Youth Retention Study of 1ˢᵗ Year Members ~ Qualitative Insights

MULTI-STATE RESEARCH STUDY

Epsilon Sigma Phi Virtual Conference – Research Presentation
October 6, 2020
NAE4-HYDP Virtual Conference – Research Roundtable
October 22, 2020

Presented by:
JoLynn Miller, University of California
Sarah Hensley, University of Florida
Jeannette Rea Keywood, Rutgers University

Qualitative Team Research Presenters

Sarah Hensley, UF

Jeannette Rea Keywood, RU

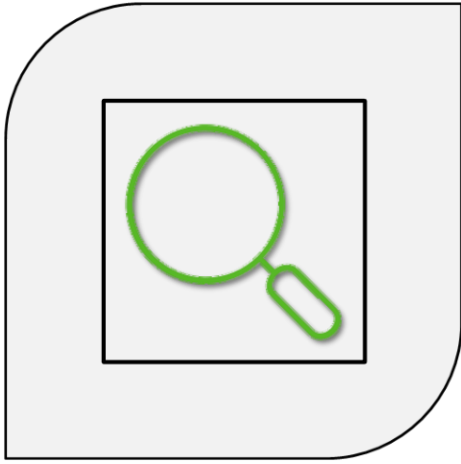JoLynn Miller, UCANR

Janet E. Fox, LSU

CarMun Kok, UCANR
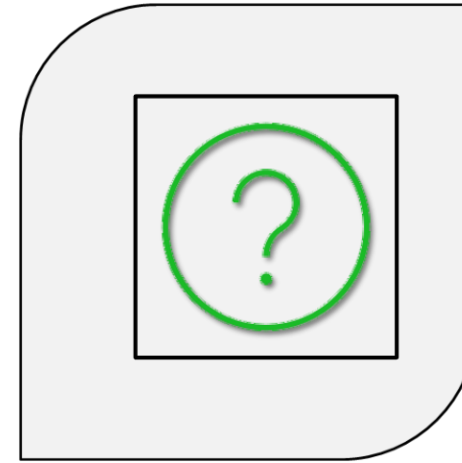
Marianne Bird, UCANR

Missy Cummins, WSU

Sarah Torbert, UWYO

Dale Pracht, UF

Cindy Wells, MO

NEED:
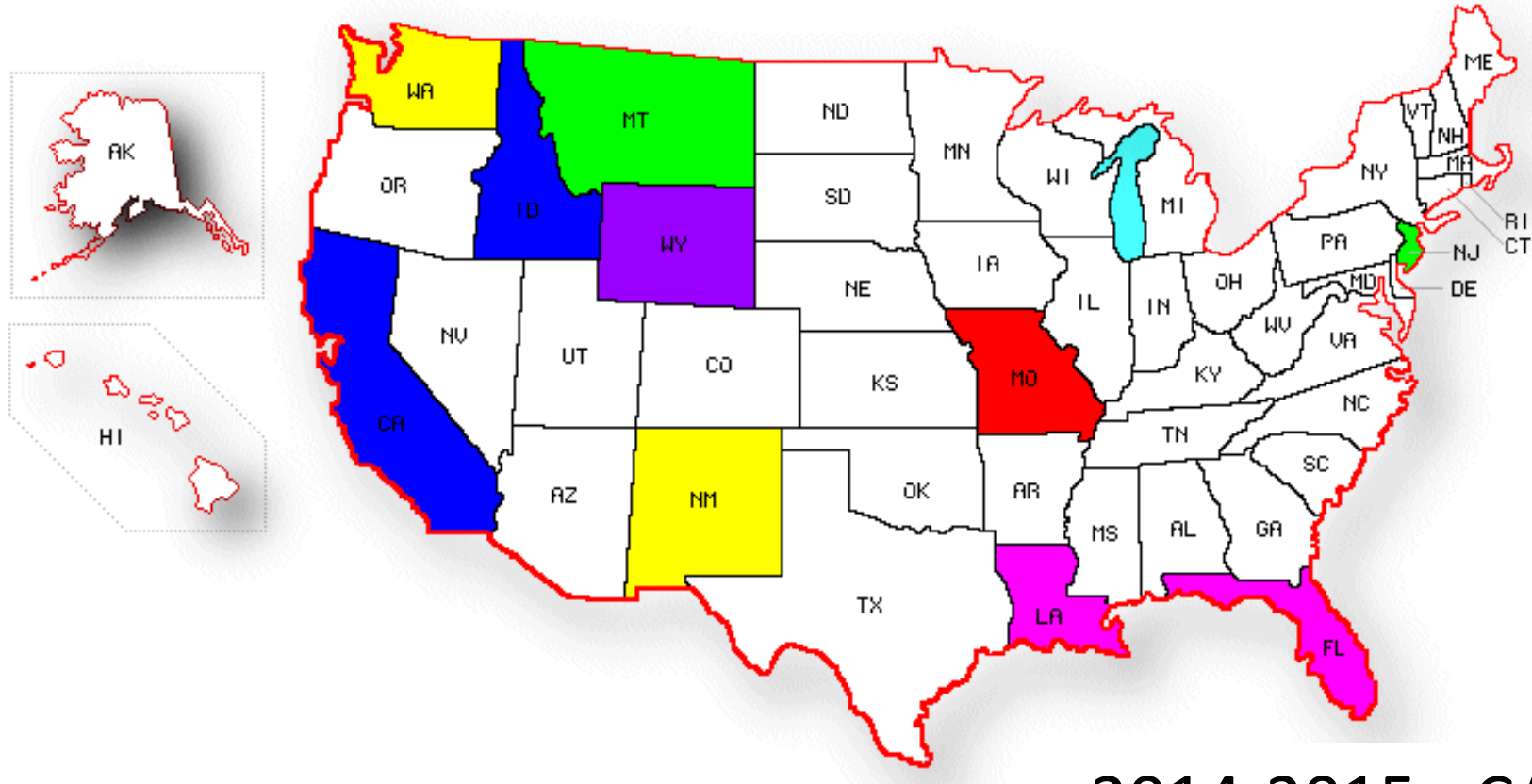PRIMARY INDICATOR FOR YOUTH DROPOUT FROM 4-H IS BEING A FIRST-YEAR MEMBER (ASTROTH,1985)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
WHY ARE YOUTH LEAVING AS FIRST YEAR FAMILIES?

WHY ARE THEY STAYING IN THE PROGRAM?

Research

Participating States

2014-2015 : CA and ID

2018-2019: 8 states

Survey Distribution

- Qualtrics Survey
- First Year Families & Members
- IRB Approved

Survey Development:
https://joe.org/joe/2018june/tt3.php

Qualitative Data

Qualitative Survey Questions

Expectations (Adult Only)

Expectations Met (Adult Only)

Leave (Adult)

Best Part of 4-H (Adult & Youth)

Changes They'd Make (Adult & Youth)

Share (Adult & Youth)

Code Book Development

Developed original codes

- Individual open coding of responses
- Discussed among research team and, using a grounded theory framework (Strauss, 1987), organized into consensus-based themes.
- With project growth, themes expanded and deepened.
- Initial data is being re-coded with newly revised code book.
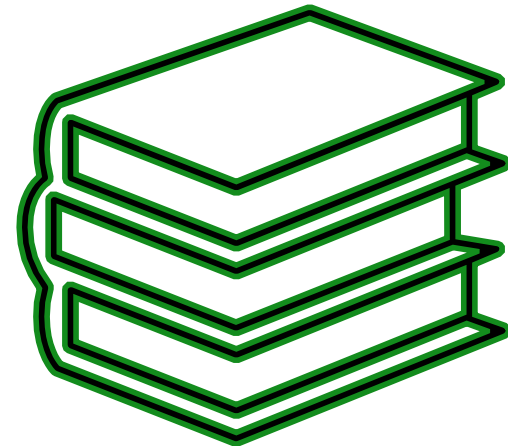
Re-enrollment Correlations

Years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18

Responses to the question "What would you change?" were coded as "positive", "constructive", "critical".

The data were double coded via consensus.

- Positive: "I wouldn't change a thing" or "nothing-it was great"

- Constructive feedback: "better communication" or "mandatory record books"

- Critical feedback: "We felt like a fish out of water and it gave her a bad feeling about 4-H" or "information was very very vague, which made us very very frustrated"

Findings

2015-2016 findings

- Parents who gave constructive feedback were 3.84 times more likely to re-enroll their child
- Parents who gave positive feedback were 19.13 times more likely to re-enroll their child than parents who gave critical feedback.

2016-2017 findings

- Parents who gave constructive feedback were 4.04 times more likely to re-enroll their child
- Parents who gave positive feedback were 16.07 times more likely to re-enroll their child than parents who gave critical feedback.

2017-2018 findings

◦ No significant difference between parents who gave constructive and critical feedback was found

Thematic Analysis of 2017-2018 Qualitative Data

Initial Inter-reliability Check of Data Coding

Round 1 – Deductive coding using code book developed apriori – Data randomly assigned qualitative team members

Discussion of Emerging Themes

Round 2 – Verification of Themes Identified & Peer Debriefing Process

Key Findings

| Belonging Inclusion | Communication | Organizational Structure |

Youth & Adult Perceptions

Belonging

"Being a part of a group where I can grow, learn about animals and learn how to help others."

"Connected to members of the group"

"The club was unwelcoming and cliquey. Not one member, parent, nor leader made an effort to welcome us as new members. Not once over the entire year."

"We were never welcomed into the 4H club."

Communication

"I just wish better communication to when projects are due"

"Honestly I would like the website to be cleaned up. I spent a lot of time searching for thing and found myself in a loop of not what I wanted"

"Better and more timely communication"

"More direction for new parents. I didn't know when meetings were or how to get involved or who to contact for more information.

"More information did not feel guided or connected for a first-year member. Was overwhelming."

Organizational Structure

"It would be more organized so we can participate"

"Thrown in without understanding what 4h (4-H) does or how things work"

"The meetings were disorganized & rules about when they could start their first project continually changed."

"The meetings where all members come together were disorganized. The 4-H officers didn't seem prepared. "

UTILIZE QUALITATIVE SURVEY FINDINGS TO DEVELOP EXIT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

GUIDE THE WORK OF THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM TO DEVELOP MATERIALS THAT SUPPORT RETENTION OF YOUTH

Future Research

Peer Reviewed Publications

Lewis, K. M., Ewers, T., Miller, J. C., Bird, M., Borba, J., Hill, R., . . . Trzesniewski, K. (2018). Addressing retention in youth programs: A survey for understanding families' experiences. Journal of Extension, 56. Retrieved from https://joe.org/joe/2018june/tt3.php

Lewis, K. M., Borba, J., Hill, R. D., & Miller, J. C. (2019). Effective communication of 4-H program essentials to 4-H families. Journal of Extension, 57. Retrieved from https://www.joe.org/joe/2019june/tt5.php

Special Thanks ~ Youth Retention Research Team

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Q & A