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CC406 Keeping Families First

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Keeping Families First

A state-wide campaign building communities where families are valued
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Teams contributing to Keeping Families First

- Sustainable Families
- Youth and Family Responsibilities
- Leadership Development
- Community Development
- Preventative Health and Wellness Education
- Work and Family Policy
- Economic Development

Resources:

5. University of Texas, Houston, Health Science Center, Work/Family Task Force Report, May 1996.

Keeping Families First Team

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"A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under whose shade they will never sit."

Greek Proverb
Mission Statement

Building communities where families are valued.

Goals

- **Form partnerships** of businesses, churches, schools and community organizations, each making a special effort to support families.

- **Increase public awareness** about the critical role families play in shaping individual lives and our community.

- **Offer educational programs**, such as interactive workshops, videos, and discussion groups throughout communities across Nebraska.

- **Improve public and private sector policies** that support individuals, families and communities.

- **Encourage family enrichment activities** by asking families to pledge to spend time together each week.

Why Participate in Keeping Families First?

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with other private and public groups, will work with families, community organizations, and businesses to pledge and implement activities that will build communities where families are valued. Research tells us that families and communities benefit from these efforts in many ways including:

- Families benefit from shared time because it eases loneliness and isolation, nurtures relationships, and creates a family identity. (1)

- Young people need caring, principled adults in their lives who support them, encourage them, and guide them. They need places—home, school, neighborhood, congregation, work—that are accepting, affirming and safe. (2)

- Families are about caring for people, about feeding and sheltering the young, old and the needy. In addition to those roles, families have had two other major roles—to protect and socialize. (3)

- Employers find family-friendly programs yield a return in important areas such as reduced turnover, increased retention, decreased absenteeism, lower training expenses, higher morale, increased productivity, and increased loyalty from employees. (4)

- Employers also have suggested that family-friendly programs can increase morale even among those employees who do not have dependent care needs. (5)
How to become a Keeping Families First Partner

This *Keeping Families First* publication contains “shopping lists” to help stimulate ideas for families, businesses and community groups. The lists don’t include every idea, so feel free to “create” your own ideas. Simply present this project to your family, business, community group or organization and ask,

“What can we do to build communities where families are valued?”

Then follow these steps:

**Step 1**
If you are a business or community group, list what you are already doing for families. If you are a family, make a list of the activities you enjoy doing together.

**Step 2**
Study examples from the “shopping lists” and develop a list of activities that interest your family, business or organization.

**Step 3**
Choose the activities that you will become involved in this year.

**Step 4**
Fill out and sign a *Keeping Families First* “Pledge Card” and return it to your local Cooperative Extension office. Families will receive a guide of family activities. Participating families and businesses will be recognized in the community.

**Step 5**
Put your plan into action!

**Step 6**
Evaluate and celebrate your success.

“Our struggle to put first things first can be characterized by the contrast between two powerful tools that direct us: the clock and the compass.”

*Steven Covey*
Shopping List for Parents

(1) Have a family fun time once a week
(2) Have regular family meetings to discuss family business, plan activities, or share ideas.
(3) Participate in a family picnic, family camp, or special family outings.
(4) Form a parent support group with other parents.
(5) Help your children create a family tree.
(6) Eat dinner together at least two nights a week.
(7) Involve grandparents more frequently in family life.
(8) Attend *Keeping Families First* conferences, activities, and events.
(9) Play games with your children once a month.
(10) Spend at least 10 minutes a day with each child alone.
(11) Practice the values you would like to pass on to your child.
(12) Take a day off and create a special holiday just for your family.
(13) Support *Keeping Families First* theme by agreeing to no violence in the home.
(14) Turn off the TV and do a family project (4-H, community service, home improvement, etc.)
(15) Invite friends and relatives to a party planned by children.
(16) Go to the park, take a nature walk, or ride bikes together.
(17) Contact your Cooperative Extension office about information and programs related to parenting, family relations, financial management, nutrition and health.
(18) Have the family help plan and prepare nutritious meals together.
(19) Have yearly medical check-ups for all family members.

Shopping List for Teens/Youth Organizations

(1) Plan a community improvement project that involves multiple age groups.
(2) Sponsor an after-school activity for elementary school youth once a month.
(3) Be a “Big Brother” or “Big Sister” for a child who needs extra support.
(4) Offer free or inexpensive child care so parents can attend parenting class, shop, or attend school activities and teachers conferences.
(5) Provide a shopping service for children to help them purchase gifts for parents.
(6) Sponsor a family night.
(7) Plan a dance or meal for senior citizens.
(8) Plan a family-friendly New Year’s Eve celebration.
(9) Provide an errand or shopping service for elderly people.
(10) Offer free or inexpensive child care so parents can attend parenting class, shop, or attend school activities and teachers conferences.
(11) Provide a shopping service for children to help them purchase gifts for parents.
(12) Sponsor a family night.
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(18) Sponsor a family night.
(19) Plan a dance or meal for senior citizens.
(20) Plan a family-friendly New Year’s Eve celebration.

Shopping List for Seniors or Grandparents

(1) Plan a special outing to the zoo or museum.
(2) Help with a family tree or scrapbook.
(3) Make an ethnic dish or a favorite family meal together.
(4) Share family history by telling stories and making audio/video tapes.
(5) Plan a picnic.
(6) Read together.
(7) Teach a craft or heritage skill to your grandchild.
(8) Play board games or cards.
(9) Help children with homework.
(10) Coach a youth activity.
(11) Become a 4-H leader.
(12) Call, write, or e-mail out-of-town grandchildren regularly.
(13) Remember birthdays and special occasions by sharing a special note or keepsake.
(14) Volunteer to be the room parent, assist in the library, serve as a tutor, or listen to children read at school.
(15) Assist with transportation to activities.
(16) Invite a child to teach you how to run the computer.
(17) Talk about the health history of the family, both good and bad.
Shopping List for Schools

(1) Support *Keeping Families First* campaigns by co-sponsoring conferences, workshops, and family fairs.

(2) Provide activities, such as picnics and pot-lucks for school employees and their families.

(3) Create “family-friendly” policies for teachers to enable them to attend appointments for their own children.

(4) Have a parent-teacher organization develop workshops based on the families’ needs.

(5) Hold “Family Health Awareness Day” or “Cultural Awareness Day”.

(6) Recognize the entire family when a child gets an award.

(7) Develop materials or workshops to help parents create an appropriate study atmosphere at home.

(8) Provide more opportunities for parents to share their interests, abilities, and talents.

(9) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to develop programs for use by parents and family members on: family relations, effective parenting, money management, health or wellness.

(10) Offer school library cards to families of students.

(11) Distribute *Enriching Family Relationships* and *Ups and Downs of Parenting Adolescents* newsletters available through your local Cooperative Extension office.

(12) Provide a meeting place for parent groups and for other family/community activities.

(13) Support character development, including: trustworthiness, respect for others, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for information about Character Counts.

(14) Provide nutritious, low-cost snacks for the athletic concession stand.

(15) Invite parents, grandparents, and family members to join students for lunch.

(16) Develop and support a before and after school care program that uses 4-H materials.

(17) Develop a family resource center in your school.

(18) Hold a stress reduction clinic for teachers, athletes, and students.

(19) Plan a physical activity in which students and staff can participate, perhaps to raise money for a school project.

Shopping List for Families with Older Adults

(1) Set aside time for regular visits.

(2) Help them review and organize important papers.

(3) Label photos with family members.

(4) Invite other seniors over for visits.

(5) Help seniors identify, label, and store family heirlooms.

(6) Share special occasions with elderly people who can’t be with their own families.

(7) Design a calendar with important family dates.

(8) Provide cards, stationary, stamps, and help with letter writing.

(9) Participate in special events important to seniors.

(10) Encourage seniors to participate in senior center activities and family activities.

(11) Keep senior family members informed of family activities.

(12) If the senior lives in adult child’s home, schedule some time for care giver, or hire someone to look after the person so the care giver can go on an outing for a day.

Shopping List for Religious Organizations

(1) Sponsor *Keeping Families First* forums and conferences with other religious organizations.

(2) Plan family night activities.

(3) Offer workshops on preventing high-risk teen behavior including dating violence.

(4) Sponsor marriage enrichment workshops.

(5) Support educational efforts to improve family relationships, communications, anger management, and money management.
(6) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to sponsor parent education programs and to organize parent support groups.
(7) Incorporate Cooperative Extension articles on resilient families and parenting tips into your church newsletter.
(8) Organize a family day or camp, making a special effort to include all families.
(9) Distribute *Enriching Family Relationships* and *Ups and Downs of Parenting Adolescents* newsletters available through your local Cooperative Extension office.
(10) Establish a plan to support families during emergencies.
(11) Make church facilities available for *Keeping Families First* activities.
(12) Designate one service a month for focusing on strengthening families.

**Shopping List for Couples**

(1) Set aside time each day to exchange thoughts and dreams.
(2) Make a commitment to go on a “date” regularly.
(3) Tell each other you appreciate the simple/routine things you do for each other.
(4) Write a letter of appreciation to each other.
(5) Participate in a couple enrichment workshop.
(6) Designate a private area in your home where children are not allowed to intrude without knocking; take advantage of this area for a chance to talk.
(7) Show respect for each other.
(8) Leave thoughtful notes periodically.
(9) Teach your partner to do what you do, for example: check writing, car maintenance, or laundry.
(10) Practice negotiation skills and be willing to compromise.
(11) Share in your partners hobbies or interests.
(12) Support the opportunity for individual growth.
(13) Plan together for a healthy lifestyle and regular medical checkups.
(14) Plan a regular physical activity together, such as biking, walking, dancing, etc.
(15) Review health insurance policies, life insurance policies, or wills regularly.
(16) Know where your important papers are located.

**Shopping List for Businesses**

(1) Offer flex-time for parent/school and family activities.
(2) Offer sick leave for a parent when children or partner is ill.
(3) Sponsor a family photo week or family bulletin board.
(4) Host brown bag lunches where workers can discuss family issues.
(5) Sponsor school-to-work days for children of employees.
(6) Sponsor orientation sessions for families of new employees.
(7) Encourage recreation or entertainment businesses to give family discounts.
(8) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to provide employees with family relations, parenting, money management and health and wellness information.
(9) Distribute *Enriching Family Relationships* and *BALANCE: Work, Family and Personal Life* newsletters from your local Cooperative Extension office.
(10) Highlight family achievements in company newsletters.
(11) With other organizations, sponsor a *Keeping Families First* conference and other activities.
(12) Help employees identify other employees who live nearby who may assist each other in emergencies.
(13) Encourage employees to exchange clothes, toys, books, baby furniture, or other household goods.
(14) Include parenting tips or a *Keeping Families First* column in company newsletter.
(15) Consider on-site child care or support child care providers in the communities.
(16) Have exercise equipment available for the employees.
(17) Get the employees involved in a worksite physical fitness/nutrition program.
Shopping List for Child Care Centers/Homes

(1) Provide parents with a newsletter that includes happenings at the center, meal menus, educational “bits” about parenting, discipline, nutrition, and suggested family activities.

(2) Post any changes in prominent places convenient for the parents to see.

(3) Send home notes to help a parent share in a child’s day, a change in mood, etc.

(4) Host family activities where all the parents get to meet each other.

(5) Sponsor an exchange of clothes, toys, and books.

(6) Ask for parent involvement by encouraging them to provide for paper, pencils, old magazines, and other materials for art projects.

(7) Offer opportunities for parents to become involved in child care activities.

(8) Provide a variety of activities for school-age children, including options for quiet time, homework, and play activity.

(9) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to provide educational NebFacts or NebGuides to parents.

(10) Contact Nebraska Good Beginnings at the State Education Department for educational materials for parents.

(11) Use the Character Counts program materials and other 4-H materials to teach life skills.

(12) Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for an independent study course for child care providers.

(13) Have the children help you plan and prepare nutritious snacks.

(14) Take the children to the park and have them help you clean up part of it.

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Shopping List for Community Groups

(1) Donate books or materials on marriage, family life, parenting, and money management to your local community library.

(2) Help libraries create displays that complement Keeping Families First activities.

(3) Sponsor discussions on family relations, effective parenting, financial management, and other family issues.

(4) Develop and distribute a directory of family related and community agencies and how to access their services.

(5) Hold community-wide fairs several times a year in different neighborhoods with entertainment for families and information for parents.

(6) Financially sponsor Keeping Families First buttons, posters, and/or refrigerator magnets for groups to use throughout the campaign.

(7) Provide speakers for a Keeping Families First speakers bureau.

(8) Have your mayor declare a Keeping Families First week to encourage communities and neighborhoods to sponsor Keeping Families First celebrations.

(9) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to hold a Keeping Families First conference with workshops on family issues, exhibits, activities for children, and family fun time.

(10) Have family members sign pledges saying “yes” to family time.

(11) Sponsor a fun run/walk for a charity, such as heart disease, diabetes, etc.

(12) Sponsor a group to pick up trash or beautify the community.

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“Simple acts of caring and involvement in young people’s lives are the cornerstone of a healthy community for youth.”

Peter L. Benson
"We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads."
Herman Melville

Shopping List for Media

(1) Encourage employees to participate in Keeping Families First initiatives.

(2) Sponsor Keeping Families First public service announcements.

(3) Join with businesses to sponsor weekly or monthly coupons for discounts on food and entertainment for families.

(4) Sponsor speakers on family relations, parenting skills, and money management.


(6) Help Keeping Families First reach more parents through news briefs, calendar items, and bulletin board tidbits.

(7) Develop newspaper, radio, and television programs on Keeping Families First issues.

(8) Give editorial page support to Keeping Families First efforts by commenting on family relations, parenting skills, and money management.

(9) Develop an idea exchange where readers or viewers write or call in with tips on strengthening families.

(10) Spotlight Keeping Families First or local families on radio and television talk shows.

(11) Cover neighborhood-sponsored Keeping Families First events.

(12) Cover Keeping Families First conferences or workshops.

(13) Work with your local Cooperative Extension office to feature a weekly newspaper column, radio, or TV show that gives family and parenting tips.
"Never Doubt
that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. It is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead
Keeping Families First
Family Pledge Card

We are committed to building strong and caring families in our community.
As a family, we pledge to:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Family Signatures

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Each family submitting a pledge card will receive a Family Fun Activity List.

Can we publish your family as a Keeping Family First participant? _____ Yes _____ No

Name: _________________________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ___________________________________________________________________
Phone: _________________________________________________________________________
Businesses, Schools, Communities & Organizations Pledge Card

___________ is fully committed to Keeping Families First and will strive to be a people-sensitive, family-friendly environment. It is our full intent to strengthen families by supporting our families in a most progressive way. We have a responsibility to help make families a positive concept and reduce conflicting demands. We will strive to plan and develop our mission, goals, and policies to further strengthen our families and our community.

We pledge to:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

This pledge will effect ______ employees.

Business or Organization: _________________________________________________________
Contact Person: _________________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ________________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________________________________________________

May we publish your business or organization as a Keeping Families First partner?
____ Yes  ____ No