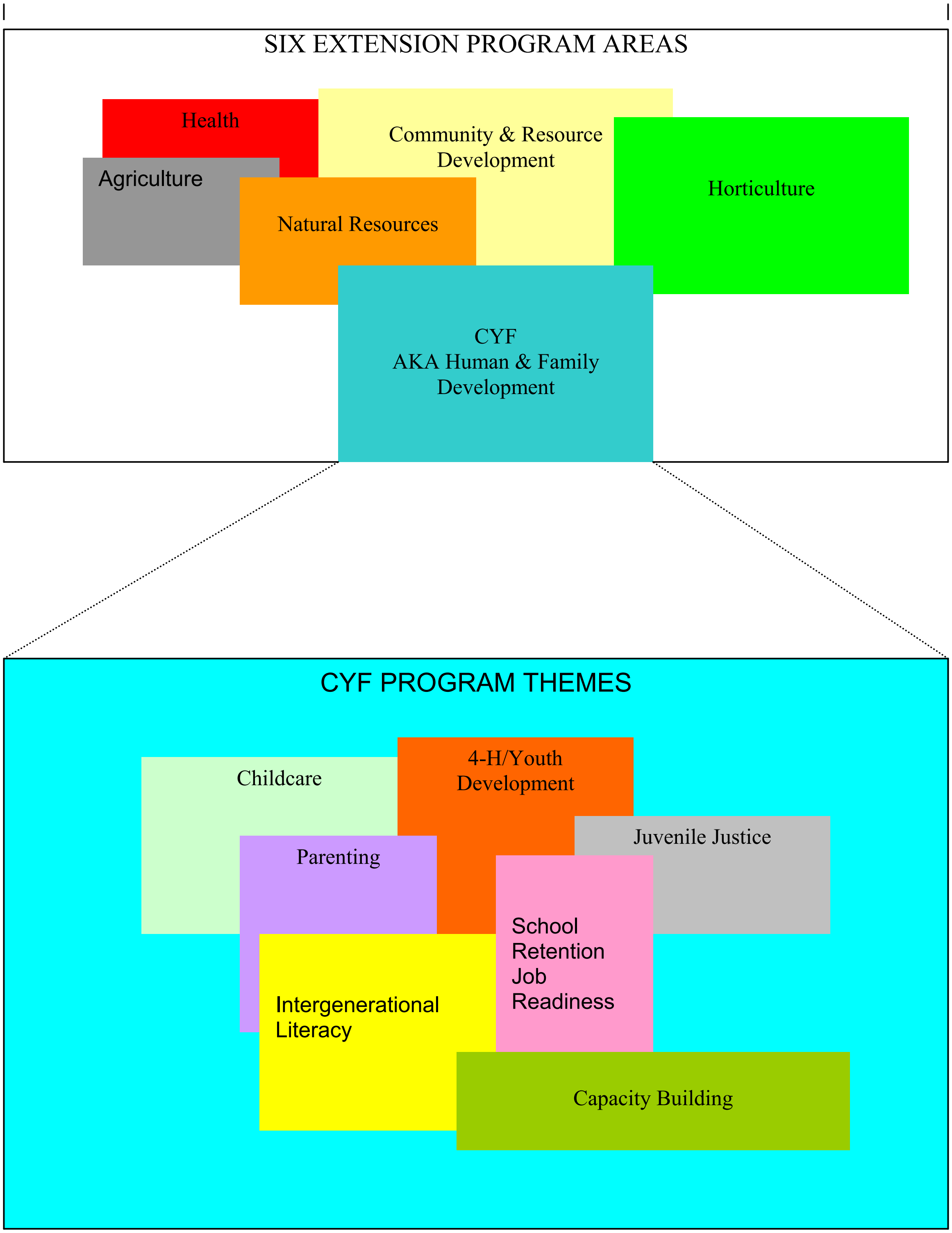
# CYF Program Planning Guide

**2003**


SIX EXTENSION PROGRAM AREAS
Health
Community & Resource Development
Agriculture
Natural Resources
Horticulture
CYF AKA Human & Family Development
CYF PROGRAM THEMES
Childcare
4-H/Youth Development
Juvenile Justice
Parenting
School Retention Job Readiness
Intergenerational Literacy
Capacity Building

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## The Context and Potential Directions of UNCE CYF Programming

### *2003*

At the beginning of the 1990s, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) began to move from the traditional structures and functions that had dominated its history to new approaches to organization and programming. That is, Nevada Cooperative Extension changed from a county-based structure to a four geographical Area organization with Area Specialists, having Master's or Doctoral degrees and who focus on specific content areas (e.g., human development or horticulture) across their respective geographical Areas. Functionally, Children, Youth and Family programming moved from a traditional education approach, often exemplified by single class-type sessions for the general public to more long-term, in-depth prevention education for at-risk children and families. Further, curricula increasingly were based on needs assessments and were more rigorously evaluated to determine program effectiveness. These changes brought heightened expectations for faculty and the programs they developed to be research-based and relevant. In conjunction with these changes, a shift also occurred in the target audiences for many of UNCE's programs. Community need assessments and accountability issues drew faculty into developing programming for youth at-risk and vulnerable families; audiences that traditionally had not been the focus of Extension programming. These shifts required additional skill sets, time commitment, and resources for Extension professionals to effectively develop programming with high-risk audiences and, depending on the desired program outcomes, much more long-term, in-depth program participant contact. In addition, new challenges emerged to be addressed: Recruitment issues, engagement and retention strategies, and the special educational needs of vulnerable program audiences.

The development of intensive prevention programming that aimed to encourage behavior change also brought the recognition that UNCE had to marshal resources and focus on fewer programmatic topics. This has led to an emphasis on collaborative teams within UNCE, as well as with other programs and agencies, that can more efficiently and comprehensively create quality needs assessments, programs, and evaluations. This collaborative program development model is at the core of our present CYF strategic planning process and will continue to guide programmatic decisions into the next decade. Such a collaborative approach is critically needed in the face of the unrelenting growth in size and diversity of Nevada's population, the revolutionizing technologies impacting prevention activities, the changing community needs and strengths within our state, and the uncertain funding climate for UNCE programmatic efforts. At the state level, HDFS Specialists have helped facilitate this process by placing additional emphasis on fostering communication and programmatic teams among Extension faculty; linking Extension faculty to other local, state, and national programs/agencies; and working with off-campus faculty to ensure quality needs assessments, research-based curricula for targeted audiences, and careful evaluation. This collaborative leadership model has resulted in the evolution of several statewide programmatic themes, in various stages of developmental maturity, which have emerged in the CYF content area. In 2001, the following themes were identified:

- Child care
- 4-H/Youth development and enrichment
- Juvenile justice
- Parenting education
- Intergenerational literacy
- School retention/job readiness and training
- Staff development (Capacity building)

In a 2002 review, the theme, Staff development, was renamed Capacity Building. This new term reflects the breadth of work Extension faculty perform for other agencies as well as Extension, through collaborative efforts.

In addition to these structural and process changes, UNCE faculty adopted a set of program development strategies over the past decade that guides our work. Consistent with the latest research and best practice models of youth development and family life education[1,2], UNCE CYF programming strives to:

- *Promote Active Involvement*. CYF programming engages citizens in identifying and addressing the needs of children, youth, and families in their own communities. Clear knowledge of, and involvement by, the citizens who live in the community is imperative for effective programs. CYF programming builds partnerships with citizens and coalitions with other agencies to develop comprehensive educational programs which meet identified needs.
- *Exemplify a Community Based, Holistic Philosophy*. CYF programming strives to develop programs that meet the concurrent

needs of the whole family, and programs that provide individual children and youth with intensive, long-term educational experiences. Programs can intervene early (prenatally) in a child's life and keep youth and families involved. Programs can support families in meeting other social service and health needs as they provide a broad spectrum of educational programs aimed at empowering families to take responsibility for their lives. Programs also can partner with schools and other youth serving organizations to extend educational experiences for older children and teens as they seek activities away from family and immediate neighborhoods.

- *Provide Safe Haven*. Extension programs strive to establish safe havens for young children, school age youth, and teens during out of school time. Programs are designed to provide safe environments and promote conflict resolution skills.
- *Provide Multiple Components and Theoretically Based Programs*. CYF programs are developed on research-based curricula designed to meet the needs of diverse audiences. Most programs acknowledge the importance of the ecological model in addressing behavior change and thus include individual, family, and community components in their formulation and/or delivery applications.
- *Bolster Resiliency and Facilitate Asset Development*. CYF programming acknowledges that protective capacities or conditions exist throughout all ecological levels and that they represent critical

competencies and conditions that buffer stress and promote growth[3]. This resiliency or strengths-based approach helps guide CYF programmatic development, although need assessments continue to help UNCE target under-served populations, identify urgent issues and community needs, and help shape program delivery and content decisions.

- *Instill Collaboration*. CYF Extension programming can serve as a catalyst and vital contributor for developing and maintaining collaborations for children, youth, and families. Indeed, only through collaborative work can CYF programs make efficient use of human and financial resources and create higher quality, more comprehensive, and more effective programs.
- *Solicit and Value Diversity*. CYF programs and staff strive to reflect the diversity of the community. In developing programs, emphasis is placed on bringing together diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise of the community, UNCE, UNR, and other collaborating agencies to build the best possible programs. An important goal of CYF programming is to promote programs, staff development, and personnel management that support inclusivity and diverse perspectives.
- *Address Complex Conditions*. CYF faculty identify underlying conditions which place children and families at risk. We work with families and communities to develop research-based programs to address these conditions, and to educate and inform the public

> about current research and trends affecting these conditions. An important goal of CYF faculty and staff is to inform the public and decision-makers about current research and best practices in relation to children, youth and families at the community and state levels in Nevada.

Together, these programmatic and philosophic shifts have brought challenges for UNCE to engage in a balanced mix of programmatic activities that can serve the CYF educational needs of many Nevadans while also intensively working with higher risk audiences to create meaningful long-term change. To address this, the CYF team has endorsed a balanced approach to offering programs that reflect differing levels of program intensity and prevention goals. Figure 1 represents a program-planning tool that can be used to assess the balance of programming efforts conducted by the CYF team. One axis represents program intensity in terms of dosage, resources, faculty time, and program goals and objectives, and the other axis represents educational/prevention objectives in terms of Primary (prevention efforts focusing on an entire population or subpopulation before they exhibit problems), Secondary (focusing on a target population known to be at risk for specific issues), or Tertiary (target audiences that already exhibit problems to prevent further difficulties). For example, newsletters sent to all first time parents in Nevada (upper middle cell) represent a different level of intensity, size of audience, and purpose than home visitation delivery programs where few participants who are known to be at risk receive long-term, in-depth services (lower right cell). The matrix can function as a tool to analyze the mix and balance of programs by theme, within an area, or across the state. As an analytical tool, additional dimensions can be added to the matrix, such as the numbers of people being reached, ethnicity or age of participants, etc. Although the team does not strive to have programming in every cell of this matrix, using this matrix allows the CYF team to assess the mix of our programming efforts and make planful decisions to avoid having the majority of our programming clustered in only a few cells. The CYF team acknowledges that it will become increasingly challenging to have a mix of programs that reflect this balance given the current trends regarding population growth and dwindling traditional resources.

Figure 1. Program Delivery Matrix

| | | Program Intensity | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Medium | High |
| Educational/Prevention Objective | Primary | | | |
| | Secondary | | | |
| | Tertiary | | | |

In sum, the increased emphasis on vulnerable, at-risk audiences, coupled with the need to provide comprehensive and intensive programming, has created the need to engage in a CYF planning process. In addition, present political and economic considerations have led to expectations for UNCE to develop 'signature' programs that create visibility for Extension and that successfully address important community and state needs. These realities make it vitally important for CYF faculty to continue to strive to work collaboratively, build on areas of programmatic strength and maturity, and create differing types of innovative 'signature' programs that can balance the educational needs of many with the intense, multiple needs of underserved, at-risk audiences.

This position paper brings up the following questions:

- To what extent should we use our resources to focus on 'signature' programs? How do we balance the academic freedom of individual faculty members with program needs of the area/state?
- How do we validate if our programmatic themes are responsive to the needs of the state? How does the availability of funding influence the development of our themes and the content of our programming?
- What implications do the program principles and themes outlined in this paper have for new resources and FTE that may become available?
- What do we do about areas that are currently not identified in our themes but that may be critical areas of need for our state (aging issues, suicide, etc.)?
- To what extent should we consider the concept of critical mass when thinking about the issues outlined in this paper (enough faculty for quality programming--e.g. should we hire one person in aging or build on youth and early childhood programmatic strengths; enough resources for effective programming; enough data for need assessment/evaluation decisions; enough visibility for marketing, recognition, and political issues)?

  - Are there other dimensions that should be added to Figure 1 that are critical when we think of programming within an area or across the state?

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## Capacity Building

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A growing body of research supports using a community change approach in program development. This approach utilizes an ecological or systemic programming model, which develops the capacity of the community system at a broader level than the individual or even the family. Although the community change approach can often achieve greater impact than individual programming approaches, community change is difficult to produce, observe, and evaluate. Nevertheless, UNCE CYF programming is committed to enhancing the capacity of communities and agencies to better assess needs and emerging issues, build collaborations and coalitions, and develop and evaluate high quality programming for children, youth and families. CYF faculty typically engage in three broad levels of capacity building with organizations and communities: Providing technical assistance; providing training for others who conduct direct programmatic service; and supporting broad-based activities that cut across specific content areas, for example large-scale needs assessments. Within these levels, CYF activities foster capacity building in a variety of ways, including providing technical assistance with needs assessments, grant writing, curricula development, current best practices and research-based program development, and program evaluation; coalition and collaboration building; linking communities and agencies to our unique (in many cases) expertise, as well as providing a link to the University; informing communities about underserved populations and critical issues affecting citizens; and staff development and training. Capacity building often allows CYF faculty to reach a larger population, improve community-based programming, and support communities in a more efficient way than we could with our own direct programming. Increasingly, there is a demand for all programs to use best practices and engage in formal evaluations beyond simple satisfaction assessments. Since many programs lack the expertise for these activities, CYF faculty often play a pivotal role in the support of these programs. Such activities are needed in all communities, but are particularly critical in isolated, rural areas with few resources and in rapidly expanding urban areas undergoing community-wide transformation. These characteristics define the current state of many communities in Nevada.

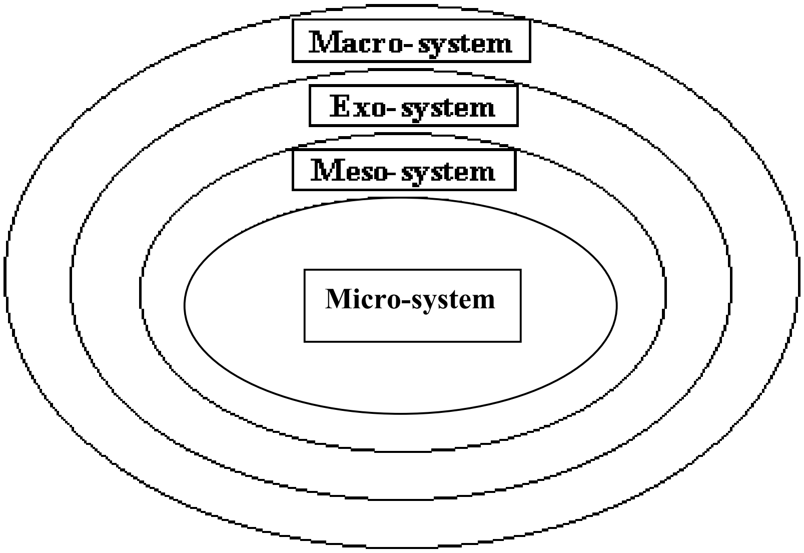
### Research Support for Capacity Building

Several theoretical frameworks for community development guide our efforts in this area. These include Bronfenbrenner's Model of the Ecology of Human Development, Risk and Resiliency frameworks, Asset-Based Prevention Models, and The Collaboration Framework.

## Bronfenbrenner's Model of the Ecology of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model and in particular his concept of reciprocity, that humans are active and shape the environments in which they live, has greatly influenced community development strategies. Bronfenbrenner suggested several levels at which the individual and the environmental systems interact. The basic concepts in Bronfenbrenner's model are helpful in illustrating the complexity of the systems in which the individual exists and how multiple systems often are embedded in one another (a simplified model is pictured below as concentric circles). In the center of the model is the microsystem. Microsystems are the immediate pattern of activities, roles, and relationships of the individual. Microsystems are encircled by the mesosystem, the relationships between two or more settings in which the individual participates. Mesosystems exist within exosystems, which are settings outside of the individuals' direct contact but whose decisions affect the individual. Lastly, the outermost ring of the model represents macrosytems, the social order and cultural norms that provide a broad context for and interact with the other systems..

Brofenbrenner's Model of the Ecology of Human Development



Since Bronfenbrenner's original writings on the ecology of the individual, there has been much additional literature stressing the necessity of striving toward a systemic perspective in both program development and prevention activities, but there has been little movement in that direction. Numerous studies have now documented the improved program impact of moving away from the person-centered model of intervention predominant in mental health services to a multilevel, ecological intervention. In addition, research has shown that intervening in the *ecology* of the individual has the greatest potential for long-term change and success.

## Risk and Protective Factors

In the 1970's, researchers began to investigate the mechanisms by which some children were able to maintain resiliency in the face of extremely stressful life situations. Risk factors were defined as "biological or psychosocial hazards that increase the likelihood of a negative developmental outcome (Werner 1990)." Through a series of longitudinal studies of children and their family and life situations, Rutter (1979) developed a list of both risk and protective mechanisms that showed consistent impact on the children's life across time. Rutter's research on key risk factors found to be strongly associated with child psychiatric disorders and their prevalence in families suggested that the presence of one risk factor has no significant detrimental effect, but having two risk factors quadruples the probability of dysfunction. In addition, individuals having four or more risk factors have an increased probability of dysfunction that is 20 or 30 times greater than an individual with no risk factors (Rutter, 1979).

In a more hopeful light, additional research also has investigated individuals with several risk factors who are able to maintain adaptive functioning. In a review of the child development literature, Werner (1990) suggests that there is a set of mechanisms that "protect" the at-risk individual from developing maladaptive behaviors. The factors are termed protective factors and include things such as self-efficacy, personal responsibility, well developed interpersonal skills, religious commitment, intellect, good social support, positive school or work experiences, and helpfulness. This suggests that community-based programming focused on increasing protective factors would be truly preventative for at-risk CYF audiences (Garmezy & Matsen, 1991; Rutter 1979, 1987; Werner, 1990). In addition, risk and protective models have had a huge impact on the prevention movement, as well as the idea of 'capacity building.' It was suddenly understood that enhancing the capacity of communities to provide more supportive environments might in turn provide protective influences on the individuals residing in that community.

### Asset-Based Prevention

This field of research has changed fundamentally in the past few years. Instead of finding risk and protective factors primarily existing within the individual, there is a rapidly expanding new literature on the factors that exist in the community or system within which the individual lives. The prevention-oriented, protective factor focus has been maintained, and these factors are now commonly called assets. The individual can have specific assets, but the realization of such assets is largely determined by the assets that exist in the community and system at large. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) have written extensively about community development through finding and mobilizing these assets within the community.

Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) work in community capacity building and their definition of community attempts to establish a common understanding of this complex concept. Community is "the social place used by family, friends, neighbors, neighborhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, ethnic associations, temples, local unions, local government, and local media" (McKnight, 1995: p. 164). A community of associations (collaborating organizations), according to McKnight and Kretzmann (1993), is one key to building healthy communities. Healthy communities and healthy families create a self-strengthening bond.

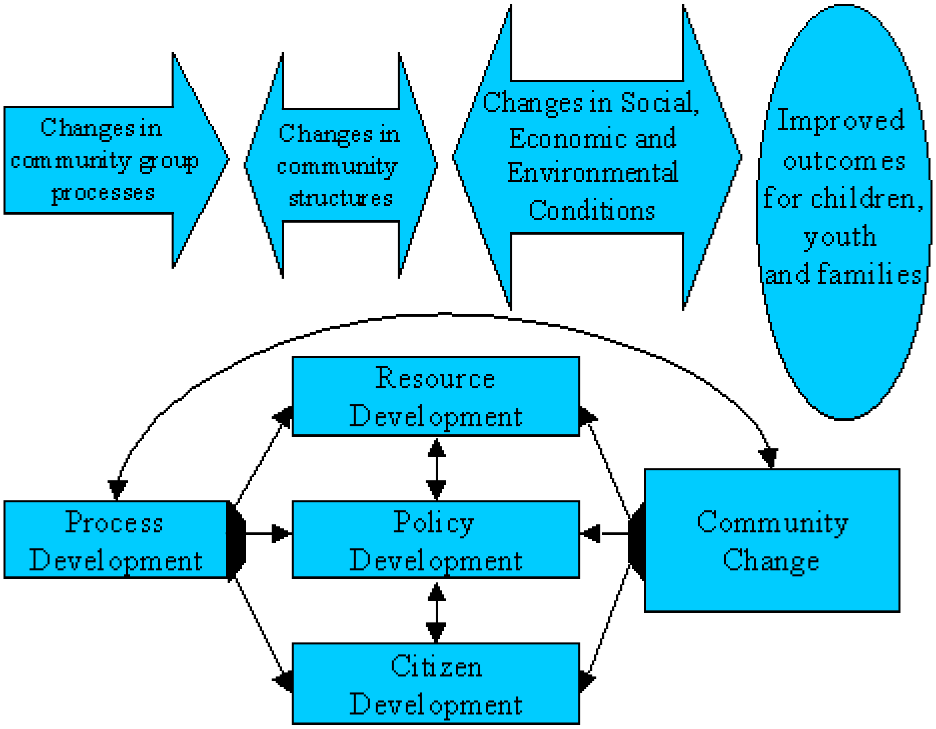
Although McKnight and Kretzmann (1993) argue that communities need external resources to assist them with their efforts, all communities (and their organizations and individual members) possess significant assets that can be mobilized and utilized. The authors feel that such an assets based approach is particularly important to citizen participation in low income communities where the tradition has been to begin with deficits rather than strengths.

### The Collaboration Framework

The Collaboration Framework outlines a framework in which community linkages operate. It also helps to outline how capacity building activities can lead to improved outcomes for children, youth, and families. In this model, programming and activities that seek to build the capacity for organizations to create (and then document) community change must be able to identify:

1. The efficiency and effectiveness of community group **processes**.
2. The status of community **structures** (policies, citizens, resources, etc.).
3. Community social, economic, and environmental indicators.

## The Collaboration Framework Model


Changes in community group processes
Changes in community structures
Changes in Social, Economic and Environmental Conditions
Improved outcomes for children, youth and families
Resource Development
Process Development
Policy Development
Community Change
Citizen Development

This model focuses on the types of linkages, process and contextual factors influencing linkages, and the interaction of all of these factors. Although a detailed explanation of this entire framework is not possible here, it provides a strong conceptual base for the types of capacity building activities in which CYF faculty engage. For example, under Process Development, there are two main levels, each consisting of five primary process components. These are:

1. **Creating strong community groups and collaborations.** This involves building cohesive groups with a common vision and articulated plan. Before community linkages are in place to change/impact the community, it is essential to build a strong foundation so that people will feel they are a cohesive unit working for a common purpose. The following are the primary process components for creating strong linkages:

Strategic Planning - A strategic planning process should include the development of integrated goals, objectives, mission, vision, implementation plan, etc., to provide potential group members with a clear picture of what to expect from the community group.

Key Stakeholders - Including multiple partners in group development, program implementation, and evaluation processes will enable group members, representing the concerns of all constituencies, to be at the table when making group decisions.

Community Building - Developing community cohesion and mobilizing citizens will provide a supportive context for community organizing and programming.

Link to Research Base - Developing programs based on what we know to work will enable community groups to implement effective community programs, thus saving valuable resources from being used on ineffective programs.

Community assessment - Developing programming through knowledge of community needs and assets, tailored to meet community identified issues, will ensure that the community group is acting in a manner to benefit the community.

2. **Strengthening existing community groups**: This involves capacity building of existing community groups:

Leadership Development - Developing leadership to best meet the needs of the group will enable group leaders to represent the stakeholders, effectively respond to community members' needs, and create productive groups.

Communication Development - Promoting clear and open communication both within the group and with those external to the group will ensure that all information is disseminated to everyone involved and that all decision-makers are informed.

Research and Evaluation - Ongoing assessment to evaluate and refine the programming efforts will allow community groups to maintain awareness of current research and refine programs as needed.

Sustainability - Developing structures to continue community group and programming efforts to completion will allow community groups to sustain their efforts over time.

Resources - Increasing the integration, accessibility, and usage of available resources will enable others to benefit from the group's findings.

When working to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in a community, there is often the need for fundamental changes in the way things are done in a particular community. For example, a community might possess an infinite amount of resources, mobilized citizens, and community friendly policies but still fail to reach its potential due to a breakdown in the processes through which those assets are accessed, utilized and integrated. Through capacity building activities, CYF faculty strive to enhance the lives of children, youth and families by strengthening agencies, organizations, and communities to be more effective and efficient in their delivery of needed services and programs.

## Summary

UNCE CYF programming seeks to make communities safer and healthier places to live. One integral strategy to accomplish this objective is to increase the capacity of community groups and agencies to positively impact the lives of children, youth, and families in a community. Many educational programs seek to impact the community without increasing their own functioning or the existing community groups on which they rely, which often leads to ineffective community-based programs. In response to this, CYF faculty engage in capacity building in a variety of ways to improve organizational and community functioning. As an example, one training program, *Program Development Research*, has had a significant impact on increasing the capacity of numerous agencies and organizations in Clark County to conduct quality needs assessments and program evaluations. In addition, UNCE faculty help establish and build community coalitions, sit on various professional and advocacy committees/boards, and engage in a variety of collaborative community-based programming. By building the capacity of communities and groups to more effectively develop, deliver, and evaluate programs, stronger and more efficient community-based programming can be facilitated.

NOTE: The authors wish to thank Susan Jakes, Ph.D. and the CYFERnet Community Editorial Board for the development of much of the capacity building information contained in this section.

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## Extension Programs Related to Child Care in Nevada

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Definition: Child care refers to home and center-based facilities that provide for the needs of children (infants through teens) when their parents are not available. It is of particular concern in this country because, over the course of their developmental years, the majority of American children will spend more time in child care, after-school care, and teen out-of-school settings than in formal education (CARES Initiative). Both nationally and in Nevada, Cooperative Extension actively works in this arena through a variety of mechanisms, including education for caregivers, consumer education for parents, provision of after-school programs, and public policy.

Statistics: In 2001, 61% of children from birth through age six (and not in kindergarten) spent time in nonparental child care in the United States. About half of children in kindergarten through third grade spend time in center-based care or non-parental home-based care (Child Trends, 2002). The Nevada Child Care Work Force Study (Essa, 2002) estimated that there are 40,500 children under six years of age in licensed, paid child care in Nevada. An unknown number (but probably equally large) are in care by relatives and neighbors that is unlicensed and, in some cases, unpaid. Nearly 6,000 Nevada school age children are in licensed care. Because many child care programs for school-age and adolescent children are not required to be licensed, there are far more school-age children receiving care than 6,000, but the exact number is unknown. There are about 5,400 caregivers providing early care and education in licensed programs in Nevada.

Research Base: Research has demonstrated that quality out-of-home settings lead to more positive outcomes for children (for a review, see Essa & Burnham, 2001). For example, a number of studies have documented the effect of child care quality on language development, social competence, positive behaviors, and academic performance in elementary school. Recent research has underscored the influence of the environment on brain development. Factors that contribute to quality include child/adult ratio, group size, staff education, staff stability rather than turnover, appropriate and nurturing interactions between adults and children, responsiveness of caregivers to children's needs, levels of verbal exchange between caregivers and children, and developmentally appropriate activities for children. Unfortunately, national studies and those in Nevada indicate that many child care programs are poor to mediocre (Essa, 2002). At the same time, public school teachers note that large numbers of children start Kindergarten not ready to learn. Although families and communities also influence children's well-being, the immediate and long-term effects of child care on child well-being are of considerable concern.

UNCE Child Care Education Programs: In Nevada, Cooperative Extension provides in-service education for caregivers through four mechanisms: 1) workshops presented across the state, 2) self-study modules available through libraries, 3) on-line materials and self-study, and 4) a network of Healthy Child Care Consultants . These programs are designed to improve child care quality through helping caregivers' better understand children's needs and behavior, improve interactions with children, increase developmentally-appropriate practice, and provide healthy, safe, and nurturing environments. Two modules, Cognitive Development and Food Safety, have been widely disseminated through libraries and Extension offices. Two additional modules are being developed: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect and Early Care and Education as a Profession. To increase quality through consumer education, UNCE also distributes child care checklists for parents to use in selecting care. In partnership with the Child and Family Research Center, Extension sends out newsletters to family day care homes, centers, and programs for school-age children to provide on-going information and support. Through a Community Integrated Services System grant, UNCE is involved in additional quality assurance activities. These include the dissemination and promotion of *Caring for Our Children, Health and Safety Performance Standards* developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association, building an infrastructure of Child Care Health Consultants available to child care programs across the state, and supporting efforts to increase awareness of and enrollment in Nevada's children's health insurance program (CHIP) through child caregivers. In addition, UNCE is developing a tool that will allow child care centers (as well as researchers) to evaluate mealtime feeding environments, in terms of child development issues. These issues include the social, cognitive and physical domains. The project is a 3-state, 3-year commitment funded through CSREES. UNCE also provides after-school care for children in the Western Area.

Other Research-related Child Care Efforts in Nevada: The Department of HDFS has two studies underway that already have provided and will continue to yield data relevant to future programming efforts across the state. The Nevada Workforce Study (Essa) has gathered the first census data on caregivers (e.g., education, wages and benefits, quality of interactions with children). A second AES-funded study (Essa, Burnham, & Martin) has evaluated the effects of two training projects on caregiver competency and child outcomes as well as beginning an interesting pilot study concerning sleep patterns in infants in child care. In addition, the AES study is seeking former caregivers who left the field before they were interviewed for the Workforce Study in an effort to better understand reasons for caregiver turnover.

Child Care, Public Policy, and Coordination of Efforts: To support Welfare to Work policies, the federal government increased funding to subsidize child care and to improve child care quality. This funding is administered by the Welfare division in the Nevada Department of Human Resources. In addition, the State Department of Education has awarded grants to support early childhood education programs. Further, the U.S. Department of Labor provided a grant to Nevada to pilot an apprenticeship program for child care providers. As a result of increased funding, there are a number of educational endeavors underway. UNCE State and Area Specialists participate in statewide meetings to improve child care quality, as members of the Quality, Training, and Licensing (QTL) Subcommittee of the State Child Care Advisory Committee of the State Department of Human Resources to ensure the coordination of Extension programming with other efforts. A state specialist is a member of the State Child Care Advisory Committee.

In addition, at the national level, Cooperative Extension currently has two major efforts underway. In 1999, the Extension Committee on Policy approved a new initiative, "Extension CARES …For America's Children and Youth." The goal of this initiative is to improve child care, school-age care, and programs for teens in out-of-school time. Their website, which contains a good deal of information is: www.reeusda.gov/extensioncares Extension faculty may now enter evaluation data at the website. In 2001, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension program leaders formed six national workgroups to better articulate the impact of Extension programs on families and communities. One of these focuses on child care. The workgroup has identified four major goals and concomitant outcome indicators that could be used for reporting purposes by Extension nationwide. UNCE faculty participate in both these national efforts.

UNCE and Child Care Training Needs/Activities in Nevada: The Work Force Study (Essa, 2002) indicated that 54% of licensed providers reported participating in one or more UNCE child care workshops, which have been offered for the last 15 years. Another 25% said they had used the Caring 4 Kids modules, which have been offered for the last two years.

In 2002, the State Advisory Committee on Child Care recommended a Career Ladder to encourage training beyond the 12 hours of in-service education currently required by State Licensing Regulations for child caregivers. The Career Ladder has seven levels, encompassing beginning caregivers with less than a year of experience and some in-service education and extending to early childhood educators with a Doctorate and 4 or more years of experience.

UNCE's educational programs support caregivers at the first two levels of the Career Ladder. According to the Work Force Study (Essa, 2002), approximately 45% of teachers in licensed centers and 22% of teachers providing care in their licensed homes leave the field each year. This indicates an on-going need for the kinds of beginning level in-service education provided through Extension. It will be important for UNCE to take note of any changes in the in-service education requirements for beginning caregivers that are currently being discussed by the State Child Care Licensing Board as well as the Core Knowledge topics that are currently under discussion in relation to the Career Ladder. In 2003, Extension faculty helped define Pre-Kindergarten Standards for the State Department of Education – the first time such standards have been developed for Nevada. All these initiatives will need to be considering as UNCE works with others offering informal education to meet the needs of child caregivers and avoid duplication of topics. In the future, UNCE may wish to consider giving college credit for some of its training opportunities and connecting more closely to CDA requirements and other recognized degree and certificate programs.

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## Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Issues
2003

Definition and Statistics: Although adolescence is not a crisis for most youth (Dorfman & Schiraldi, 2001; Huizinga, Loeber, Thornberry, & Cothern, 2000; Steinberg, 2001), the majority are directly or indirectly exposed to five major risks during teen years: injury and disease, school failure, unintended pregnancy, delinquency, and violence (Lerner, 1995). Many of these risk indicators have declined nationally in the past decade (Centers for Disease Control, 2000; Children's Defense Fund, 1999), however others, such as female delinquency and urban youth violence have increased (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2001). Even with these promising overall trends, approximately 1 in 5 arrests made by law enforcement agencies involve a juvenile, which equates to approximately 2.8 million juvenile arrests annually (OJJDP, 1999). In addition, adolescents under 18 years of age, who currently make up 19% of the total US population, account for 37% of all burglary arrests, 30% of robbery arrests, 24% of weapon arrests, 14% of murder arrests, and 14% of drug arrests. Studies have indicated that juvenile delinquents are more likely than non-delinquents to experience problems such as unemployment and alcoholism in adulthood (Kazden, 1992). Intensive study of the causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency (Loeber & Hay, 1995) and violence (Herrenkohl et al., 2001) have identified a pattern of multiple and sequential risk behaviors (Hawkins, et al., 2000) whose effects can be buffered by the presence of personal, family, and community assets (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Richman & Fraser, 2001). Reducing risks and nurturing protective capacities and conditions provides the theory and practice methodology for most juvenile justice as well as Extension programs with youth.

Research Base: The research literature suggests several important considerations for prevention programming of these issues. First, early prevention of delinquent behavior is more effective than interventions with identified delinquent adolescents (Zigler, Taussing, & Black, 1992), although several asset-based, multi-level models have shown success with at-risk adolescents and delinquents. Second, family interaction styles (i.e., supportive relationships where parental monitoring of behavior is present) have been found to predict delinquent behavior more powerfully than family structure. Third, parental monitoring, even at age five, has been found to be predictive of lower levels of delinquent behavior among teenagers (Henry et al., 1993). Fourth, since it is now accepted that many high-risk youth behaviors are interrelated and have a large number of common risk and protective factors associated with them (Silverman & Felner, 1995; Felner & Felner, 1989), integrated, developmentally appropriate prevention strategies that foster protective assets common to violence, crime, and drug use reduction offer the best pathway to reduce the prevalence of each phenomena while requiring less prevention resources.

Other effective strategies include community-based programs that focus on social skills and building connections to a community, rather than long-term stays in institutional centers (Mulvey, Arthur, & Repucci, 1993). Family-centered programs that help parents develop and maintain effective monitoring and discipline strategies also have proven effective, especially when they are sensitive to their specific environments and involve long-term community efforts (Kumpfer, Molgaard, & Spoth, 1996).

In general then, delinquency prevention and intervention programming topics include:

- General youth development
- Drug and alcohol education
- Academic success
- Mentoring
- Workplace preparation
- Positive parenting
- Youth/family counseling
- Youth/adult partnerships
- Social/interpersonal skill development

Juvenile justice is one of many emerging target areas challenging Extension organizations with expanding demands and shrinking resources. However, county or state programming can meet these challenges through a collaborative model:

- The challenge of offering diverse and relevant programming can be met by applying healthy youth and family development paradigms most needed by organizations traditionally oriented to problem- and intervention strategies;
- The challenge of limited curricula can be met by adapting existing materials and methods for high-risk audiences as well as using best practices in delinquency prevention and developing materials with grant funds;
- The challenge of limited budgets and human resources can be met by expanded grant funding, shared staff and management efficiency through collaborative agreements; and
- The challenge of organizational capacity and visibility can be met by collaborating on solutions to critical issues, sharing efforts and cross-training.

UNCE Juvenile Justice Activities: Over the past decade, juvenile justice reforms promoting prevention and community collaboration have opened doors for Extension work in youth, family, and community development. Need assessments by UNCE in the early ‘90s identified juvenile justice issues as a priority when results found few alternatives other than detention were available for Elko youth—helping drive the large recidivism rate in that county (Evans, Leone, & Neese, 1994).

In addition, a study of all adjudicated youth in Nevada found this to be a problem for urban and rural communities statewide (Evans, 1994, 1997). As a result of these and other needs assessments, collaborations were formed in several communities (with UNCE involvement) to address this issue. As a consequence of these activities, Project MAGIC was developed in several rural communities to target entry level and less serious offenders. Today, UNCE is involved in juvenile justice issues statewide, with Project MAGIC functioning in tribal, rural, and urban communities, as well as activities such as anger management and parent training, staff training, and research, needs assessment, and evaluation efforts conducted by faculty in all three Extension geographic areas.

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## Extension Programs Related to Family/Intergenerational Literacy in Nevada
2003

Definition: Family Literacy programs are designed to improve the language and literacy skills of both parents and children. The majority are designed for parents with preschool or early school-age children and aimed at improving children's school readiness and success, while simultaneously supporting the language/literacy development of parents. Most federal programs, such as Even Start, have adopted a specific definition for family literacy that addresses four program components. These include Early Childhood Education programs for children that are age-appropriate and help prepare children for success in school and life. A second component is Adult Education, specifically, parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency. A third component is Parenting Education, training that helps parents become teachers of their children and full partners in educational systems. The fourth component is Parent and Child Together (PACT) that involves the interaction of parents and their children around language and literacy. The Nevada Statewide Family Literacy Initiative, that involved several Extension faculty, helped develop a set of quality indicators of program delivery (process evaluation) and a set of outcome indicators following the federal definition of family literacy to evaluate programs in our state (Nevada Statewide Family Literacy Initiative, 2001).

Statistics: Literacy is a concern in Nevada. One quarter of Nevadans--nearly 300,000 youth and adults--are illiterate; they cannot read or write well enough to do simple tasks, such as filling out a job application or reading the newspaper (Nevada Literacy 2000, 1992). Further, teachers in Nevada report that they have children entering school who have never held a book in their hands. These children are struggling uphill from the first day they set foot in school. According to the 1991 Carnegie Foundation report*, Ready to Learn: A mandate for the nation*, teachers reported that 35% of kindergarten children were not ready for school. The area in which children were reported to be most lacking was in literacy and language skills (Boyer, 1991). The school systems in Nevada also are concerned with children's readiness to learn to read and their acquisition of such skills in the early years of school. In 1998, the Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that 47% of fourth-grade students in Nevada scored below the basic reading level, compared to 39% nationwide.

Research Base: A number of studies have found that children who start Kindergarten without basic language and literacy skills have difficulty learning to read, and they continue to experience reading problems throughout school (Snow et al., 1998). For all children, differences in home environments have been linked to variations in early reading achievement and later school success (Heath, 1983; Wells, 1985).

Research on brain development helps explain why early home and child care experiences are critical to language development. From 0 to 3, there is tremendous brain development - experiences that are repeated over and over in the baby's life are being wired into the brain. The brain is forging thousands of new connections each day - keying in on the repeated sounds of speech it hears as well as the tone of a person's voice. By the time babies are a year and a half old, the bottom 10% will understand around 90 different words while the top 10% will understand more than 300 words. Parents who understand their baby's development, play with the baby, and are responsive to their baby, naming objects and activities and emotions, looking at simple picture books with their baby, asking if the baby has the object being named in the book (do we have a red ball?), and talking with their baby are facilitating brain development - essentially preparing that baby to learn to read. Parental influence continues in the preschool years, when the child is from two to five years old. Research indicates that children who have books and other reading materials at home, as well as writing materials, do better than children who have none. Children who see their parents reading and writing do better than children who do not see such models. Perhaps the single most important activity cited in the literature for building these early literacy skills and understanding in preschool age children is reading aloud to children (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Wells, 1985) when children feel emotionally secure (Bus & van Ijzendoorn, 1995; Bus et al., 1997), and are active participants in reading (Whitehurst et al., 1994). When parents and caregivers engage in scaffolding - for example, asking children to predict what will happen next, naming and talking about the pictures, rereading the story many times, helping children link what is in the book with what is in their own lives - children gain critical language and literacy skills. Research has demonstrated that working with English-speaking parents to enrich home environments, through family or intergenerational literacy programs, increases the chance that preschoolers will succeed once they reach school (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Edwards, 1995; Edwards, Pleasants, & Franklin, 1999; Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Neuman,1996; Whitehurst et al., 1988.

Children for whom English is a second language are of particular concern in this country, because they often have difficulty in school (Rossi & Stringfield, 1995). This may be true for several reasons. They frequently start school with no or limited English; their parents may lack the resources and knowledge to help prepare them for schools in this country. For example, many immigrant parents have limited education and literacy skills in their first language. For those who attended school, accepted behaviors for children and teachers may be different from what their children are likely to experience in the United States (Perez, 1998). They may not be able to afford children's books or realize the importance of shared book reading. Given that the percentage of Spanish-speaking immigrants is expected to increase in Nevada over the next 25 years (Campbell, 1996), it is likely that ever-larger numbers of ESL children, at risk for low achievement, will enter schools in our state. Despite the growing need, the literature on appropriate programming for limited English speakers is considerably less clear that it is for native English speakers. Much is yet to be learned about the types of intergenerational literacy programs that will be most helpful to both parents and preschool children for whom English is a second language (Bialystok & Herman, 1999).

UNCE Family Literacy Programs: University of Nevada Cooperative Extension provides a number of programs for both English-speaking and English as a Second Language families and is engaged in research activities to further the development of family literacy efforts. The programs have been developed collaboratively with public televisions stations in Reno and in Las Vegas, public librarians, the Reading Coordinator for the Washoe County School District, the Northern Nevada Literacy Council, and the Nevada State Literacy Coalition. One of the family literacy programs offered by UNCE is The Family Storyteller for low-literacy parents and their 2 to 7 year old children. Approximately 300 volunteer leaders have been trained across the state to offer this program; Extension also provides the program in Washoe County and Clark County. The Clark County Extension office also offers Children's Books for Healthy Families, Reading with Children, and Reading with Infants. In addition, UNCE has trained volunteers and has directly provided Money on the Bookshelf for 3 to 8 year old children and their families. This program has dual goals of increasing shared book reading while also teaching the basics of decision-making, goal setting, and other beginning financial skills to parents and children. Programs have been offered to both English and Spanish-language audiences. The Family Storyteller also has been expanded and enriched for parents enrolled in English as a Second Language programs and other parents who are specifically interested in gaining English skills as well as helping enrich their young children's development and school readiness. The ESL Family Storyteller is primarily offered in the Reno area at present.

Much new development is underway with UNCE's Family Literacy programming. In addition to the continuing development of The Family Storyteller for ESL audiences, the Nevada Literacy Coalition received a grant to utilize The Family Storyteller with parents who are in prison. The Southern Area joined with The Family Storyteller team to adapt the program for this new audience, which included parents, children, and their community caregivers (relatives, foster parents, etc.). In the Western Area, faculty collaborated with public television and the Children's Cabinet to adapt and provide the program to Native American families on the Pyramid Reservation. In addition, the Nevada State Department of Education consultant who provides leadership for programs for children with special needs has presented The Family Storyteller at professional meetings because he views this work as helpful to families of such children. He would like to work with UNCE on further refining and adapting the curriculum for children with special needs, which provides opportunities for work with another vulnerable audience. Finally, others have requested that UNCE produce a family literacy curriculum for parents of babies and toddlers.

Other Family Literacy Efforts in Nevada: UNCE faculty recently participated in an Even Start Statewide Coalition on family literacy that collected information about and helped coordinate programming and evaluation efforts. A wide variety of programs are being offered and are listed on a website through the Nevada State Library. Among the most important are federal and state sponsored Even Start programs, focused on family literacy. Head Start has a family literacy component. UNCE has trained both Even Start and Head State personnel to use The Family Storyteller, and it has been incorporated in such programs throughout the state. In 2003, the core Family Storyteller team began a new collaboration with the Washoe County Children's Cabinet to combine their efforts to provide family literacy programming throughout Washoe County and to extend partnerships with the Washoe County School District.

At the national level, several states have purchased The Family Storyteller for use through Extension, Special Education, or public television programs. As with all programming efforts, it is important for UNCE to coordinate and collaborate with other agencies and programs sharing an interest in family literacy and in school readiness. Further, given the number of requests received for program development and expansion, UNCE will need to set priorities and find additional funds to support program development, delivery, and evaluation.

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## School Retention/Job Readiness and Training
2003

Definition: Education is viewed by society as a way for youth to gain self-sufficiency and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a successful transition into adulthood. Youth who do not acquire sufficient academic skills may find themselves severely restrained in an increasingly competitive job market, and may have access only to those jobs that are lower in status, part-time, and that offer little opportunity for advancement. To overcome this, school environments must be conducive to learning and take into account the diversity of the students to ensure that each child has access to the best education possible (Evans & Polk, 2000).

Statistics: In 1999, 11.2% of the 34.1 million 16- through 24-year olds in the United States were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school. Nationwide statistics on dropout rates indicate that five percent who were enrolled in high school in 1998 were no longer in school and had not successfully completed a high school program in 1999. A regional comparison of dropout rates in 1999 shows that students in the West are more likely than those living in the Northeast and Midwest to become dropouts. State level comparison statistics for 1997-1998 show that Nevada has a dropout rate of 10.1%, which is the second largest dropout rate in the country (NCES, 2001). Nevada also ranks poorly when considering the number of graduating seniors entering into higher education. Some studies indicate that one of the strongest indicators of dropout risk is poor academic performance (OESE, 2002). A comparison of state and national test scores for 4th and 8th grade students in 2000 show that Nevada students rank below the national average in reading, math, and science (NCES, 2001).

Nevada's rapid growth, bustling economy with high paying entry jobs, and historical lack of value placed on education have been offered as reasons for our poor graduation rates. However, according to Muha and Cole (1991), while many students drop out to seek work, the job market is not lucrative for them. Only eight percent of employed dropouts are in skilled positions compared to 20 percent for their graduated peers. The situation for minority dropouts is even worse. Estimates of high school dropouts that are unemployed range as high as 65 percent (Ingersoll & LeBoeuf, 1997).

Research Base: Educational and social psychological research has approached academic success or failure from the perspective of individual deficiency as the leading factor for academic failure. However, structural factors, the social environment, the school environment, and cultural influences all play an important role in academic success or failure (Woods, 2001). According to the National Dropout Prevention Center, students usually drop out between the ages of 15 and 17 at critical transition points (OESE, 2002). Studies have shown that early identification, family involvement, clear instructional objectives, and monitoring of student progress are effective in dropout prevention (Woods, 2001). Also, students are less likely to drop out of high school if they participate in programs that help them transition from middle school, are culturally sensitive, provide a non-threatening environment, and combine academic and work-based learning (Legters & Kerr, 2001; Mizelle, 1999; Woods, 2001). In order to ensure that each adolescent has access to the best education possible, members of the community, parents, and school personnel need to work together to develop an educational system that is positive and supportive of the students, and that ultimately leads to a more promising future for all youth (Evans & Polk, 2000).

The National Dropout Prevention Center has identified 15 strategies that have had positive effects on the dropout rate and job readiness:

- Systemic renewal
- Professional development
- Early childhood education
- Alternative schooling
- Instructional technologies
- Service learning
- Conflict resolution
- Out-of-school experiences
- Community collaboration
- Family involvement
- Reading and writing programs
- Individualized instruction
- Mentoring/tutoring
- Learning style/multiple intelligences strategies
- Career education/workforce readiness

UNCE School retention/Job Readiness Activities: UNCE has identified this area as a high need and has initiated programming activities, particularly in Clark County, to address these issues. The Dropout Prevention Interactive CDROM program and the ILP program for foster youth are two examples of UNCE programming in this area. School districts, the State Department of Education, and non-profits across the state are engaged in various strategies to enhance student school engagement, job readiness, and enrollment in higher education. The Millienium Scholarship program for example, has rapidly increased enrollment in higher education among Nevada's campuses. In addition to these activities, many CYF programming efforts in the areas of after-school programming and literacy directly relate to this topical area.

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## Extension Programs Related to Parent Education in Nevada
2003

Definition: Parent education is a term that may overlap with others, such as parent support and parent therapy. Parent education typically involves helping individuals develop greater self-awareness as parents, learn new information about child development, learn effective guidance and discipline skills, improve communication with their children, and enjoy their family life more (Wolfe, 2002). Theories of child development assume that lay persons need input and guidance from experts in the rearing of young children (Kessen, 1979). Many view rapid and complex social change as contributing to the challenges that parents face in rearing their children (Powell, 1993). Recent indicators of child functioning have contributed to concerns about parent-child relationships (Powell, 1993), particularly as viewed from an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). Finally, research evidence indicates that educational programs for young children and their parents have lasting effects (Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983). Although there is interest in supporting parents, there is also periodic debate about the ethics of parent education. The concern is that parent education could be viewed as a way for the child-rearing values and practices of one population to be imposed on another (e.g., Laosa, 1983), or that parents representing ethnic minorities or low-income groups are deemed in greater need of expert help, centered around the values of the dominant culture and family type. There is continuing discussion of the degree to which parenting programs should be professional focused or family centered (Dunst et al., 2002). Thus, parent education and/or support needs to be approached with sensitivity, awareness, knowledge, and skill.

Statistics: According to the 2000 Census, there are close to 512,000 children under 18 living in Nevada with a somewhat larger number of boys than girls. They live in a variety of types of households. There are over 238,000 households in Nevada with children under 18 years of age. This includes around 166,000 married couple families and 50,675 female-headed households with no husband present. While teachers, social workers, and other professionals indicate the need for parenting education, there are no statewide surveys to pinpoint needs. One indicator is the statistics on child abuse and neglect in Nevada. In 2000, there were 12,797 reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect, of which close to 27% were substantiated. This represents a slight drop from 1999. A different perspective is provided by looking at the number of incidents of child abuse and neglect that were confirmed in 2000; that number is 6,976. Although not all child abuse and neglect is perpetrated by parents, it is informative to realize that in 3,594 of the cases, social workers reported that "parents cannot cope."

A qualitative study of UNCE's age-paced newsletters, *Little Lives: A Parent's Guide to Development*, also documented the fact that many parents need information about child development and parenting, feel isolated, are concerned that their child is behaving in unacceptable/inappropriate ways, and doubt their own abilities as parents. Such data indicate the on-going need for parenting education and support for the general population of parents as well as for those at risk of harming their children.

Research Base: Research has demonstrated that parenting practices affect child outcomes. Parenting needs to be understood and facilitated from an individual and environmental context (Powell, 1993). From an individual perspective, the psychological characteristics of the parent, sources of stress and support within the environment, and the parent's resources are important determinants of parental functioning (Belsky, 1984). Further, parenting is an active, cognitive process (Powell, 1993), involving parental beliefs, messages from the parent's social network, and the family value system. Thus, programming approaches, such as open-ended discussions and home visits, may be helpful in adjusting program content to achieve a better fit with parents' hopes and dreams for their children as well as in providing opportunities for parents to think through new information and utilize it in their parenting practices (Powell, 1993). It is also recognized that effective parenting programs are responsive to parent and community characteristics; a cookie-cutter approach is not effective (Powell, 1993). Finally, the more intense parenting programs are, the greater their effectiveness. This includes number of contacts (Heinicke, Beckwith, & Thompson, 1988), as well as comprehensiveness or range of services (e.g., Ramey, Bryant, & Suzarex, 1985).

UNCE Parenting Programs: Nevada Cooperative Extension provides a wide range of parenting programs and delivery systems, some of which stand alone while others are embedded in youth programs. Parenting programs are aimed at families with children of all ages and are available throughout the state although not every program is available in each county. Delivery methods include mailed information (e.g., Little Lives, Just Do It Jr., and Project Magic), group meetings (e.g., Fun to Play, Parenting from Prison, RETHINK – Anger Management, Project Magic, Nuevas Familias, Partners in Parenting, Conscious Parenting), home/individual consultation (e.g., Nuevas Familias, Friendship with Families, and on-line, interactive materials that are in development (e.g., Family Space Adventure). Programs are aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect, building family strengths, and increasing the positive effects of youth programs. They are designed for teen parents as well as adults, different cultural groups, and families with various educational and income levels.

Other Parent Education Efforts in Nevada: There is no central listing of parent education programs in Nevada. Some parenting programs are provided through the State, such as those available through Family to Family (infants) and Family Resource Centers. Non-profit organizations, notably the Children's Cabinet in the north and the Economic Opportunity Board in Las Vegas, also offer parent education programs. Schools, child care centers, and Head Start provide varying levels and types of education and support to parents. In addition, pediatricians, family doctors, public health nurses, practitioners who work with the families of children with special needs, and social workers often provide information and support to parents.

In addition, a number of efforts are underway at the national level. In 1994, Cooperative Extension published the *National Extension Parenting Education Model (NEPEM),* which identifies six areas that are important to parenting. These are: Care for oneself as an individual, understanding of child development and one's individual children, knowledge and skills in guidance, skills in nurturing children, the ability to motivate and stimulate children's learning and development, and skills in advocating for children in the community. Recently, Cooperative Extension at the national level has created *The National Extension Parenting Educators Framework (NEPEF*) that identifies training and skills for parent educators. These include: Growth as a professional; knowledge of theoretical frameworks related to parenting education; developing programs through planning, marketing, and evaluation; recognizing and responding to diversity in families; using effective teaching methodologies and delivery systems; and building networks, community advocacy, and the field of parenting education. It is anticipated that on-line training for parent educators will be available. There is a wide variety of information about parenting research and programming linked to the CYFERNET website.

Further, based on evaluation data that indicates that age-paced materials are both cost and outcome effective, a group of State Extension Specialists is focusing on making mailed parenting information universally available to parents across the country. At present a website is under construction that will make available the age-paced materials from a number of states, including Nevada (Little Lives), and the leadership group is exploring ways to facilitate the use of age-paced materials to reach parents with children from 0 to 18.

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## 4-H/Youth Development

2003

Definition: Youth development is a process that promotes positive outcomes for young people through supports and opportunities (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). Youth development prepares youth to meet the challenges of adolescence through coordinated, progressive series of experiences that help them to become socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Youth development is designed to focus on the positive outcomes desirable for youth, not just the negative outcomes targeted by prevention activities. Programs like 4-H epitomize this concept, drawing from most UNCE content areas (e.g. agriculture, natural resources, horticulture, health, community development), but first and foremost focusing on enhancing the life skills, competence, and confidence of youth.

Statistics: Youth and families in Nevada face many serious challenges that make youth development programming more needed than ever before. Statewide teen birth rates, school dropout rates, and youth suicide rates place Nevada at or near the bottom of all states (Casey Foundation, 2001; Evans, Marte, Betts, & Silliman, 2002). In addition, the majority of Nevada youth (58 percent) have less that half of the 40 developmental assets deemed critical to success by the Search Institute (Center for Business and Economic Research, 2001). Although a focus on needs identification has helped marshal scarce resources to address critical problems, efforts that rely on risk reduction strategies often fail to adequately prepare youth to assume productive roles as adults. Positive youth development, in contrast, is about creating supportive communities for youth and empowering them to engage in their own development while contributing to the well being of the larger community. Positive youth development is relevant to the needs of all youth, not only those in high-risk situations. Positive youth development is a conceptual shift from a focus on youth with problems to one that asks how communities can help youth develop the confidence, competence, connections, and character to contribute in meaningful ways to their families, peers, and communities.

Research Base: Positive youth development is rooted in the concept of resiliency, which represents a paradigm shift *away* from identifying risk factors that lead to psychosocial problems *to* the recognition and discovery of strengths that foster positive development and self-actualization (Bernard, 1997; Bensen, 1997; Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 2000; Werner, 1982). Resiliency research addresses the question of why some individuals exposed to various risk factors are able to avoid negative outcomes while others are more vulnerable to the risks and are not able to avoid the negative outcomes (Zimmerman & Arunkamar, 1994; Jackson, Born, & Jacob, 1997). Zimmerman and Arunkamar (1994) define resiliency as "…those factors and processes that interrupt the trajectory from risk to problem behaviors or psychopathology and thereby result in adaptive outcomes even in the presence of adversity" (p. 4). Resiliency research can be used to determine which factors place children and adolescents at risk for developing a negative outcome and which factors, called compensatory or protective factors, allow them to avoid or reduce a negative outcome (Rutter, 1987). Rutter (2000) cautions against conceptualizing resiliency as a stable, individual trait that protects an individual from a variety negative outcomes. Rather, resiliency is relative to the particular risk and depends on the context and particular circumstances in which the individual is involved. An individual may experience resiliency in one aspect of their lives, while having difficulties in other aspects (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). The identification and encouragement of developmentally appropriate protective factors, assets, or competencies is the conceptual foundation of positive youth development.

Youth development programming topics include:

- Youth Development-General
- Academic Success
- Creative & Arts Education
- Leadership
- Mentoring
- Out-of-School Time
- Positive Parenting
- Science, Technology & Education
- Service learning & volunteering
- Social/Interpersonal Skills
- Sports & Recreation
- Workforce Preparation
- Working with Diverse Audiences
- Youth/Adult Partnerships

UNCE 4-H/Youth Development Programs: University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) has a long and productive history with positive youth development programming. 4-H, after-school programming, and leadership and life skills development are examples of the breadth of current UNCE youth development programming. Indeed, the philosophy of positive youth development programming (i.e., providing high quality, developmentally appropriate, sustained engagement with youth as partners and resources) guides all UNCE youth programming. Such programming can often only be done in collaborative partnerships that include the organizations and institutions that are central to the lives of many youth (e.g., local Schools, military bases, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCA, non-profit youth service agencies, juvenile justice departments, state/local government initiatives and efforts). In addition, the recognition that the most effective programs involve the family, school, and peer systems directly related to youth guide UNCE programming. In 2002, 4-H celebrated its centennial with conversations about youth development held in every county and state, culminating in a national conversation. These conversations developed a blueprint for future strategies to promote youth development, and further engage and empower youth in their communities.

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