

Chapter IV: Related Programs


It is now possible for a person eighteen years of age to graduate from high school without ever having had to do a piece of work on which somebody else truly depended . . . without ever having cared for, or even held, a baby; without ever having comforted or assisted another human being who really needed help. No society can long sustain itself unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills involved in assisting and caring for other human beings

Urie Bronfenbrenner

Professor Emeritus, Cornell University

The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design,
Harvard University Press, 1981





Because social and emotional health and development are now known to be critical factors in reducing school violence and in an overall readiness to learn, there is increasing support for programs that foster these qualities. Many schools and youth programs offer such programs, and some are required by individual states or school districts.

Parenting education for children and teens can help meet requirements of, or significantly enhance, related programs that might currently be part of the curriculum. Advocates for parenting education should be aware of related programs offered in their districts and consider how they can be expanded to include, or be combined with, parenting education in the curriculum.

Parenting education and related programs for children and teens also frequently take place outside regular school hours. They might be offered through after-school programs, religious organizations, scout troops, and clubs such as 4-H. Programs at family support centers and mental health and community centers that focus on families at risk could also include teaching children and teens parenting skills.

Some national organizations that provide programs for school age children require members to complete projects to receive badges, and provide a specific curriculum that requires or recommends particular projects. While some include skills and knowledge related to parenting education, they are generally not parenting education projects per se. However, because these national programs can be tailored to meet local needs and talents, they provide important opportunities for parents and other advocates of parenting education for children and teens to develop and implement parenting preparation programming. Advocates can encourage their local scout troops, clubs, and other community programs to use and expand on child development or relationship skills curriculum materials already available from their national or regional organizations.

Curriculum materials listed in Chapter III; in Appendix B, State Curriculum Standards, Guidelines and Resources; and in the Selected Resources are also adaptable for out-of-school use. The following are some of the many programs related to parenting education currently being used in schools and in community organizations. Also described are some of the many organizations that currently offer or have strong potential for developing and implementing such programs. (Also see Selected Resources for contact information for many of these programs.)



Related Programs in Use in Schools and Community Organizations

Babysitting

American Red Cross

Attn: Public Inquiry Office

431 18th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-639-3520

Web: <<http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/courses/babyindex.html>>

The American Red Cross offers babysitting training based on its Babysitters' Handbook, which can help eleven- to fifteen-year-olds learn about the responsibilities involved in being a good babysitter. The handbook contains information and enjoyable activities to help babysitters learn about appropriate and safe toys; positive discipline, such as negotiating, mediating, and encouraging positive behavior; feeding; diaper changing; and what to do if an accident occurs.

Safe Sitter

5670 Caito Dr., #172

Indianapolis, IN 46226

Phone: 317-543-3840

Fax: 317-545-7233

Email: safesitter@netdirect.net

Web: <<http://www.safesitter.org>>

Safe Sitter is a child care curriculum written by a pediatrician and recognized for excellence by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Designed for eleven to thirteen year-olds, it teaches safe and nurturing child care techniques, behavior management skills, and appropriate responses to medical emergencies. The program is competency based, highly structured, and interactive. Students must pass a rigorous written and practical exam.

The program is offered throughout the U.S. and in other countries. Safe Sitter is taught only at registered teaching sites, and uses only instructors trained through the program. Hospitals most often sponsor Safe Sitter, although middle schools, service clubs, churches, and youth organizations may offer the program

independently or in collaboration with a local hospital. The maximum student-teacher ratio is 8:1. A modest fee is charged, and scholarships are available. The curriculum is presented in modules, which can be combined and taught in one of two course options: the Safe Sitter basic condensed curriculum designed for busy schedules, and the Safe Sitter complete curriculum designed for comprehensive coverage.

Character Education

Character education is now required by a growing number of school districts and states. At the start of 2001, at least nine states had legislative requirements; at least eleven more had adopted policies recommending some type of programming. Character education is designed to develop ethical, responsible, and caring young people by teaching and modeling good character, thus leading to a more compassionate and responsible society. Character education programs, which vary in content and implementation, help students to develop good character by learning about, caring about, and acting on core values, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, civility, compassion, courage, and citizenship. The caring, communication, and other relationship skills learned through parenting education cover many of these areas.

Conflict Resolution, Anti-Bullying, and Other Violence Prevention

Conflict resolution education has been incorporated into schools and youth programs for more than twenty years. Its aim is to prevent violence and create caring learning communities. Concern about school violence has led to an increase in this programming and to requirements for its inclusion in classrooms. These programs are designed to foster children's ethical, emotional, and social development by helping them learn to care for the well-being of themselves and others; manage and resolve conflicts nonviolently and cooperatively; understand and value cultural differences and confront prejudice actively; and make responsible decisions and take meaningful action. Activities include classroom or group work, skills training, and peer mediation. Some of these programs involve the entire school intensively in creating an environment based on trust, caring, and respect, and the modeling of these behaviors.

Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America

1910 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1584
Phone: 703-476-4900
Fax: 703-860-2713
Email: natlhdqtrs@fcclainc.org
Web: [<http://www.fcclainc.org>](http://www.fcclainc.org)



Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), formerly Future Homemakers of America, is the national extracurricular career and technical student organization for family and consumer sciences students. FCCLA helps young men and women become better leaders in their families, careers, and communities. Students learn skills for life, such as planning, goal setting, problem solving, decision making, and interpersonal communication.

FCCLA programs include Families First, which directly supports parenting education for youth through its goals of helping young people become strong family members and leaders for today and tomorrow and strengthening the family as the basic unit of society. Families First Projects include the following units and goals:

- Families Today—understand and celebrate families
- You-Me-Us—strengthen family relationships
- Meet the Challenge—overcome obstacles together
- Balancing Family and Career—manage multiple responsibilities
- Parent Practice—learn to nurture children

The Parent Practice unit contains many project ideas on topics that include caring for children; child abuse prevention; costs of having a baby/raising a child; family health and safety; managing family resources; nurturing positive self-esteem; parental roles and responsibilities; parenting skills; and sources of help for parents.

FCCLA has a national membership of nearly 222,000 young men and women.

Lifeskills and Family and Consumer Sciences

Many school districts and states require some teaching of lifeskills and offer more intensive elective courses. In middle and high school, lifeskills are generally taught through family and consumer sciences or health education classes. These courses are designed to help students meet the challenges of balancing personal, family, and work life throughout the lifespan, including instruction in nutrition and wellness; life and home management, employment, and career development; wise consumerism; responsible citizenship; appreciating human worth and accepting responsibility for one's actions; and using critical and creative thinking skills to address problems in multiple settings.

School Health

The Centers for Disease Control and the American School Health Association are promoting, for optimal national health, a Coordinated School Health Program model. Its health education component recommends that students learn about family living, growth and development, nutrition, injury prevention, communicable diseases and other topics that are also recommended by The Parenting Project for inclusion in parenting education for young people. Many of these topics are currently being taught in required or elective health education courses. Some districts are developing and implementing this model.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to programs that include prevention, building resiliency, and affective education. These programs share many aims with parenting education for children and teens. Social and emotional learning programs enhance what has recently been termed “emotional intelligence,” the ability to recognize and manage emotions, make responsible and ethical decisions, and establish positive relationships. Through supportive settings and learning opportunities, SEL fosters positive academic, health, and citizenship outcomes. Because SEL skills are commonly taught in prevention programs for drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, violence, and dropping out of school, SEL is a unifying framework to coordinate their implementation and strengthen their overall effectiveness.

Many schools and youth programs, particularly for young people at risk, work to build resiliency by developing protective factors that enable youth to thrive even in adverse circumstances. Like parenting education for children and teens, these programs seek to foster social and emotional competencies, qualities consistently identified as characteristics of both resilient youth and nurturing parents. Through compassionate, understanding, respectful, accepting, and nurturing teachers who serve as positive role models, the programs aim to foster a sense of belonging at school. Students gain knowledge and skills, and the perspective that enables them to recognize the impact of family life on the development and mental and physical health of children.

The programs enable students to anticipate the results of different life choices, rather than to unthinkingly follow the path of least resistance.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Schools, as well as youth programs, including Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Girls Incorporated, offer a variety of programs to prevent teen pregnancy. Programming includes abstinence education and varying levels of sexuality



education, depending on state and district regulations, school personnel's perception of students' needs, and the values of the community. Parenting responsibilities may be included, sometimes through the use of the Baby Think It Over® Program, with its infant simulators, as described in the previous chapter. Teens may also spend time caring for babies and toddlers in a child care facility.

More intensive programming is often directed toward youth viewed at particular risk of early pregnancy. The most effective of these programs are designed to foster known resiliencies to teen pregnancy, going well beyond abstinence or sexuality education, to include tutoring and advocacy to improve school performance and attendance; life planning, including when to have children; developing future and career orientation; general health education and health promotion; positive peer relationships and use of leisure time; mentoring; and improving family relationships.

As in parenting education programs, both girls and boys learn that bearing and caring for a child are among life's most critical and challenging responsibilities and are best undertaken with emotional maturity, stable relationships, and financial security.

Organizations

Family Support Centers

Family Support America

20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100

Chicago, IL 60606

Phone: 312-338-0900

Fax: 312-338-1522

Email: <<http://www.familysupportamerica.org/content/feedback.htm>>

Web: <<http://www.familysupportamerica.org>>

Family Support programs at community centers, schools, work sites, and other locations offer opportunities to provide parenting preparation for youth. As part of their work to strengthen and support families, they include programs on parenting for parents and programs for grandparents and other family members caring for children. Some provide parenting education for young people. Many others use parenting education to empower communities to address problems related to cycles of poverty by improving infant development, reducing teen pregnancy and child abuse, and enhancing young people's ability to care for



siblings and other children. Family Support Centers use some of the programs described in the previous chapter, including the Baby Think It Over® Program and Education for Parenting: Learning How to Care. The Roots of Empathy™ program originated in family support settings.

Religious Education, Faith-Based Youth Groups, and Other Faith-Based Organizations

There are many opportunities both in and out of school for young people to learn parenting preparation in faith-based venues. Many denominations and individual churches and synagogues sponsor day schools and after-school programs and Sunday or after-school religion classes and youth groups. Many religious schools have opportunities for young people to observe and interact with parents and babies or with classes of infants and preschoolers.

Family issues, often a sensitive topic in secular schools and programs, can be presented in the context of a developed theology regarding family life. Many denominations have developed, at the national, regional, or local level, family life and dating/sexuality courses for teens and parenting programs for parents. Materials and curricula from these programs may be adapted for use in parenting education programs for children and teens. Additionally, programs developed for secular schools or youth programs can be readily adapted to faith-based settings.

Youth Organizations

4-H

National 4-H Headquarters
Families, 4-H & Nutrition, CSREES/USDA
Stop 2225, 1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-2225
Phone: 202-720-2908
Email: 4h-usa@reeusda.gov
Web: <http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/>

4-H is the youth development education program of the land-grant universities' Cooperative Extension System. Its mission is to create supportive environments to help culturally diverse youth and adults reach their full potential. 4-H works across the country to assist youth in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to become productive and contributing members of society. Participants in 4-H programs enroll in educational projects each year. Clubs choose instructional materials from among ten thousand options within the National 4-H Curriculum Collection.



One recently reviewed and recommended curriculum includes a component that teaches parenting skills to 4-H participants. Kids on the Grow! is designed for boys and girls from kindergarten through 10th grade. Focused on “kids taking care of kids” and “kids taking care of themselves,” the curriculum asks, “What can we do to help kids handle emergencies, develop home-alone skills, stay healthy, and relate appropriately to others?” The curriculum features one forty-page group activity guide for helpers and one twenty-page youth activity guide for youth in grades 3 through 6 and 7 through 10. After completing the second step of the Grow! series, youth are encouraged to enroll in their local Red Cross babysitting training course (see above). The curriculum is designed to mesh with this course. It covers the following lifeskills areas: planning and organizing, critical thinking, concern for self and others, accepting differences, self-motivation, leadership and teamwork, personal safety, and self-responsibility.

In 2000, 6.8 million children were enrolled in 4-H programs throughout the country. Of these, more than 133,000 students participated in child development, child care, babysitting, and parenting learning experiences.

Boy Scouts of America

National Council of the Boy Scouts of America

PO Box 152079

Irving, TX 75015-2079

Phone: 972-580-2000

Web: <<http://www.bsa.scouting.org/>>

Boy Scouts of America provides an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to prepare them for active citizenship, and to develop personal fitness. Boy Scouts activities include those linked to one hundred merit badges. The Family Life badge is currently being revised and will include a segment on preparation for fatherhood. Earning this badge is required to become an Eagle Scout and may be selected for completion by troops and individual scouts. There are 4.6 million members of Boy Scouts of America, including 3.4 million boys and 1.2 million adults.



Girl Scouts of the USA
Girl Scouts of the USA
420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2798
Phone: 1-800-478-7248
Web: <<http://www.girlscouts.org>>

Girl Scouts provides girls with a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow strong so they can assume the role of active citizens in their own communities and in an increasingly global society. Activities within Girl Scout programming require learning more about taking care of others. For example, Junior Girl Scouts cover material on conflict resolution. In addition, after reading about teenage pregnancy, they are asked to notice the time and effort involved in nurturing a delicate plant seedling.

Cadettes and Senior Girl Scouts may choose to complete an “interest project patch” on child care and choose from several projects related to parenting. One project suggests, “Pick a particular developmental level, such as infancy, childhood, or adolescence, and learn about either the physical, emotional, intellectual or social growth that takes place during that stage.” The 3.7 million members of Girl Scouts of the USA include 2.7 million girls and nearly 1 million adults.

