



### **Program Spotlight: Family Resource Center Cornell Cooperative Extension Tioga County**

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The 2Gen Initiative Program Spotlight Series is intended to bring attention to parent education programs across the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) system that incorporate a two-generational (2Gen) or whole-family approach to parent education. This Program Spotlight focuses on the **Family Resource Center (FRC)** in CCE Tioga County and highlights impressions from CCE parent educators who have implemented the program.

#### **Program Background & History**

The Family Resource Center (FRC) program began in 1998 in Tioga County with contributions from many community members as well as a grant through the New York State Office of Child and Family Services (NYSOCFS) Children & Families Trust Fund. Since then, the program has evolved with support from these and other local funding sources. The FRC program provides a variety of parenting education opportunities, parent-child activities, and connections to community resources and engagement activities that support the health and well-being of families in Tioga County. The program is directed by a small team of credentialed parenting educators who work with parents, caregivers, and a variety of community partners to plan and implement program activities throughout the county, both virtually and in family homes.

#### **2Gen Approach**

A 2Gen approach to parenting has been integral to the FRC since the outset of the program—the program’s initial design prioritized drop-in play times for families with young children in which on-site “play care” was provided by staff and volunteers during parenting workshops. In addition, facilitated parent-child activities have been offered as core elements of the program to engage caregivers in hands-on learning about child development and strategies to nurture early curiosity. By engaging caregivers and children in activities together, FRC staff build meaningful relationships with families and assist them in exploring parenting strategies that are most relevant in their current situations. Parents and caregivers who engage in adult-focused workshops have the opportunity to try out newly learned skills with other families in the playtime context and with the support of parenting education staff. Parents and caregivers also connect with each other in a context of social support within the learning process. Children whose families participate in programming directly benefit from engaging in activities that support their development

and skills in a variety of areas and, most importantly, gain the experience of connecting learning and exploration with fun and family bonding.

### **Educator Impressions**

Jackie Spencer, an educator in Tioga County with long-term involvement in the FRC program states the following about how it impacts the families involved:

*“Providing family life education in a hands-on, family-oriented approach is similar to engaging with home growers in their gardens or producers on their farms. The conversations become bidirectional and the educators learn as much from the families as the families learn from them. Adult learners tend to seek out practical information to apply to an immediate goal. We have found that offering a package of opportunities to a universal audience of parents/caregivers to be far more beneficial in supporting the adoption of positive parenting practices.”*

In 2019, the FRC program served 162 and 160 children, and in 2020 the program served 168 adults and 143 children. With the help of parent and caregiver input, the FRC program continues to emphasize opportunities for families to gather together with their children and engage in a balance of formal parenting education workshop opportunities in the context of fun learning experiences.

**Visit the *Parenting Project* website at:**

<https://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/engagement/parenting/home>

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