

Making a Difference

2020 Lubbock County Parenting Child Development Education

Improve Family Life for Texans

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Relevance

Despite changes in their structure, families remain the most basic unit of society. Today's families need support to build the resiliency necessary to meet life's challenges head-on. There is encouraging evidence that research and educational programs can contribute to the strength and resiliency of all families. The Lubbock County Leadership Advisory Board identified financial management, childhood obesity and health management as issues in Lubbock County. However, they identified parenting issues as being one of the top 10 issues. Lubbock County Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Board extended the topics to child abuse, teenage needs & risky behavior, teen pregnancy, and parenting skills. More than 30% of all households in 2018 were in single or non-family groups and one-fourth of children are in a family with married couples, the rest are in blended families, with grandparents, or in foster care. Children of single parents are now the poorest age group in the United States. Twenty percent of Lubbock Children live in poverty according to the 2020 Lubbock County State of Health Report. Parental challenges are considerable. One in four adolescents engages in social behaviors that can lead to serious long-term difficulty. The State of Texas Children 2007 indicates that in Lubbock County, 19.9% of births were to teens and that there were 1,239 confirmed victims of child abuse in 2007 and 20 deaths to children and teens. Many children in day care and pre-school have developmental issues and day care workers and pre-school teachers need tools to work with these children while their parents are at work, school, etc. No time has been more challenging than 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating these issues with lockdowns, parents working from home, home schooling, COVID-19 illnesses, and parents losing jobs, wages, and health benefits, utilities interruptions, lack of internet access, & housing evictions, among other problems.

Response

Now in its 25th year, the Building Strong Families Conference was started by Lubbock Partner's for Parenting Coalition, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service advisory board/coalition, to address these issues listed above. It is now an incorporated agency of its own and Extension serves as a voting board of director's member. I served on the Board of Directors and the Media/Public Relations Committee and was responsible for attending meetings, & assisting with/serving on the speakers committee, assisting with registration distribution to schools and daycares in Region 17 Education Service Center area as well as to other agencies and locations in Lubbock County where clientele would have access to it. I assisted with promoting the conference with other County Extension Agents, contacting media with news releases, and giving interviews, helping get sponsor donations. COVID-19 required all meetings and the conference to be virtual. Agencies provided 2-4 slides to be shown virtually at various times in place of real exhibits. The BSF Board met virtually monthly to plan the annual conference. The various committees work independently and report on activities at the monthly meetings. Speakers and topics for the conference are determined by the speaker's committee and approved by the board based on evaluations received from the preceding year's conference. Donor support and grants are applied for throughout the year. Grant writing/sponsor contact is a responsibility of the chairman and treasurer. Other donor support and volunteer support is sought by various committee members. The COVID-19 Risk Management Bulletin and power point presentation was mandated to be presented at all programs just before the lock down occurred. Due to COVID-19, day care provider trainings were made available virtually that fulfilled the face-to-face training requirements. Some of these by the State specialist were free, while some counties offered childcare conferences with fees for attending virtually. I served on the District 2 FRED committee and Families Reading Every Day was also offered virtually free of charge across the state in May and June with social media posts of various reading opportunities and other information and statistics posted by committee members.

Results


The 25th Annual Building Strong Families Conference was held virtually for free. Expenses included food at the in person BSF Conference sites of \$190.00, postage, printing, and other supplies totaling \$ 329.10, website fees of 29.95 and other miscellaneous expenses of 349.98. Various expenses were offset by donor's or grant funds (\$1,500). Other donors were the collaborating

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

agencies who donated time to plan and work the conference, present educational exhibits, & serve as speakers. There were 7 speakers and 315 registered. There were 145 accessing the conference online, but there may have been more viewing together at home or offices and some attended one of the 4 in person sites for virtual viewing. Of 74 surveys completed: 71 were female; 67 were professionals; 30 were age 21-40; 25 were white (non-Hispanic), 41 were white (Hispanic or Latino), 6 were Black or African American, 1 was American Indian or Alaskan Native and 1 was Other (American Indian, Hispanic or Latino); Income range included 12 under \$25,00, 20 from \$25,00-\$39,999, 16 from \$40,000-60,000, and 23 over \$60,000; 40 learned about the conference by attending last year, 16 learned about it from their child's school, and 10 learned about it on Face Book, while 4 learned about it via other media or their insurance plan; 89.19% indicated the conference was very helpful; 37.5% had pre-K children, 46.43% had K-5 children, 32.1% had 6-8 grade children, 26.79% had high school children, and 35.71% had college age children; 100% of those responding indicated they would attend again 98.65% indicated they would recommend the conference to others. All attendees enjoyed Lubbock High School Ballet Folklorico de Oro as pre-conference entertainment. The Opening Keynote was "Let's Chat! Community Impact on our Youth" by AJ McCleod and a youth panel exploring how environments impact children's life 95.79% found this session helpful or very helpful and 96.84% recommended having them speak again. Participants liked having the youth panel input. Alicia Holligan presented "This is My Monkey...This is My Circus: Parenting with Resiliency and Embracing the Challenge" highlighting the challenges and celebrations that go with parenting. 94.05% found the session helpful or very helpful; and 92.86% recommended have her speak again. Marty Groves and David Frazee presented "All in the Modern Family: Parenting Across the Continuum" discussing tried and true strategies to assist parents in the ever-evolving day-by-day family life. 98.72% found this session helpful or very helpful; and 100% would recommend these speakers for future conferences. After lunch, "The Power of Music" speaker was Christine Neugebauer with an overview of the elements of music as an art form and its function in health and healing in early childhood through older adulthood. 80% found this session to be helpful or very helpful and recommended her as a future speaker. "Parenting: Seeing the Treasure in the Challenge" by Brandon Clayton highlighted our children as treasures despite the challenges and how parents can re-define their children's challenges as treasures in transition. 100% attending this session felt it was helpful or very helpful and recommended him for future conferences. The closing keynote was "Don't Be a Loser—Be a Learner!" by Dr. Lisa Ramirez showing why it is important to celebrate every win and loss to reframe the emotional challenge of loving our children as they navigate the waters of making tough decisions. 82.36% found this speaker and topic helpful or very helpful and 87.50% recommended her to speak again. This agent also presented a program for 21 at the West Texas Home Day Care Association in March before the COVID lockdown on Emergency Preparedness. The COVID-19 Risk Management bulletin and power point was mandated to be presented at the time of this presentation as well. Twenty-seven daycare providers/teachers received certificates of completion for attending online State-wide Extension Child Care Trainings for CEU's. In Lubbock County, two families registered for the virtual FRED program, but neither completed the series. There were 17 social media posts reaching 1,869.

Summary – Due to the continued success of the BSF Conference, the committee will resume meeting in January 2021 to begin planning a 26th Celebration for the 2021 Conference for October 21st. In addition, there are plans to possibly offer the Families/Fathers (FRED) Reading Every - Day program in 2021 with the LISD or South Plains Community Action Association Head Start Programs or other groups. Every District across the state will offer a Child Care Provider's Conference on a Saturday morning. Each of the 12 districts has been assigned a month by the State specialist who will assist in presenting the conference topics/sessions virtually. All counties will advertise these opportunities so that providers can get CEU's as required.

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VALUE	
Parenting Education	
	Parenting programs from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service increase participants' knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are essential to a child's development. Parents who are consistent, respectful, involved, and serve as positive role models increase their children's potential for success and help prevent delinquent behavior during the adolescent and teen years.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions