

Thinking about Teams... Expanded Menu Opportunities for Elementary Schools

As part of the PROSPER continuation grant from the National Institutes of Health, we are able to offer our 14 PROSPER sites an “expanded menu” of evidence-based interventions for elementary aged youth. Our scientists found that more youth are experimenting with substances at an earlier age and wanted to encourage sites to adopt prevention programs in the elementary grades.

The continuation grant allowed us to make this offer in two consecutive years. Last year the offer included training in one of two school-based programs, Life Skills Training-Elementary (LST) or Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), or one family-based program (Family Matters). The first year included training costs and expenses for one teacher or one Extension staff member. The school or Extension Office had the option of training more staff for free if they covered travel expenses and curriculum costs.

This year the offer was modified. The menu was reduced to the two school programs (LST-Elementary and PATHS) but was offered to all teachers in one grade level at no cost to the school.

Some schools that declined the offer cited cuts to teaching positions as the reason they could not add new programming. In those cases, teachers were being moved to new grade levels or areas of instruction and needed to become familiar with new education curricula. Administrators feared that adding new programs would create an added burden for teachers. Other administrators explained their need to focus on improved reading and math performance since their building and/or district was labeled a “School In Need of Assistance” under No Child Left Behind.

These issues demonstrate the difficulties encountered when trying to implement evidence-based interventions. It also underscores the need for PROSPER Teams to build and maintain strong relationships with their school partners to sustain the programs they have in place.

A big thank you goes out to all those PROSPER teams that made a special effort to help their school leaders with this difficult and complex decision.

Sites using the LST Elementary program:

- Ottumwa
- Red Oak

Sites using the PATHS program:

- Mt. Pleasant
- Howard-Winneshiek

RAND Study Finds Alcohol Advertising and Marketing Are Associated with Adolescent Drinking

Children’s exposure to alcohol advertising during early adolescence appears to influence both beer drinking and their intentions to drink a year later, according to a RAND Corporation study published in the June 2007 issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

The study of children in the sixth and seventh grades found that those exposed to alcohol advertising at high levels – from television, magazines, in-store displays and promotional items like T-shirts and posters – were 50% more likely to drink and 36% more likely to intend to drink than children whose exposure to alcohol advertising was very low.

“Parents may be aware that advertising may promote drinking among early adolescents,” said Rebecca L. Collins, a RAND senior behavioral scientist and lead author of the study. “We did a previous study that found that children as young as fourth grade were very familiar with alcohol advertising and can tell you slogans and brand names. This new study shows that by the time they get to sixth grade, ads may be influencing them to drink.”

(Continued on page 5)

Youth on PROSPER teams in Iowa



Brooke Johnson

We would like to thank Brooke Johnson and Gabby Clark for sharing their thoughts about youth involvement on PROSPER teams. Brooke has been a member of the Estherville Team for five years and Gabby has been involved with the Hampton Team for two years. Their long-term involvement with these teams is a testament to their commitment to helping children and youth in their community.

Both Brooke and Gabby reported that they have lots of fun with the PROSPER programs and with the PROSPER team members. It appears that both girls became members of their local PROSPER teams largely due to recruitment efforts by their Team Leaders, Holle Smith (Estherville) and Bev Peters (Hampton).

When asked why they became members of the PROSPER team, they said that their primary motivation was because they wanted to help children and youth. Brooke and Gabby reported that youth roles might be somewhat different than that of the adult team members, but they contribute to the teams' work by providing support for program recruitment and registration, assisting with childcare, and attending various PROSPER meetings. In addition, young people have valuable perspectives to offer as former participants of PROSPER programs.

Both Brooke and Gabby are not only committed to working with their PROSPER teams but are strong advocates for youth involvement on their teams. They suggested that youth on PROSPER teams have ideas that appeal to other youth in the community as well as new suggestions for and reactions to the PROSPER programs based on their experiences. For example, PROSPER youth can offer ideas for incentives, prizes, and activities for kids who participate in the programs. They also see youth team members relating better with younger kids because they are seen in a positive light and as a role model.

When Brooke and Gabby were asked what they have learned by being members of their respective PROSPER teams, they stated they have learned to be responsible and think outside the box. In addition, they realized that family dynamics are unique to each family and that parents raise their children in different ways.

Both girls want future PROSPER youth members to know that it's fun to be a part of the PROSPER team. The "biggest fun" is knowing that they are a part of a group that is making a difference in the lives of children, their families, and their communities.

Thank you Brooke and Gabby for sharing your experiences!



Gabby Clark

(Continued from page 4)

"Parents often think they don't have to worry about their kids drinking before they get to high school, but sixth grade – or even before then – is the time to talk with children about alcohol marketing techniques, as well as drinking," Collins added. "Getting kids to think critically about ads may lessen any effects the ads have."

Like other studies, the RAND research found that television ads, which mostly appear during sports programming, are a key factor. But the RAND study also found that the 19% of children who owned a hat, poster or T-shirt promoting alcohol were nearly twice as likely to drink or intend to drink as other youngsters.

"We were a little surprised by how common these promotional items were," Collins said. "Parents can make a difference by keeping promotional merchandise from their kids. My guess is that many parents think it's harmless: your kid has a Budweiser T-shirt, it's just funny. But it probably is a subtle communication to kids that beer drinking is cool."

The study by RAND, a nonprofit research organization, is titled "Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and its Relationship to Underage Drinking" and is available from the Journal of Adolescent Health Web site at www.JAHOnline.org.

We would love to hear your local news! From big events to interesting little stories of success or cautionary tales, we all benefit from knowing what is going on in other PROSPER communities. If you have any local news that you'd be willing to take a moment to share, please send a note to mbode@iastate.edu or sbecker@iastate.edu and we'll be sure it appears in the newsletter and/or the PROSPER website.



PROSPER PARTNERSHIPS

**Iowa State University
Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute**
2625 North Loop Drive, Suite 500
Ames, IA 50010-8296

**Iowa State University
University Extension**

"Partnering for Capable Youth and Families"



Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 3680 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.

**IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY**
University Extension

PROSPER is a partnership of prevention scientists from Iowa State University's Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute, ISU Extension, local school districts and community volunteers.



Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute
2625 North Loop Drive, Suite 500
Ames, IA 50010-8296