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FOCUS ON FAMILY RESOURCES

Virginia Extension Family Resources • Extension Division
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University • Blacksburg, Virginia
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FOCUS ON VIRGINIA EXTENSION FAMILY RESOURCES

Extension Family Resources has opportunities to make vital contributions to society. Federal, State, and local concerns reveal the need for human development and greater inter-relationships and inter-dependence among many segments of various agencies, organizations, and audiences for greater economic and social development.

Virginia families with incomes of different levels have problems even in this era of affluence. Extension Family Resources utilizes its competencies in the solution of problems affecting families.

The environment in the home and in the community must be conducive to the maximum development of youth and adults, including usefulness to the aging population. Responsibilities are great in the increasingly complex world in which families circulate.

Family Resources, a segment of the VPI&SU Extension Division, is influenced by:

- Rapid technological, social, and economic changes
- Changing roles of family members
- Need for continuing education for adults of all ages
- Environmental factors affecting families.

Dynamic and ever-changing programs are developed to meet the demands and changes in society.

Some areas of concern include: family stability, consumer competence, family health, family housing, and community resource development. Subject matter areas of food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, family relations and child care, home management, housing, home furnishings, consumer education, safety, pollution and other environmental factors, leadership development, human relations, and related areas are coordinated with these major emphasis areas.

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Family Resources

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AREAS

CONSUMER COMPETENCE

The economy is constantly changing, due to continuing development of new products, services, and methods for meeting the changing needs of consumers. Many consumers experience difficulty in making financial decisions because of the complexities of our modern economy. Families often lack management and technical skills to use their resources to best advantage in providing clothing, furnishings, appliances, food, health services, and security for themselves. *Consumer rights, responsibilities, and protection is a concern of the total economy including businessmen, government agencies, and consumers.* Increased costs of foods and services and inability to obtain credit are other concerns of many families.



COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The development of human, social, economic, and cultural resources is imperative for a community to be progressive. Rapid social and technological advances, shifting population, increased or decreased population in various areas, and the concerns of ecology each have influence on the individual, family, and community. Many of the problems require community interest, support, and action.

Leadership development, interest, and concern for adequate schools, churches, recreation, and other social factors as well as pride in a community are important in the cultural development of citizens. Informed local leadership is necessary for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs in a community.

Increased leisure time requires varied activities to develop talents and interests of citizens for involvement in community development.

There is concern for unemployed and under-employed youth and adults. Understanding and better use of local resources develops citizens' abilities and employability. Opportunities for youth and second careers for senior citizens help families enjoy better community life.



FAMILY HEALTH

Good health is desired by all. Several factors influence physical and mental health of an individual and family. Some factors are controlled by the individual or family, but others require community action.

Many persons consume foods which do not supply the essential nutrients in the quantities needed for good health. Adolescent girls and women (ages 9 - 64) and older men and

women (65 and over) are more apt to have poor diets than other family members. Low income families are more apt to have poor diets, yet middle income and more affluent families may have poor diets.

The hungry child often fails to achieve his full potential. Scientists are currently investigating the extent to which poor nutrition (both pre-natal and post-natal) influences potential.

The environment in which one lives influences physical and mental health. Health hazards result from some of the advances of modern living. Health services are necessary for optimum health.

Consumer health education concerns include: insurance, family planning, quackery relating to health and nutrition, and drug abuse.



FAMILY HOUSING

Good housing contributes to the health and stability of family members. Consumers are often inadequately prepared to make important decisions concerned with selecting, building, buying, remodeling, furnishing, and maintaining the home.

Approximately 30 percent of the family income is allocated to shelter: this includes utilities and maintenance. Although there is still a high premium placed on home ownership, many families find other housing alternatives both satisfactory and desirable. Some of these alternatives include rental units, mobile or manufactured home ownership, and occupancy of apartments or townhouses on a condominium basis.

Housing dollars need to be spent in a way to provide maximum comfort, convenience, and safety for all family members. Attractive living conditions provide family pride and community pride. Appropriate housing is needed for the aging population, whether they prefer to remain in their own homes or live in centers provided for them.



FAMILY STABILITY

Early marriages, changing values, poverty, mobility and anonymity, increased number of women in the labor force, child care, early retirement, changing roles of family members, use and abuse of drugs, and the pressures of society are some of the concerns in family relations. Emotions influence both the physical and mental health of families. Each influence citizens' reactions.

A healthy family environment contributes to desirable development of children and adjustment of both children and adults. Participation in community affairs helps families to be informed and useful.

AUDIENCES

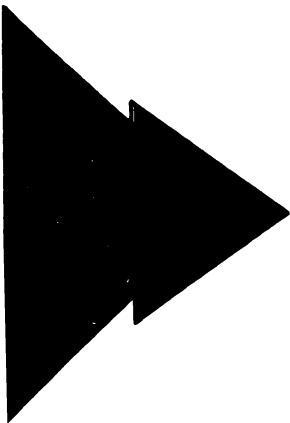
All Virginia families as individuals, homes, and communities are potential contacts for Extension. It is impossible to reach all people. Thus, the Extension Division works with many groups, agencies, businesses, and individuals through which educational programs are channeled for previously reached and unreached audiences. Audiences include youth, young couples, married couples planning for arrival of their first child, parents without partners, families with young children, disadvantaged families, employed women, the unemployed and under-employed, personnel in business and industry, professional home economists, professionals in family-oriented agencies and organizations, the aging population, and retired citizens.

PROGRAM CONTENT

To relate Virginia Extension Family Resource programs to the major areas of concern, emphasis is given to various subject matter such as:

- Development of children and youth
- Family-oriented learning experiences
- Child care services
- Adjustments in everyday living
- Adjustments in marital and parental roles
- Drug education
- Preparation for retirement
- Opportunities available for the aging population
- Changing roles of family members
- Creative use of leisure time
- Management of family resources
- Family financial security
- Use of time and energy in homemaking practices
- Money management
- Consumer performance in the market
- Nutrition and health
- Food buying, preparation, and food service
- Food sanitation and safety
- Nutrition for groups with special needs
- Safety hazards in the home
- Community health hazards
- Understanding housing codes
- Home selection, building, buying, and remodeling (design, materials, finishes, lighting, etc.)

- Housing costs and finance
- Community resources in housing
- Home appliances: selection, use, and care
- Furnishing and equipping the house for comfort, convenience, and attractiveness to meet family needs
- Furnishings and the home in relation to one's health, i.e., the handicapped
- Household wastes and pollution; recycling and reuse of products
- Clothing and textiles: selection, planning, buying
- Developing human resources through leadership training
- Opportunities to work with small businesses and industries serving families
- Development of home-related salable skills
- Understanding public policy and concerns affecting families
- Understanding opportunities available in a community and how to expand and improve
- Continuing education opportunities available
- Employment and educational opportunities for women and youth
- Training and retraining youth for employment
- Health plans and other services available in communities
- How to develop and make better use of leadership abilities
- Resources at local and area level – understanding and using effectively.



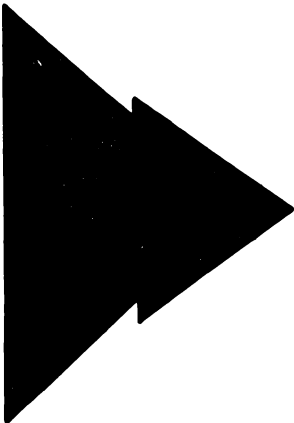
METHODS

To bring about changes in behavior, it is necessary to be exposed to a variety of educational experiences. Programs take many forms such as the following: series of educational lectures and/or demonstrations, short courses, workshops, television series, home study courses, television spots, group discussions led by trained leaders, radio spots in a series, tip-a-phone messages, newsletters, news articles, series of feature news stories, educational exhibits, tours, camps, and generous use of publicity giving key educational information. "Each one teach one" may be a good motto to practice. One method seldom serves all the varied needs of all the audiences.

A number of effective channels exist through which leadership is developed and educational information is disseminated. Organizations and civic groups that are committed to community improvement can initiate and help implement worthwhile community resource development activities. Volunteer leaders and Extension technicians help extend educational programs as they bring about changes among their peers. Business concerns, community colleges, other professionals, and agencies are seeing how they can help extend educational programs through cooperative efforts with Extension.

The professional workers serving as resource persons often help groups identify problems, determine alternative solutions, and locate possible resources for educational programs. Many groups implement programs and evaluate them in terms of their needs and what they set out to do.

Programs can be planned with the people utilizing the total disciplines from all the colleges within the University. Other agencies, organizations, and professionals are involved. Information about current and proposed Federal, State, and local legislation as well as available resources are useful in developing, implementing, and evaluating educational programs. *Extension programs are supported by the people at the local, State, and Federal level.*



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Your Extension Agent is as near as your telephone. The office is open to you. Trained home economists and an educational leader are willing to work with you. For information contact:

