



2009
“Report to the Community”
A Review of Family and Consumer Sciences Program Impact

Kay County OSU Extension Center
January 1 – December 31, 2008

Character Critters

Two Character Critter trainings were conducted in 2008 for 22 child caregivers and elementary school staff. New sites adding Character Critters to their early childhood curriculum in 2008 included Delaware Tribe Resource and Referral, Miss Nan's Child Care, Country Day School, and the Osage Interlocal Cooperative. Funding for the materials was provided through an \$870.00 Smart Start Kay County grant.

New sites adding this curriculum to their character education programming make a total of 53 Kay County sites with over 2,591 children to implement this curriculum since its introduction to Kay County in 2001.

Teaching children character can make a difference in not only their quality of life, but also in the longevity of their life. Many children exhibiting risky behaviors have been raised in homes where healthy character traits may not have been taught or modeled. Oklahoma Kids Count and Rural Health Works data for 2008 describe the following risky behaviors among Kay County youth. Where "1" is best and "77" is worst, Kay County ranks:

- ⇒ 75th in childhood stressors
- ⇒ 75th in juvenile crime arrests
- ⇒ Worse than national average in juvenile drug related arrests
- ⇒ 62nd in births to young teens
- ⇒ 77th in the state in high school drop-outs
- ⇒ Three times the state average for unsafe speed traffic fatalities and injuries
- ⇒ 64th in teen deaths

Participant Results:

Comments received from new Character Critters sites include:

- *"The children are attentive to the puppets and implement the vocabulary words (trustworthy, respect, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, caring) throughout the day."*
- *"Parents have commented to me about the new words they noticed in the children's vocabulary."*
- *"... Character Critters have opened my eyes to their (puppets) value in the Pre-K class."*
- *"Very positive impact. For example after reading and explaining about Cindy the good citizen crab the children seemed more conscientious about picking trash off the ground and throwing it in the trash can."*



Monthly Newsletters

Newsletters are received by clientele e-mail, accessed through our web-page, or by mail. **Newsline** – Over 560 families receive up-to-date information on topics related to Family Economics, Family Relationships, Child Development, Food Safety & Preparation, and Nutrition & Health.

Child Care Home News – Directors of all licensed Kay County childcare homes receive news of the county organization and educational updates related to children, families, and child care.

OHCE – Members receive news about the past and upcoming events of the organization.

4-H Social Etiquette Workshop

Eighteen Kay County youth enrolled in a Social Etiquette Workshop. The workshop included a PowerPoint presentation, demonstration, video, hand-outs and hands-on activities teaching:

- grooming and clothing
- table setting and etiquette
- greeting and conversation skills
- thank you notes
- escorting and seating ladies
- email and cell phone etiquette
- introductions and handshaking
- job interview etiquette



Following the workshop 4-H members changed into appropriate dinner attire. The gentlemen escorted the ladies to the table and seated them. A 4-Her was assigned the role of hostess during the dinner which was prepared and served by Pioneer Tech Center (PTC) students.

At the conclusion of the dinner the gentlemen escorted the ladies back to the classroom. Everyone wrote a formal thank you note to the PTC instructor and students.

Participant Results:

A comparison of pre/post-test responses showed every participant had an increase in knowledge. Average scores showed a 64% increase in knowledge among all participants. Comments offered by participants included:

“I will put a napkin on my lap from now on.”

“I learned how to escort a lady.”

“I learned to eat Continental Style.”

Without exception, the participants said they thought all kids should go to a workshop like this. One summed it up by saying “they would learn to not humiliate themselves while eating at a fancy place”.

A month following the workshop parents offered these comments:

“My daughter reminded me to place a napkin on my lap while at a restaurant.”

“My son was shocked that his sister began eating dinner at home before everyone was at the table.”

“My daughter has been practicing the Continental Style of eating.”

“I feel better about my children’s next visit with their grandmother. She is a very proper person who has commented before about their lack of manners.”

Youth Food Preservation Workshop

A Food Preservation Workshop for youth was offered June 24th. The goal was to develop an appreciation for the efforts of early day homemakers, teach safe food preservation skills, and prepare county fair exhibits.

- ⇒ Eight of the 13 participants had never used a hot water bath canner; nine had never used a pressure canner.
- ⇒ Four of the thirteen participants were children or teens, including 4-H youth.
- ⇒ When asked how much they had learned on a scale of 1-9, 100% had increased their knowledge and skill, averaging 5.48 or better. Five selected a ranking of “8” or greater.
- ⇒ Using a scale of 1-8 to describe increased skills in canning fruits, 53.8% participants ranked their skills “6” or above.
- ⇒ Using a scale of 1-8 describing increased skills in canning vegetables, 46% participants ranked their skill a “6” or above; 30.7% ranked their skill a “7” or above.



Participant Results:

- ✓ 7 participants planned to preserve more fruit or vegetables as fair exhibits.
- ✓ 8 participants planned to preserve some fruits or vegetables for the family.
- ✓ 8 participants planned to preserve fruits or vegetables as gifts.
- ✓ 3 participants planned to teach others about canning fruits & vegetables.
- ✓ Participants entered 41 Vegetables, Fruits exhibits, Jams and Jellies and Pickled exhibits in the Kay County Free Fair, all earning a ribbon. (14 Blue ribbons, 15 Red ribbons and 12 White ribbons)

I Can Problem Solve

Kay County statistics for childhood stress and risky behaviors among our youth include:

- 63rd of 77 in child abuse and neglect
- 116 children living in foster care
- 23.3% of children live below the poverty level
- 23.2% of children live in single-parent homes

Children raised in such environments often lack the social skills needed to avoid participation in activities leading to poor outcomes. This fact is evidenced in the following Kay County statistics where “1” is the best and “77” is the worst:

- 75th in juvenile crime arrest
- 77th in the state in high school drop-outs
- 75th in childhood stressors
- 64th in teen deaths
- 62nd in births to young teens
- Worse than national average in juvenile drug related arrests
- Three times the state average for unsafe speed traffic fatalities and injuries

Participating in a \$2286.10 in Smart Start Kay County grants, the second of a five-year plan to provide training and materials at no charge to all interested child care facilities and elementary schools continued.

“I Can Problem Solve” (ICPS) programming in 2008 trained new child care center staff, Ponca Tribe Head Start staff and Delaware Tribe Resource and Referral staff. The program teaches problem solving skills, alternative solutions to problems, and facilitates social interaction among peers.

Participant Results:

- 17 Kay County school counselors and child care professionals who reach 3,433 children annually implemented ICPS in preschool through 7th grade classes.
- Results shared by counselors and child care staff included:
 - *“I noticed several (students) who are really working to think things through before acting.”*
 - *“During playground duty I’ve heard students trying to resolve conflicts on their own and they have used the ICPS tools!”*
 - *“It got me to think more about how I talk to the children and getting them to see the feelings of others.”*
 - *“In our younger students (PK & K) we saw an overall improvement in social skills (less fighting, less tattling, more expression of feelings. In 1st and 2nd grade students, I noticed more thinking before acting.*
 - *“One student was selfish and bossy at the first of the year, but by the end of the program, he was making progress in using words to describe his feelings instead of acting them out with aggression.”*

Co-Parenting

Co-Parenting classes for divorcing parents of minor children are offered each month. Kay County’s Co-Parenting class for divorcing parents just completed its 12th year, reaching 226 divorcing parents of 277 children from 11 area communities. The court-ordered class teaches stress management and communication skills, encourages use of community resources, and stresses the needs of children as the family structure changes following divorce.

Volunteer professionals from schools and agencies assisted in teaching these classes and contributed funds to purchase additional educational resources to use with children and families.

Evaluations have been positive and show a change of knowledge, attitude, skills and aspirations. In exit evaluations 96.1% of the participants had positive things to say.

Parent Exit Comments:

- *“I will stop and think about what I say and the impact it has on my children.”*
- *“I learned ways to get along with my ex without anger and plan to set up a visitation schedule that is best for my children. They need more time with him.”*
- *“I would get mad at my ex for not coming or promising things and not coming through but now have a better way to discuss without fighting.”*
- *“It has really helped me think about my child’s feelings, and realize that they are suffering as much as I am.”*
- *“I will try to communicate with my kids more and look for hidden signs of stress in my kids.”*
- *“Helped me realize the role I play in some scenarios and not be so selfish of my feelings and appreciate my daughter as the little person she is and not our messenger!”*

Significance of These Results

While some divorcing parents are too caught up in their own pain to notice the child's trauma during this change in family, other parents know the children are experiencing stress, but do not know how to minimize it. Many parents continue fighting during and after the divorce, often placing children in the middle of the battle or playing tug-of-war over the child. Kay County childhood stress statistics include:

- 63rd in child abuse and neglect
- 23.3% of children live below the poverty level
- 116 children living in foster care
- 23.2% of children live in single-parent homes

Children living in this atmosphere are more likely to experience risky behaviors than children whose parents discuss their differences privately and keep the children's best interest in mind. Statistics indicate children affected by a bitter divorce are at higher risk for health problems, poor self-esteem, reduced school performance, more arguments or fights, unhealthy behavior such as drug abuse or sexual relationships and gang involvement. In addition, 80% of teen psychological admissions and 75% of teen suicides are directly related to such divorces. These outcomes are seen in Kay County statistics listed below.

- 62nd births to young teens
- 75th in juvenile crime arrests
- 5th in childhood stressors
- 64th in teen deaths
- 77th in the state in high school drop-outs
- Worse than national average in juvenile drug related arrests
- Three times the state average for unsafe speed traffic fatalities and injuries

Fresh Start: Nutrition and You

In 2008, "*Fresh Start: Nutrition and You*" provided education to households receiving food stamps or living in subsidized housing. Participants learn nutrition, meal planning, food budgeting, and food safety through weekly classes in the comfort of their own home, or group settings if they prefer. In 2008, participants also shared produce donated by Ponca City Discount Foods. Approximately 80% of enrollees graduate from the program reporting a change in attitude, knowledge, behavior, and health.

In 2008 schools with at least 50% of students eligible for free or reduced meals were included in FreshStart programming.

Educational and informational booths were set up for the Tonkawa and Kaw Tribal Health Fairs. For more information contact Nutrition Education Assistants Deanna Nelson or Monica McChristian at the Kay County OSU Extension Center.

County Fair

The Kay County Free Fair is the largest county fair in Oklahoma. It provides fundraisers for non-profit organizations, boosts community spirit and camaraderie while evaluating the work of youth and adults and building skills in our citizens.

Training for fair volunteers was held before the start of the fair. To increase participation, Best of Show exhibits are available in various exhibit categories. A Clothing Construction Judging Contest was held for both youth and adults, allowing participants to test their skill judging clothing.

Blackwell and Tonkawa Schools encouraged and assisted students to become involved in their community by exhibiting in the Kay County Free Fair.

Farm to You

McCord, Woodlands and Newkirk Elementary students, 998 in all, participated in a new educational activity, *Farm to You*, through the cooperation of school staff, parent and community volunteers and the Kay County OSU Extension Center. *Farm to You* is a free interactive and educational adventure for elementary school students to follow food from the farm to the market and through the body to explain the relationship between agriculture, food and health.

The 40' x 40' exhibit included 9 stations where students learned:

- that farms provide food for good health.
- to use food labels to make healthy choices.
- about the digestive system.
- the importance of physical activity and personal hygiene.
- improved eating and health behaviors.



Small groups of approximately ten students began the educational, interactive experience at the cheeseburger farm where they learned that food comes from farms. The second station, called the market, showed students about the transportation, processing and packaging of food from the farm to the market. The third station is the Healthy Cool Café where they discussed the food groups before they entered the imaginary body learning about the digestive system, the muscles, the bones and the skin in six additional stations.

Farm to You is coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service and is a collaborative effort between state agency, commodity and community partners. The requirements for schools to participate include having 300-450 children to participate, space to accommodate this exhibit. Volunteers are necessary for setting up and taking down the exhibit to serve as station presenters. Any other school or organization serving youth who is interested in scheduling *Farm to You* may contact Mary Rhyne at 580.362.2200.

Ready-Or-Not Tots

Statistics for Kay County show a ranking of 62nd in the state in births to teens age 15-17. The Ready-or-Not Tots electronic simulators teach child care skills to pre-teens and teens. These simulators serve as a tool to prevent teen pregnancy, teach parenting skills, and prevent child abuse and neglect. Programmed for a 72-hour cycle, the simulators cry at various times of the day and night. It is the teens' job to provide 24-hour care for the baby, determine the reason they are crying, and remedy the situation. The dolls come with an infant carrier and a fully supplied diaper bag to give our teens a little taste of caring for a baby and are available to Kay County schools, agencies or organizations. During 2008 69 male and female teens age 14-18 from Ponca City, and Blackwell participated in this activity.

One participating teacher said, "All teachers and administrators are supportive of this activity. I had one teacher report abuse by the student. Statements I heard from students were:

- 'I sure am going to wait until I'm older to have kids'
- 'Babies take up all my time.'
- 'I am so tired.'
- 'It is no fun because you have to take your kid everywhere you go.'
- 'Be prepared to get up whenever.'

Student evaluations prove this teacher's assessment to be accurate. When asked about time and effort, it was evident that they learned babies take a lot of time and a great effort whenever the baby is not sleeping. The hardest part of parenting appeared to be having patience when the baby cries, waking at night, and learning to understand a baby who cannot talk.

In preparation for having children, students suggested finishing school, having a trustworthy partner, finding a job and saving money, becoming aware of what to expect of an infant and prepared to spend a lot of time with your baby. Students commented that babies change your life. Quoting one student "You are constantly putting your needs aside to take care of someone else." They also commented that you lose a lot of sleep, babies change your life. You have to grow up, make adjustments, accept responsibility, and care for someone else.

Oklahoma Home and Community Education, Inc.

Previously known as "Home Demonstration" and "Extension Homemakers", this organization continues to be active in Kay County. Groups are organized throughout Kay County and membership is open to all regardless of gender, race, color, age, disability, religion, status as a veteran, or national origin.

OHCE identifies local issues facing families which become the basis for educational programming and efforts of the organization. The organization's goal is to educate its membership to be well-informed and able to handle change in their homes and communities, provide community services, and develop leaders. As advisor, the extension educators' role includes preparing lesson materials, teaching the lessons, and attending their organizational meetings and activities. OHCE educational leader lessons and workshops for 2008 included:

Country Kitchen
Basic Quilting Workshop
February Association Meeting
Food Preservation Workshop
Food Show and Tasting Luncheon
Hat and Mitten Tree
Book and Magazine Giveaway
NW District Meeting
October Association Meeting
Flu Immunization Clinic
OHCE Family Picnic
OHCE Week
Raising a Reader support
Effective Meeting Leadership Training

Sleep Pants Workshop
State OHCE Conference Lesson
Just Say No! To Senior Scams Lesson
Bread Baking Tips Lesson
Spring Flowers from Cuttings Lesson
CPR Lesson
Home Maintenance Lesson
A Matter of Taste - Water Quality Lesson
Thrifty Fashions Lesson
Made in the USA Lesson
Gambling – The Risks and the Odds Lesson
Chocolate Choices Lesson
Piñata Workshop
Ornament Workshop

NW District OHCE Meeting

Hosted by Kay, Logan and Noble Counties, the "Spirit of Spring" was the theme of the Northwest District Meeting of Oklahoma Home and Community Education held April 5, 2008 at the Ponca City High School. The public was invited to join 200 OHCE members from 17 counties in the state. Guests were welcomed with a reception at the Conoco Museum and had the opportunity to tour local sites of interest on Friday and Saturday.

Highlights of the morning included a Welcome by Mayor Homer Nicholson, *God Bless America* by Cordelia Clapp and a Business Meeting. Participants then selected three of the 21 workshops to attend between 11:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The first series of workshops included Clutter Control, OHCE Treasurer Training, Forming Community Coalitions, Genealogical Research in the 21st Century, Military Family Support Project, Organic Gardening, Recruitment and Making Local OHCE Brochures, OHCE President's Workshop, and Multi-Cultural Partnerships.

Following lunch, the second series of workshops included Beginning Computer Use, Fun Dances, Genealogy – Finding Your Roots, Make and Take Scrapbooking Project, Quick and Easy Decorating, Trunk Showing of Today's Quilts, and Garnishing Tips and Techniques.

The third series of workshops followed with Decoupage Plates, Intermediate Computer Use, Home Fire Safety, Make and Take Scrapbooking Project, Simply Italian, and Trunk Showing of Today's Quilts.

Other 4-H and Other Youth Development Activities

Family and Consumer Sciences Four-H project areas include consumer education, fabrics and fashions, food science, personal development, health and fitness, family life, safety, leadership, and childcare. Workshops and competitive events as well as educational materials in addition to those described previously included:

- 4-H Oakwood Mall Day
- Clothing Construction Contest
- Free Loan Curriculum to area schools
- Monthly 4-H Newsletter Educational Articles
- Child Car Seat Check
- Youth and Adult Clothing Construction Judging Contest
- Feeding Wild Birds 4-H Individual Learning Package
- Fashion Revue Committee at 4-H Round-Up
- Media Smart Youth PLO training

Advisory Boards /Organizations

Advisory Board Member: Pioneer Tech's Early Care and Education of Children program
Ponca City Family and Consumer Sciences Program
Child Care Links

Ambassadors Board of Directors
COACH (Connecting Older Adults & Communities for Health) Advisory Team & Focus Group
Early Childhood Planning Council
Epsilon Sigma Phi
Growing Strong Families Impact Team Member
Growing Strong Families Impact Team Curriculum and Evaluation Committee Member
Kay County Alliance
Kay County Early Childhood Planning Council Member
Newkirk Chamber of Commerce Member
OEAFCs Member and Chair of Member Resources Sub-Committee
OEAFCs Audit Committee Chair
Ponca City Fire and Life Safety Council
Rotary International Member
Safe Kids Coalition Car Seat Check volunteer
United Way Financial Stability Initiative
Family Resiliency Impact Team
Ponca City High School FCCLA Advisory Committee

Professional Development Activities

Agroterrorism
Computer Gadgets Cooperative Conversations
Effective Leadership utilizing Parliamentary Procedure
Empowering Older Rural Oklahomans for Positive Nutrition
Epsilon Sigma Phi Meeting
Establishing Healthy Eating Behaviors in Children In-service
Healthy Communities In-service
Home Drinking Water In-service
Impact Team In-Service (Spring and Winter meetings)
Increasing Efficiency Cooperative Conversations
Introduction to Setting Up a Website Cooperative Conversations
Joy of Stress
Living in the Shadows of the Ghosts of Grief
Love and Logic: Success with Underachieving Kids
Nutrition and Aging Series In-service - Parts 1- 9
Nutrition-Rich Foods: A Positive Approach
NW District In-service Training
OCES Conference
OEAFCS Annual Conference
OEAFCS Mid-Winter Meeting
Wilderness of Grief: Finding Your Way

Awards Received

Oklahoma Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences:
2008 Barbara Tricinella Award
2008 Community Partnership Award
2008 Continued Excellence Award
2008 Dean Don Felkner Award
2008 Florence Hall Award
2008 Marketing Package Award

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For more information about the Family and Consumer Sciences program, contact:

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Meet Kay County's OSU Extension Center Team

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