post-test. Specifically, participants of CCE parent education classes reported increased patience with their child, increased confidence in making rules that take their child’s needs into consideration, increased belief that they have the skills necessary to be a good caregiver, decreases in how often they yell at their child, increased time spent reading with their child, and decreases in the number of hours their children spend watching television.

A p-value generated from a paired t-test was used as a statistical measure to determine whether a change in a given survey question between the pre- and post-test was significant. A p-value of .10 or less was considered statistically significant. This means that we can say with 90% certainty that the pre-to-post changes in participant responses are not due to chance.

These results indicate that six out of ten measures of parenting attitudes, behaviors and knowledge improved significantly from the pre- to the post-test. This suggests that, across the state, CCE parent education programs may have had a positive impact on their participants.

http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/parenting/