



School Based Parenting Education Programs in Livingston County CCE

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Since 2017, Livingston County has been dedicated to enhancing family dynamics through its comprehensive parenting education programs, in collaboration with the Mount Morris, Dansville and Keshequa School Districts alongside the Livonia, Avon, and Caledonia-Mumford School Districts. These initiatives have served as a beacon of support for parents, providing them with invaluable resources and guidance on navigating the challenges of parenthood.



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And it's not just parents who benefit from these sessions. Recognizing the importance of providing a supportive environment for families, arrangements for children's activities are often made during the sessions.

Whether it's through childcare services provided onsite or engaging educational activities tailored to different age groups, children are encouraged to participate, allowing parents to fully immerse themselves in the learning experience.

During the sessions, participants delve into a variety of topics essential for effective parenting. From understanding different parenting styles and stages of child development to fostering positive communication and addressing behavioral challenges, the curriculum covers a broad spectrum of areas crucial for nurturing healthy family dynamics.

This partnership between Livingston County and the School Districts has endured over the years, reflecting a commitment to long-term collaboration in supporting families within the community. These initiatives have left a lasting impact on participants, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and support networks necessary to navigate the complexities of parenthood and foster thriving family relationships.

Learn more about this partnership [here](#).

Introduction

Accessibility of parenting education resources and support has the potential to influence the developmental trajectory and overall well-being of children throughout communities. This case study recognizes this crucial aspect and highlights the integration of parenting education programs in the educational landscape of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Livingston County (Livingston CCE). Specifically, this case study examines the implementation, impact, and evolution of partnerships between Livingston CCE and schools, highlighting the strategies and successes that contribute to the positive development of families in Livingston County.

Background

Parenting education provides parents with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to effectively nurture and support children's healthy development by promoting effective communication, understanding children's behavior, and offering tools for discipline, contributing to the creation of a supportive and nurturing family environment. This, in turn, can lead to improved child outcomes, enhanced family relationships, and a stronger foundation for children to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

CCE connects communities with Cornell University research to enrich and empower the residents of New York State and plays a vital role in enhancing the well-being of individuals through educational programs including parenting, family life, and family dynamics across diverse communities. The collaboration between CCE Livingston and six school districts developed from a historical context of Livingston CCE after-school youth programs in schools. The introduction of parenting education programs in the schools may be attributed to CCE's existing Ag in the Classroom teaching classes in every school district in the county at that time, aiding in the smooth establishment and growth of the partnership.

Livingston County has used a variety of curricula, targeting various ages and stages and parenting efforts. This includes three versions of the *Active Parenting Curriculum*, from birth through age 5, ages 5-12, and teens. *Active Parenting: First Five Years* is designed to support parents in fostering positive relationships with their young children. The program covers essential aspects of parenting, including understanding parenting styles, navigating child development stages, engaging in healthy discipline, and encouraging positive behavior. Additionally, it focuses on preparing children for school success through practical strategies. The *Active Parenting* curriculum focuses on parents of children aged 5 to 12 and covers a range of topics including parenting styles, communication, discipline, building self-esteem, understanding

and addressing misbehavior, and fostering school success. Additionally, the *Teen Curriculum* focuses on fostering cooperation through active communication and encouragement, instilling responsibility and discipline through logical consequences and problem-solving techniques, building courage, redirecting misbehavior, and addressing issues related to drugs, sexuality, and violence.

Additionally, the *Parents Apart* curriculum is designed for parents navigating separation or divorce and focuses on supporting children through the emotional challenges of these transitions. It covers topics such as understanding children's emotional reactions, promoting effective parenting through listening skills and conflict management, and avoiding common pitfalls during separation. *Discipline Is Not a Dirty Word* highlights that discipline extends beyond mere punishment and control and advocates for an affirmative and constructive discipline approach, prioritizing the teaching of essential life skills, nurturing self-discipline, and fostering a positive parent-child relationship. Finally, *PS: It Works!* focuses on practicing the five *Parenting Skills Workshop Series* skills: Encouragement, Can Do, Choices, Self Control, Respecting Feelings.

Forming and maintaining the relationship

The partnership between Livingston CCE and six school districts involved a thoughtful and strategic process. Parenting educator DeAnna Croteau initiated the collaboration by presenting a proposal to the leadership of each school district highlighting the challenges faced by schools in educating children and providing counseling services to struggling students and their families. By identifying a crucial need—educating parents on parenting skills and addressing significant behavioral issues in children—the proposal resonated with the shared goals of the school districts. The offer of free classes, made possible through an annual grant from the Livingston County Youth Bureau, further strengthened the proposal's appeal and contributed to its positive reception across all six districts. This initial step set the stage for the subsequent process of relationship and trust building. Through the implementation of free parenting classes, a foundation of mutual understanding was established, fostering trust and cooperation between DeAnna, Livingston CCE, and the school districts. This shared commitment to supporting families and addressing educational and behavioral challenges laid the groundwork for a sustainable and collaborative partnership.

Program Personnel

The program was staffed by one full-time parenting educator, DeAnna Croteau, who played a central role in facilitating and leading the parenting education initiatives. The program benefits from additional support provided by school employees, volunteers, and educators from other

agencies, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the program. A recommendation for at least one additional part-time parenting educator was suggested given the increasing demands and scope of the program, to enhance the program's capacity, and to ensure its ability to meet the diverse needs of the community. The involvement of a collaborative team reflects the program's comprehensive approach and the importance of drawing on diverse skills and experiences to address the complex challenges faced by families.

Partners and supports

The partnerships were fortified by a comprehensive array of program supports aimed at removing barriers and ensuring inclusivity for participating families including essential assistance such as transportation, food, and childcare. The Department of Social Services plays a crucial role in arranging free Uber transportation, alleviating transportation-related obstacles for families. Moreover, the inclusion of SNAP-Ed classes provides valuable nutritional education, contributing to the overall well-being of participating families. Additionally, the program collaborates with the Youth Summer Employment Program, offering opportunities for youth engagement and development. A sexual assault counselor further reinforces the support network, addressing sensitive issues and ensuring the well-being of families involved in the program. These coordinated efforts from various entities reflect a commitment to overcoming barriers and fostering an environment where families, regardless of their circumstances, can actively engage and benefit from the program.

Conclusion

This case study highlights the success of a multifaceted and supportive approach to CCE-school partnerships in offering parenting education programs by establishing and nurturing fruitful school partnerships. By identifying the unique needs of each school, offering programs at nominal or no cost, and prioritizing flexibility and program tailoring, the initiative has effectively addressed the diverse challenges faced by families within the community. The incorporation of evidence-based approaches, drawing insights from past experiences, and a proactive stance in exploring funding opportunities have collectively contributed to the program's adaptability and sustained impact. This case study underscores the importance of collaboration, adaptability, and an understanding of community needs in establishing successful school partnerships and advancing the goals of parenting education initiatives.

Visit [The Parenting Project website](#)

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