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Selected Human Ecology Outcomes Addressing the Ecology of Poverty

Food Insecurity and Food and Financial Skills

- Improved food and financial skills are associated with resilience to the effects of poverty on food security.
- Poverty and food deprivation are associated with obesity in women.
- *EFNEP* assists limited resource families in acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior change necessary for nutritional well-being, and to contribute to personal development.
- *FSNE—Eat Smart New York* targets food stamp recipients with education designed to improve nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being on a limited budget.
- Food and Nutrition Education in Communities programs, including *EFNEP* and *FSNE*, provided programming to 18,209 adults and 13,602 youth enrolled in nutrition education sessions through *CCE* during 2006.
- The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (*FMNP*) works to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income families and seniors, and support farmers. During 2006, *CCE* work to maximize redemption of *FMNP* checks resulted in 87,000 senior households and 275,000 *WIC* households redeeming *FMNP* checks, providing \$5.2 million directly to New York farmers.

Family and Welfare Policy

- Faculty are examining family and welfare policy, including marriage promotion initiatives, child support and fatherhood, cohabitation and marriage among unwed mothers, and racial and ethnic disparities in poverty.
- Results from these studies have been presented to policy makers and practitioners.

Strengthening Families

- Parenting skills are essential for promoting child well-being, but many parents struggle with how to parent effectively and meet both their own needs and those of their children.
- The *Parenting in Context* website (www.parenting.cit.cornell.edu) provides educators with research-based curricula, resources, and evaluation tools.

Environment of Childhood Poverty

- Research on developmental impacts of poverty investigates the role of multiple stressor exposure as a factor leading to socioemotional dysfunction and physiological stress among children.
- Stressors are both physical (i.e., housing, crowding, noise) and social (i.e., child separation from family, family turmoil, exposure to violence, peer difficulties).
- A national conference will use a bioecological model of human development to provide a theoretical and organizational framework

Morbid Obesity and Welfare to Work

- Morbid obesity impairs the ability of former welfare recipients to transition from welfare to work.
- It is associated with lower wages, fewer hours worked, a lower probability of employment, and greater reliance on cash benefits among some groups.
- For white females, an additional 65 pounds is associated with 9 percent lower wages.

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing

- Risk behaviors among fathers in fragile families include domestic violence, substance use problems, or incarceration.
- Research indicates that most commonly mothers end the relationship and monitor fathers' involvement with children.
- Policies aimed at promoting marriage and "responsible fatherhood" could face important challenges.

People with Disabilities

- Working-age people with disabilities have a higher risk of poverty than those without disabilities.
- Research data resulted in a program of technical assistance and presentations to government agencies, policymakers, and consumers on the employment and economic well-being of people with disabilities.

Selected Faculty in Human Ecology

Richard Burkhauser

Professor, Policy Analysis and Management
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Effect of public policies on economic behavior and well-being of vulnerable populations including older persons, people with disabilities, and low-income households.

Rachel Dunifon

Associate Professor, Policy Analysis and Management
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Child and family policy including how children fare in various family living arrangements, the role of grandparents in the lives of youth, and how welfare reform influences children.

John Cawley

Associate Professor, Policy Analysis and Management
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Economics of obesity including the effect of body weight on labor market outcomes: wage rates, unemployment, employment disability, transition from welfare to work.

Jamie Dollahite

Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences
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Nutrition education for limited-resource audiences that is designed to prevent obesity and chronic disease.

Gary Evans

Professor, Design and Environmental Analysis
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Effect of the physical environment on human health and well being, particularly environmental stress, children's environments, and the environment of poverty.

Daniel Lichter

Professor, Policy Analysis and Management and Director, Bronfenbrenner Life Course Center
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Family and welfare policy, including children's changing living arrangements and poverty, cohabitation and marriage among unwed mothers, and welfare incentive effects on the family.

Christine Olson

Professor, Nutritional Sciences
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Community-based intervention to promote healthy body weight in mothers and infants; relationship of the rural food and physical activity environment to body weight in women and children.

Maureen Waller

Assistant Professor, Policy Analysis and Management
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Marriage, fatherhood, and social policy in low-income communities: transitions in relationships between unmarried mothers and fathers and between unmarried fathers and their children.

Prepared by Dr. Josephine A. Swanson, Associate Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Assistant Dean for Outreach, College of Human Ecology
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