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 who often live in poor-quality housing that has 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/care giving 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:

- 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.
- 4-H and NYS Library Partnership
- Operation Military Kids
- Public Presentations
- 4-H National Mentoring Program
- 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
- The Parenting in Context Initiative
- PROSPER
- The Role of Grandparents in the Lives of Adolescent Grandchildren
• Family Economics and Resource Management
• Design & Environmental Analysis: knowledge, ideas, and designs that contribute to improving the places in which we work, live, learn, heal, and play
• Volunteer development opportunities and events

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Indicators</th>
<th>Near-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Mid-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcome Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5.1a) Number of youth program educators and adult volunteers participating in programs on positive youth development</td>
<td>(5.1c) Number of youth participants who demonstrate gains in vocational/citizenship skills – knowledge, attitudes, and/or aspirations</td>
<td>(5.1f) Number of youth participants who demonstrate ability to express their ideas confidently and competently</td>
<td>(5.1i) 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>
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<tr>
<td>(5.1b) Number of youth participating in projects related to vocational skills and/or citizenship</td>
<td>(5.1d) Number of youth volunteers who learn life skills (e.g., self-motivation, goal-setting, conflict resolution, resilience, empathy, decision-making)</td>
<td>(5.1g) Number of adult volunteers documented to mentor and advise youth and other adult volunteers in an effective and positive manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5.1j) Number of youth participating in projects related to healthy eating, active living, and social-emotional wellness</td>
<td>(5.1e) 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>(5.1h) 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>
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*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 4.1d, 4.1d2, 4.1g, and 4.1h.
5.2 Human Development: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Literacy

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(5.2a) Number of participants enrolled in 4-H STEM project areas</td>
<td>(5.2d) Number of participants demonstrating increased awareness of STEM, interest in STEM, improved STEM abilities, and/or increased awareness of opportunities to contribute to society using STEM skills.</td>
<td>(5.2e) Number of participants that report improved school achievement or have been observed to improve academic improvement and/or success in school science.</td>
<td>(5.2j) Number of participants who increased number and diversity of 4-H youth pursuing education and careers in STEM-related fields.</td>
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<td>(5.2b) Number of youth reached through STEM school enrichment, special interest, camp, and after school programs</td>
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<td>(5.2f) Number of youth applying STEM learning to contexts outside 4-H programs, e.g., school classes, science fairs, invention contests, etc.</td>
<td>(5.2k) Number of participants who increased and more diverse pool of trained educators, engineers, and other scientists.</td>
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<td>(5.2c) Number and diversity of 4-H and other youth program educators and adult volunteers participating in programs on STEM for youth</td>
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<td>(5.2g) Number of youth expressing interest/demonstrating aspirations towards STEM careers, e.g., career fairs, job shadowing, volunteer work or internships.</td>
<td>(5.2l) Number of participants who increased STEM literacy and application of STEM knowledge and skills to civic engagement.</td>
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<td>(5.2h) Number of youth adopting and using new scientific methods or improved technology.</td>
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<td>(5.2i) Number of youth and adult volunteers documented to become contributing participants in STEM related issues in their communities and/or choose STEM related professions.</td>
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<td>5.3 Human Development: Youth Civic Engagement</td>
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<td>(5.3a) Number of youth participating in education programs leading to civic engagement initiatives</td>
<td>(5.3e) Number of youth and adults demonstrating knowledge gains related to Youth/Adult Partnerships and civic engagement initiatives</td>
<td>(5.3f) Number of youth documented to have practiced life skills in authentic decision-making partnerships with adults</td>
<td>(5.3h) Number of youth documented instances in which youth and adults partner to improve quality of life within a community</td>
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<td>(5.3b) Number of youth participating in train-the-trainer programs related to civic engagement</td>
<td>(5.1i) 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>(5.3g) Number of youth who demonstrate application of skills to civic life, within and beyond the 4-H context</td>
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<td>(5.3c) Number of adults participating train-the-trainer programs related civic engagement</td>
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<td>Number of youth who demonstrate improved or advanced workforce skills</td>
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<td>(5.3d) Number of communities participating in 4-H civic engagement initiatives</td>
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**Family**

### 5.4 Human Development: Individuals

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<tr>
<td>(5.4a) Number of infant and child caregivers completing non-formal education programs about quality dependent care giving.</td>
<td>(5.4c) Number of participating infant and child caregivers who demonstrate knowledge or skill gains related caregiving practices.</td>
<td>(5.4e) Number of participating infant and child caregivers reporting to have applied positive caregiving practices.</td>
<td>(5.4g) Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents reporting to have used childcare quality characteristics in their care selection.</td>
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<td>(5.4b) Number of persons with care-requiring dependents completing non-formal education programs on selection of caregiving individuals and facilities.</td>
<td>(5.4d) Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents who demonstrate ability to evaluate the quality of care programs.</td>
<td>(5.4f) Number of participating persons with care-requiring dependents reporting to have used childcare quality characteristics in their care selection.</td>
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### 5.5 Human Development: Community Level

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<tr>
<td><strong>(5.5a) 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.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.5b) Number of program participants who demonstrate knowledge or skills gains regarding community approaches to family care.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.5c) Number of program participants reporting to have been involved in community level assessments of family care needs.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.5d) 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.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5.6 Parenting</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(5.6a) Number of persons completing complete non-formal education programs about parenting.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.6b) Number of parents, grandparents and other adults providing parental care gaining who demonstrate knowledge or skills gains regarding developmentally appropriate and effective parenting methods.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.6c) Number of parents and other adults providing parental care adopting developmentally appropriate and effective parenting methods.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.6d) Number of parents/relative caregivers reporting to have experienced positive change in parent-child relationships and child nurturance that they attribute to implementing new parenting behaviors learned in educational programs.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5.7 Economic Security</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(5.7a) 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.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.7b) 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.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.7c) 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.</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.7d) Number of program participants reporting to have met day-to-day financial obligations while also progressing on future goals for home ownership, savings, retirement accounts, etc.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(5.7e) Number of program participants reporting to have reduced debts and/or increased savings.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5.8 Indoor Environment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(5.8a) Number of</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.8b) Number of</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.8c) Number of program</strong></td>
<td><strong>(5.8d) Number of program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(5.8d) Number of program participants reporting to have reduced debts and/or increased savings.</strong></td>
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consumers and property managers completing programs on indoor air quality issues.

consumers and property managers gaining awareness and knowledge of indoor air quality issues and remediation options.

participants documented to have taken measures to prevent or remediate indoor air quality issues.

participants documented to have reduced short-term health effects of indoor air pollutants (such as irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, headaches, dizziness, and fatigue) as a result of participating in educational programs.

(5.8e) Number of participants reducing risks of respiratory diseases, heart disease, and cancer by implement measures such as radon remediation, controlling indoor triggers of asthma: secondhand smoke, dust mites, pet dander, and pests.

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

The evaluation approach included in our plan can be more accurately described as an evaluation "system" rather than as bounded "studies" or investigations. Each of the plans addresses a broad combination of
applied research and extension initiatives spanning multiple audiences, methods, and intended outcomes. Thus, a combination of routine program monitoring and documentation, measurement of near-term outcomes, and targeted follow-up activities is required to provide comprehensive assessment. In addition, specialized data needs of funding partners must be addressed, sometimes using methods and/or accountability structures required by the funders.

Cornell Cooperative Extension works with the Cornell Office for Research on Evaluation (CORE) to inform our evaluation processes. CORE has piloted the Evaluation Partnership Project (EPP) over the last decade, which aims to support program planning, implementation, and evaluation within the Cornell Cooperative Extension system. The CORE Evaluation Partnership Project has included program development and evaluation planning with a number of targeted programs and counties, including 4-H in 2013. In conjunction with the new 4-H Common Measures being piloted nationally, NYS 4-H Youth Development is focused on documenting impact, identifying best practices, and building capacity for more precise evaluation methods within the system.

We employ a combination of routine program monitoring and documentation, near-term outcome assessment, and targeted follow-up activities for each of our planned programs. The results are aggregated in a statewide accountability system, which leads to the summary results reported in the State Defined Outcomes in each Plan of Work. This includes selected impact statements and success stories from a pool of more than 400 documented narratives.