



Dear Educators:

I hope you are in the swing of the new school year and beginning to prepare for holidays as they will be upon us sooner than we realize. For me the summer flew by this year for several reasons. First, the weather (we had mainly rain and mild temperatures) really made me feel like we never had a summer. Second, I had many more ongoing projects than usual. Third, my third child was born which makes three children under the age of two. Yes, I am a little crazy. I tell you this to say it is important to stop and enjoy the colors of fall, because I am certain they will be gone very quickly.

There are a lot of great resources covered in this bulletin. I want to point out the web resource link to the new parenting book entitled *Raising courageous kids: Eight steps to practical heroism*. The book is a must read for family and consumer science educators conducting parenting class as well as anyone who is a parent.

Sincerely,

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*In This Issue:*

- Family Activity
- Research Briefs
- Resources for Educators
- Web Resources
- Possible Funding Sources

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Use this fall to prepare for the holidays by making gifts. Gifts that are made and given to others are treasured and often kept for years because of their sentimental value. This year, as a family, pick a one-hour block of time a week to sift through all the family pictures to create family collages. Everyone enjoys pictures of love ones, even though many of us do not enjoy getting our picture taken. If you need new pictures, then take them during that time. By designating a specific time a week to do this activity, you will be accomplishing three things. First, you will be spending time together as a family. Second, you will be creating wonderful gifts to be shared with others. Third, you will be creating a routine “family time” that you can continue to fill with other fun activities.



# RESEARCH BRIEFS

## Drinking and Religion Don't Mix

The vast majority of American high school seniors report having used alcohol at some time, and numerous health-compromising outcomes associated with drinking such as delinquency, psychopathology, school failure, and other problem behaviors are becoming increasingly prevalent among our youth. This study examines the extent to which religion predicts: the decision to use alcohol; the choice among users of how much and how often to drink; and the experience of alcohol-related problems.



Data from this study were drawn from a four-wave panel study of 1,175 middle-adolescent youth from two suburban school districts in western New York. Trained research staff administered questionnaires to the youth (15 or 16 years old) in their high school setting. The sample was 98.5% White, and mostly middle class, with a median annual family income of more than \$40,000. Seventy four percent of the sample was Catholic, 16% Protestant, and 10% other.

The results of this study showed that the importance of religion to the youth and attendance at religious events and services were negatively associated with the prevalence of alcohol use. In addition, self-reported importance of religion was a significant predictor of the decision to begin drinking. However, when peer, family, and school variables were



included in the analysis, the effects of religiosity were insignificant. Indeed, the strongest correlate and predictor of the decision to use alcohol was association with alcohol-using peers, suggesting that the effects of religion on drinking may be mediated by peer selection. Religious attendance was a significant correlate and predictor of how much and how frequently youth chose to drink, suggesting that religious boys and girls are likely to internalize religious principles and develop personal standards of conduct to guide their actions. Indeed, religious attendance was associated with reductions over time in the quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption. Likewise, alcohol use was inversely related to subsequent religious attendance and salience,

suggesting that religious boys and girls may rationalize their drinking behavior by altering their religious beliefs and practices. The study found that religious attendance had a moderately negative effect on the occurrence of alcohol-related problems. Further research is needed to determine whether the findings of this study can be generalized to non-Whites and to youth of other religious traditions.

Found in: Mason, W. A., & Windle, M. (2002). A longitudinal study of the effects of religiosity on adolescent alcohol use and alcohol-related problems. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 17*, 346-363.

## Education Matters to Families

Over the past two decades, children with full-time employed parents are increasingly likely to be low-income if their parents do not have a college education. Among children whose parents work full-time and year-round, the percent of children in low-income families:

- increased from 68% to 73% if parents did not hold a high school degree;
- increased from 38% to 43% if parents had a high school degree, but no college;
- decreased from 18% to 15% if parents had at least some college education.



The author has four sound strategies to address this issue:

- Increase access to financial aid for low-income students.
- Help low-income parents who are enrolled in higher education with child care costs.
- Use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars to support education for low-income parents.
- Head Start can promote the pursuit of higher education among the next generation of parents.

Found in: Koball H., & Douglas-Hall, A. (2004). *Effects of parent education on income*. New York: National Center on Children in Poverty. Retrieved September 3, 2004 at: [http://www.nccp.org/pub\\_pei04.html](http://www.nccp.org/pub_pei04.html)

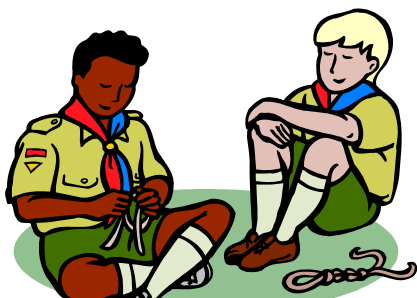
## Public's View about Children

A brand new survey recently fielded by the Ad Council, "Engaging the Public on Behalf of Children 2004," reveals dramatic shifts in the public's views of children, their sense of responsibility to all children, and their willingness to help. It also points to a climate in which the public is poised to respond in positive ways to messages that offer opportunities to help kids.

The public has a more positive view of children. For example, in 1995, less than one-quarter of all Americans (23%) used positive words to describe children. At the end of 2003, twice as many (46%) used positive terms, such as "wonderful," "great," and "smart." When asked specifically about their own children and/or children they know well, this percentage jumped even higher, with more than two-thirds describing children in a positive manner (78% of parents and 71% of non-parents).



The majority of Americans now believe that parents are responsible for raising children *with the support of others in their communities*. In 1995, most Americans blamed parents for the problems children were experiencing. However, in 2004, most Americans (72%) say that raising children is the responsibility of parents *with support of others in the community*.



The majority of Americans believe that one person can make a difference in the life of a child, and they are willing to help. According to *Engaging the public on behalf of children 2004*, almost all Americans (97%) think that one person can make a difference in the life of a child, and the majority (78%) would like to help, a wonderful sign of new optimism and openness.

Little differences were found among demographic subgroups in the survey findings. Levels of involvement or willingness to get involved were not related to how old people were, whether they worked or not, their ethnicity or their education and income levels. This suggests that Americans are more united on children's issues than on many other issues.

Found in: Advertisement Council. (2004). *Turning point: Engaging the public on behalf of children*. New York: Author. Retrieved on June 25, 2004 at [http://www.adcouncil.org/pdf/commitment\\_children\\_turning\\_point\\_report.pdf](http://www.adcouncil.org/pdf/commitment_children_turning_point_report.pdf)

## ***PROGRAM RESOURCES FOR FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE EDUCATORS***

### **Children in the Middle: Tools for Divorcing Parents**

<http://www.divorce-education.com/CIM.pdf>

"Children in the Middle" is a program for divorcing parents and their children. This program has just been identified as a "Model Program" from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. Thus, there is evidence that this program works and has positive outcomes for children. This program provides divorcing parents skills to reduce family conflict and help their children deal with divorce. The program consists of a video kit (\$229), a facilitator's guide (\$60), and booklets for participants (\$3 each). If you choose to conduct this program, please let me know as I am willing to assist with setting up an evaluation study of it.

# WEB RESOURCES

## Resources for Professionals

### Excellent Parenting Book

<http://www.raisingcourageouskids.com>

This web site provides enhancement materials for the book, *Raising courageous kids: Eight steps to practical heroes*, written by Kansas State Extension Specialist Charles Smith. This website includes information on obtaining the book, bookmarks for the site, a media guide, reading group guides, a short on-line course on courage, a workshop guide for use by professionals, and information on joining a Yahoo Discussion Group on courage.



### Adolescent Obesity Largely Caused by Lack of Physical Activity: New Findings and Future Study

<http://www.unc.edu/news/newsserv/research/apr03/sut/herland040903.html>

A University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill study suggests that lack of physical activity is more likely behind the accelerating rate of adolescent obesity than excessive caloric intake, finding that physical activity decreased 13% and caloric intake rose only 1% among U.S. adolescents from 1980 to 2000.

### Performance Measures in Out-of-School Time Evaluation

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/snapshot3.html>

The release of the early evaluation of 21st Century Learning Centers sparked heated debate as to what after-school programs should be held accountable for and how they should measure their impact. This "Out-of-School Time Evaluation Snapshot" provides a comprehensive listing of the performance measures that programs nationwide are using, and the sources they use to collect data.



### Poverty is the Problem With Kids Today?

[http://www.nccp.org/pub\\_cpf04.html](http://www.nccp.org/pub_cpf04.html)

In its new fact sheet, the National Center for Children in Poverty reports that more than one-third of America's children--more than 26 million kids--live in low-income families, meaning their parents earn up to double the poverty line. Eighty-four percent of children who live in low-income families have at least one parent who works.

## Resources for Parents

### Sesame Street: Talk, Read, Write! Program

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/talkreadwrite/index.php>

This program provides resource materials that support and engage the delightful and important process of literacy development for pre-school children, ages 3-5. The central goal of the bilingual multimedia program is improving the four fundamental skills necessary for literacy development: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The program was developed by Sesame Workshop. Since 2002, 75,000 multimedia kits were distributed free of charge to child care programs, local resource and referral agencies, public broadcasting stations, libraries, family literacy programs, and a variety of local community based organizations. Now, this program is available as an online resource center for parents!



### Identifying a Good Adolescent Literacy Program

[http://www.all4ed.org/press/pr\\_060204.htm](http://www.all4ed.org/press/pr_060204.htm)

Twenty-five percent of the nation's secondary school students read considerably below grade level, putting them at risk of dropping out of high school or graduating unprepared for college or work. This new Alliance for Excellent Education issue brief offers guidance for middle and high school administrators and teachers looking for effective adolescent literacy programs.



### Children Not Getting Enough Sleep

[http://www.sleepfoundation.org/features/children\\_sleep\\_problems.cfm](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/features/children_sleep_problems.cfm)

A National Sleep Foundation poll finds that American parents and children are sleeping less than experts recommend. Children doing better on the sleep front are more likely to include reading--and not TV or videos--as part of their bedtime routine. Children who get the fewest hours of sleep or go to bed after 10 pm are the most likely to drink caffeinated beverages during the day. Most parents/caregivers of infants and young children--and half of those raising school-aged kids--report being awakened at night at least once a week by their child. This web site contains a parents' guide for dealing with children sleep issues.



# POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

## Youth-Led Grants: 3D Action Grants

<http://3dzone.org/html/programs/grants.asp>

3D Life Adventures offers grants of up to \$500 for creative student-led initiatives or curricula aimed at fostering cultural and/or natural diversity. Projects should be student-conceived and administered, but sponsored and overseen by an adult mentor. Recently funded programs have included environmental education curricula, community improvement projects, and local community partnerships. Applications should be submitted one month before the scheduled start of the project.

## Local Target Store Grants

[http://www.targetcorp.com/targetcorp\\_group/community/community.jhtml;jsessionid=BGA0ZNGN5SGP5LARA0VWW1NM5CEACU1IV](http://www.targetcorp.com/targetcorp_group/community/community.jhtml;jsessionid=BGA0ZNGN5SGP5LARA0VWW1NM5CEACU1IV)

Target offers store-based grants that support projects promoting early childhood education, the arts and family violence prevention. Target store team leaders play a key role in local grant programs because, we believe, they know their communities best. Target will accept grant applications between March 1 and May 31, 2005. Most grants average between \$1,000 and \$3,000. Applications will be reviewed as they are received; therefore, those that apply early are more likely to get funded.



Please check out the FYRP website:

<http://resiliency.cas.psu.edu>



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