



HELPING CREATE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

3,345

parent and caregiver participants in 2019 MSU
Extension early childhood programs

48,676

children and youth influenced by adults who attended MSU
Extension early childhood programs in 2019

PRIORITY

A R E A S

Michigan State University Extension provides early childhood programs that help parents, caregivers, childcare providers and other important adults in the lives of children from birth to age 8 develop important skills. These programs focus on:

- School readiness.
- Social emotional development.
- Positive life skill development.

For more information about MSU Extension's early childhood programs and resources, contact earlychildhood@msu.edu or visit www.canr.msu.edu/early_childhood_development/.

IMPACTS

As a result of MSU Extension early childhood development programs, adults increased their knowledge of basic concepts that promote school readiness and positive life skills development during the early childhood stages. These improvements help adults ensure children have the building blocks they need for future success. Of participants surveyed in 2019:



98%

understood the importance of actively supporting a child's learning.



98%

said they were prepared to support learning and growth in the program area.



97%

understood how the topic presented connects to healthy development.



97%

said they now had techniques to help young children.

“I will make sure to be modeling positive behaviors for the children and be sure that I promote resiliency myself and help the children understand controlling emotion and behaviors.”

- Early childhood program participant



BUILDING PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN FAMILIES AFTER THE FLINT WATER CRISIS



The city of Flint and its residents continue to reel from the public health crisis uncovered in 2016 created by lead-contaminated city drinking water. Long-term effects of lead exposure in children, even at low levels, include deficits to the immune system and cognitive development, especially to executive functioning. It also leads to externalizing behaviors. These deficits have far-reaching negative impacts that can continue into adulthood. Fortunately, strategies and practices, which act as protective factors, have been identified to help combat these outcomes.

Among these protective factors are quality parenting practices and positive family functioning, both of which encourage resiliency in children under stress. As a result of community-based parenting education, families as a whole also experience improved resilience and more positive parent-child interactions. To help bolster these protective factors in Flint communities and reduce parent stress, Michigan State University Extension launched a two-generation parenting education program for area residents.

Parents in the program attend a five-week research-based parent curriculum while their children simultaneously attend a program focused on building executive functioning. In addition to the workshops, all families share a meal, which models lead-mitigating food. The program is funded by a Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) grant provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

In 2019, 27 parents had completed the MSU Extension CYFAR program in Flint and participated in an evaluation. Analyses of these evaluations show significant program impacts on family resilience; after participating in the program, parents reported a better ability to strategize, problem solve and persevere in times of crisis. Nine children had also completed evaluations of the youth portion of the Flint program and analysis showed significant impacts on child executive function.

“ [This program helped me to] understand how my little’s brain functions so I can be the best mamma possible. I want them to feel safe and loved and always have trust and comfort in me. ”

- MSU Extension Flint CYFAR program participant

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