

impact

of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Economic Development and Quality of Life for People and Communities

Parenting Skills for High Risk Families

Issue

When families are torn by fighting, abuse, alcohol or drug addictions, with parents too young or too tired to take care of children, they need help. The Pinal Parent Project (formerly Family & Community Connection), sponsored through the Arizona Cooperative Extension, trains paraprofessionals to teach parenting to high-risk families.

What has been done?

Extension staff and volunteers work in small groups and one-on-one with at-risk families. The Extension-developed curriculum includes child development, parenting skills, home management techniques, life skills and resource referral. Partnering of families with staff and volunteers works because they can relate to each other. These staff members and volunteers range between 16 and 75 years of age, and are of all ethnic backgrounds. They come from the same communities as the family with whom they work. The program includes families involved with Child Protective Services, court-referred truancy cases, and welfare-to-work (TANF) participants.

Impact

During 2002, a total of 2,100 families participated in the Pinal Parent Project (formerly Family & Community Connection). Program participant evaluation results indicate the following impacts: 100 percent reported learning at least one new skill, 100 percent reported they use at least one new skill at home, while 91 percent reported that the discipline they use at home with their children is less harsh, 85 percent reported that the class material was helpful and added to their knowledge about parenting, and 81 percent gave the classes an overall rating of good-excellent.

"I use almost every skill, because it helps me in my everyday life."

-participant

"I try to explain how I'm feeling (though hard at times) and to think before I react." -participant

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