

# 5 ways

## Wisconsin families strengthen communities & contribute to the economy

FAMILY LIVING PROGRAMS  
UW-EXTENSION

Cooperative Extension  
Family Living Programs  
provides research-based  
resources and education  
to help families thrive.

### 1 Families and children are Wisconsin's future.

Today's children will carry into adulthood the lessons they learn from their parents. That's why good parenting practices that help children achieve lifetime success are so important to the social and economic future of Wisconsin.

- Family Living Programs has developed an effective parenting education program that has benefited nearly half of all state parents with newborns for two decades through the *Parenting* newsletter series. And Family Living's view of good parenting practices has continued to evolve with the times through its *eParenting™ High-Tech Kids* program which helps parents and kids connect in the era of new media.



## 2 Families fuel the workforce.

Seventy-one percent of state children younger than age six have both parents in the workforce.

- Among the challenges faced by working parents is finding high-quality child care. Family Living



Program's *Better Kid Care* offers training and support for early childhood staff in more than 40% of Wisconsin counties, including rural areas. *Better Kid Care* leads to improvements in early care and education programs in Wisconsin, and allows parents to work knowing their children are in good hands.

- Cooperative Extension nutrition educators help to keep Wisconsin's working families healthy through the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP). Diet-linked diseases account for around \$250 billion each year in increased medical costs and lost productivity, according to the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion Strategic Plan. More than 300,000 people, including youth and adults, learned about choosing and preparing healthier foods and basic food safety through WNEP in 2011. Nutrition education aids not only learners, but also employers and taxpayers who benefit from healthy workers and decreased medical costs.



## 3 Families are consumers.

Food, housing, health care, transportation—families need them all. Families support the local economy by purchasing goods and services from local businesses and service-providers. The 2010 American Community Survey reports that aggregate family income in Wisconsin totaled more than \$108 billion. Family wages used to purchase goods and services are a powerful driver of the state's economy.

- Family Living educators around the state provide education and resources to help families spend and manage their money wisely. Between 2008-2010, Family Living colleagues provided financial education to more than 42,000 individuals, ranging from youth to senior citizens. They also trained almost 2,000 community members on the basics of household financial management so that staff from human service agencies, food pantries and financial institutions were better equipped to counsel about budgeting and wise use of credit.



# 4 Working families are taxpayers.

Family wage earners contribute to state coffers through income, property and sales taxes. Working families use local banks and credit unions to secure basic financial services, such as checking, saving, investing and obtaining credit.

- Every year, Family Living Programs collaborates with financial institutions to sponsor Volunteer Income Tax Assistance programs around the state. These events not only help people prepare and file their taxes, but also offer an opportunity to learn about other strategies to enhance their financial situation. Taxpayers may hear about refunds for which they are eligible, bringing those dollars back into local communities.
- To help improve young people's financial literacy skills, Family Living educators work with state and community partners and local financial institutions to conduct programs that teach youth the fundamentals of good money management.



# 5 Families care for their elderly and disabled.

According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, caregiver services in the U.S. were valued at \$450 billion in 2009. The group reports that unpaid family caregivers will likely continue to be the largest source of long-term care services in the U.S. as the aging population (65+) more than doubles between 2000-2030, increasing to 71.5 million. Twenty-nine percent of the adult population (65.7 million people) currently provides care to someone who is ill, disabled or aged. Studies show

- Caregivers often find they need more information on topics such as keeping a loved one safe at home; communicating more effectively; balancing work and eldercare; and managing stress. Family Living educators have responded to this need by teaming up with community partners to provide resources such as the *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* course that enables family members to successfully manage their support roles.



that family members routinely step up to take responsibility for meeting caregiving needs at home.

## Cooperative Extension Family Living Programs— Working for Wisconsin families

**F**amily Living Programs university-based and county colleagues serve as catalysts for positive change by working with Wisconsin families and communities to address important issues, concerns and opportunities. Family Living provides statewide leadership to promote education, resources and partnerships that create an environment where families and their communities can thrive.

To learn more about Cooperative Extension, visit [www.uwex.edu/ces](http://www.uwex.edu/ces).

For more information on Family Living Programs, see [www.uwex.edu/ces/flp](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp) and visit us on Facebook.

