

*“Excellence in Outreach Scholarship”
Outreach Scholars Academy*



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1. PROJECT TITLE:

The Family Education Collaborative

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Family Education Collaborative is:

- A collaboration between the YWCA of Manchester, UNH Cooperative Extension, UNH Manchester and the UNH Department of Family Studies for the purpose of strengthening families in Manchester and New Hampshire;
- Initially funded by UNH Cooperative Extension and the UNH Outreach Scholarship Program. Additional funding is being sought from a variety of sources.

The Family Education Collaborative will provide:

- **Direct education, services, and resources** to Manchester parents and caregivers including evidence based parent education programs on all aspects of parenting healthy and vibrant children in all types of family settings;
- **A voice for families in Manchester** to assist in making their community a better place to raise children;
- **A vital laboratory for students and researchers** studying effective design and delivery of family education programs and a chance to interact with parents from diverse backgrounds;
- **A model program** that will provide leadership in program design and research to 22 other family and parent resource centers throughout New Hampshire and offer badly needed curriculum and standards to those programs.

The research shows that:

- Parent education is effective in reducing child abuse and neglect;
- Family resource centers such as the Family Education Collaborative can reduce community rates of juvenile crime, addiction, and delinquency;
- Parent education saves real dollars by preventing costly social service, justice and mental health system intervention;
Healthy families are more productive in the workforce, contribute positively to their communities, and raise children who perform better in sc

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION/STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES/PROBLEM

Manchester is a complex, rapidly changing landscape for families and presents unique challenges to parents and caregivers who desire to raise healthy and productive children. Although it is one of the largest and most complex cities in the state it is currently the only major city without a family resource center. New Hampshire has been a leader in the family resource movement for over 20 years, however the 22 existing centers have no real statewide support for programming, curriculum, or staff training and thus, services vary greatly from region to region. In addition, UNH Family Studies students and researchers and UNH Manchester students have, until now, had no real direct access to families to research their changing needs in a changing human ecology and no clear community path to test new strategies for strengthening families in order to prevent abuse, neglect, juvenile crime, and family deterioration. The Family Education Collaborative will provide, through the YWCA and Cooperative Extension, a viable laboratory where researchers, educators and parents can interact to develop effective strategies for strengthening New Hampshire families.

4. PROJECT DETAILS

Goals and Objectives:

1. To establish a model, working family resource center that provides evidence based education and training to New Hampshire families.
2. To develop and disseminate statewide, through the network of Family Support New Hampshire, effective evidence based parent education programs that are distinctly tailored to New Hampshire communities.
3. To provide a laboratory to engage scholars and students in effective research of changing family ecology, and to develop effective primary prevention programs for families facing an uncertain future.
4. To build the capacity of family support and resource programs statewide to serve New Hampshire families by establishing standards and criterion for parent educators and creating a training program to assist those educators in obtaining competency in their craft.

Target Population/Audience:

New Hampshire families, professionals, students, researchers.

Methods: Community assessment of needs and services, gap analysis, and development of educational programs specifically designed and tested to address the needs of New Hampshire parents.

Evidence of External Collaboration and Partnership:

UNH Cooperative Extension has established an outreach office at the Manchester YWCA and has assisted the YWCA in completing 5 applications for foundation support to further the work of the collaborative. By hosting statewide meetings at the YWCA, the agencies exposure has increased and their capacity to attract funding and community support has increased. UNH Manchester students have been directly involved in the assessment process and have helped write the Collaborative's mission statement, designed invitation to community leader focus groups, and been involved in all aspects of development. UNH researchers, Extension Educators, and UNH Manchester faculty have collaborated on all aspects of the program's development.

Expected Impact:

The Collaborative has already assisted the YWCA in the procurement of a 25,000.00 grant to further the work of the collaborative. In addition, it is expected that within the second year of operation the Collaborative will establish minimum competencies for Parent Educators in New Hampshire and will begin a researched based education program to train the over 200 current educators at 22 family resource centers.

A paper describing the establishment of the Collaborative and its unique approach to the problem of parent education will be submitted, in December, to the Journal of Extension, a peer reviewed publication.

Scholarly Connection:

This program will provide Cooperative Extension with new, innovative, evidence-based programming for use across New Hampshire. For me, personally it has allowed me to gain access to the major players in the policy and education programs in New Hampshire and to understand funding streams, agency needs and gaps, and the very real needs, from the front lines, of New Hampshire parents. It has forced me to evaluate the effectiveness of our current programs and to search for new, innovative strategies for information dissemination and training. It has also provided me with incredible insight into how important parent education is in the realm of family science.

5. EVALUATION PLAN

One measure of our Outreach effectiveness will obviously be in this visible increase in the YWCA's capacity.

In addition, we are using content analysis protocol to assess the effectiveness and relevancy, across three distinct groups (community leaders, families, social service organizations), of our community needs assessment. We are also asking outside faculty from UNH Family Studies Department to review our process at the end of the year and provide guidance and feedback, as well as outside faculty from UNH Manchester.

Finally, we will ask the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund to assist in the development of a five year strategic plan for the Collaborative.

LOGIC MODEL ATTACHED

FAMILY EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE DISSEMINATION MODEL



