

A Snapshot-Family & Consumer Sciences in Northwest

K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Science (FCS) is outreach education, using research based information in the areas of food, nutrition, health and safety, family relationships, family economics, aging and daily living skills.

People manage their lives by the decisions they make. FCS provides the tools, helping individuals gain the knowledge they need for making decisions so they can lead productive and economically secure lives.

Who We Are -

The Northwest Area is made up of 26 counties that include 14 local extension units. Personnel responsible for FCS programming in the area include 13 extension agents, one multi-county specialist and three Family Nutrition program (FNP) assistants.

This group presented 1,350 educational programs directly reaching 36,954 individuals. The staff combined efforts with 81* types of community partnerships *to help individuals and families develop decision making and critical thinking skills**. Thirty-six* methods were implemented in promoting Extension FCS programs.

What We Do -

Extension FCS reaches individuals and families of all ages, types, and stages of life, without reference to economic boundaries or educational levels.

To teach individuals and families critical life skills means providing the opportunities for hands-on applicable experiences, assisting in the development of critical thinking, confidence and decision-making skills needed to function in society. This is accomplished through a variety of subject matter.

How We Do It -

Healthy Lifestyles

Teaching families about healthy choices leads directly to the decisions they make when they

select foods, choose an activity, assess their living environment, and prepare food for immediate consumption or preserve it for future use.

Healthy lifestyle programs help families remain healthy, which is especially important since a large portion of the northwest area is identified as medically under-served.

Topics related to healthy lifestyles span nutrition to food safety, physical activity to environmental concerns, and both prevention and management of health conditions.

☀ *Schools have reported lower absenteeism in classrooms where Extension FCS has taught hand washing.*

☀ *In Wallace County, 90% of parents who had children participating in extension programming report it takes longer to move through the grocery store as their children want to double check all the labels of products being purchased.*

☀ *The request for radon test kits has increased and several mitigations have resulted.*

☀ *Food safety questions have almost doubled in the past year.*

☀ *Of those who participated in a Community Meltdown, 60% reported improving nutritional and physical activity habits.*

☀ *After attending a class on “Cooking with Diabetes” a gentleman reported learning that he could eat well and still control his diabetes.*

Consumer Education & Family Economics

Quality of life is determined by the decisions consumers make. FCS helps them learn to weigh options and ultimately make the right decision for their situation.

Budgets, or rather lack of, is the root of many problems relating to families. Learning to manage money is a critical skill.

Knowing how to be an informed and budget-conscious consumer contributes to keeping a family economically sound.

Topics expand from basic decision making to estate planning, from organizing personal records to knowing available local resources, from saving for the future to couponing, from Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) to fraud and identity theft prevention.

This area of FCS reinforces math and reading skills while building self-confidence, assisting with job readiness and giving participants an advantage when functioning in the real world.

☀ *In one local extension unit, SHICK saved a total of \$14,905 for the 54 individuals involved.*

☀ *At a Phillips/Rooks District meeting, 25% of the individuals reported being a victim of some form of fraud.*

☀ *A financial planning program designed for students is being used in high schools.*

☀ *Court Services uses Extension FCS to teach budgeting and basic money management.*

Participants gain the skills and personal confidence to be empowered, enabling them to be in charge and make more sound decisions for themselves and their families.

Family Relations

Every person is affected by family. Strong individuals build a strong family base. A strong family base builds strong communities. Strong communities provide a positive future.

A strong, stable and resilient family unit is the pivotal point in establishing the future - a future with economic security, caring communities and a healthy society.

Extension programs for strengthening families range from parenting of infants to aging and caregiving, from positive family communication to work-

ing through conflicts in healthy ways, from understanding human and family developmental stages to knowing how to set limits for the benefit of family members.

The resiliency of a family is directly related to the skills a family has: communication, management of stress and crisis, showing respect, commitment to one another, openness to change, managing conflict, and a shared outlook on life.

Families evolve over time, there is not a quick fix or a manual to consult. Often change does not fully take place until the next generation. However, there are skills and guidelines that when learned and practiced, help considerably.

The research base of extension information gives consistency across the state, providing guidance as families develop and search for understanding and answers to guide their everyday lives together.

It all comes down to self-responsibility. Participants in FCS Extension educational programs choose to: learn, be self-sufficient, make their family healthy, spend wisely, communicate effectively with family members, and make sound decisions.

We provide knowledge, resources, training and ultimately, the know-how!

Family and consumer sciences education does impact the quality of life for Kansans. We don't sell products - we educate!

Information collected and compiled by Libby Curry, Area Extension Specialist, FCS, Northwest.

*For a complete list of skills acquired through FCS, community partners, promotion methods and topics taught, visit <http://www.northwest.ksu.edu> and click on Family and Consumer Sciences on the left side of the page.



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30m, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Gary Pierzynski, Interim Director.