

# Knowledge of Emotional, Social, Legal, and Financial Realities and Responsibilities of Parenting

Report #4  
Future Leaders Program  
Department of Social Services  
Missouri, USA

February 14, 2023



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## Overview

This report describes participants' knowledge of emotional, social, legal, and financial realities and responsibilities of parenting as part of the Future Leaders program. The Missouri IV-D Family Support Division received a three-year, \$1 million grant from the Office of Child Support Enforcement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund the Future Leaders program as part of the Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting demonstration. The Future Leaders program focuses on teen parenthood and emphasizes collaborative relationships between the Missouri IV-D Family Support Division and urban and rural school districts across Missouri, with a core focus on improving the lives of the youth they serve.

The goal of the Future Leaders program is to educate middle school aged youth, so they become more mindful of their actions about responsible parenthood and inspire them to be advocates of responsible behavior going forward. This is accomplished through partnerships with organizations, some with pre-made curricula created specifically for teens and young adults, and some who design curricula specifically for this program. The overarching aims of the Future Leaders program are to:

- Provide child support education to 7th and 8th grade students in Missouri public schools by explaining the financial, legal, and emotional responsibilities of teenage pregnancy
- Educate youth so they become more mindful of their actions about responsible parenthood and inspire them
- Develop future leaders by educating and motivating teens to delay parenthood until they have completed their education, started a career, and entered a committed relationship
- Learn life lessons on the responsibilities of parenthood, finance, and child support

Key long-term goals of the Future Leaders program are to increase:

- Age of parents when the first child is born
- Number of children born into committed relationships
- Number of parents with gainful and sustained employment upon birth of their first child and subsequent children

## Program Structure

The student learning component of the Future Leaders program comprised two main blocks of content. The financial curriculum was provided through Junior Achievement and the personal development content was adapted and created specifically for this program by Dr. Victor R. Wilburn, Professor of Child and Family Studies at Southeast Missouri State University. The full curriculum consists of these modules:

- Cyberbullying
- Discover Your True Self
- Financial Responsibilities of Parenthood
- Future Leaders Goals
- Human Needs and Safety
- Learning to Lead
- Relationship Violence
- Relationships (Bullying)
- Sense of Purpose and Achievement
- Basic Human Needs
- So, You Think You're Ready to be a Parent?
- Communication and Relationships
- Parenthood
- Path to Success
- Readiness for Parenting
- Sense of Purpose
- Social Belonging
- Future Leaders Introduction
- Social Aspects of Parenthood
- Discipline

The Future Leaders program responded to the needs of the school districts and to certain student populations. Educational content was updated and adjusted on several occasions based on student needs and the willingness of the individual school district to present specific content. Not every unit of content was presented to every student cohort identically. Over time, the strategy of adjustment will allow for further tailoring of the educational content to specific student circumstances. Data collected across these changes may also provide insight into future directions for maximizing the learning potential of these modules. The program is maintaining a library of all modules in every adjusted form so they can be re-used when appropriate.

We held focus groups with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Jefferson City, MO to obtain early feedback on the content and format of the planned educational modules. Content from these 4 modules was presented for feedback and evaluation:

- Module 1 – So You Think You’re Ready to be a Parent
- Module 3 – Social Belonging
- Module 4b – Bullying
- Module 4 – Sense of Purpose and Achievement

The focus groups were video recorded for analysis and data was collected from the student cohort via polls and surveys, some of which were structured and some that

encouraged free text entry (which included emojis). All modules were evaluated across the same 10 parameters with more input sought about specific content (such as the value of videos) as appropriate. The 10 questions asked after each module included:

- Q1. Did you find the topic interesting?
- Q2. What did you think of the video(s)?
- Q3. What did you think of the instructor?
- Q4. Did you like the pictures in the presentation?
- Q5. Did you like the activities in the presentation?
- Q6. What was the one thing you liked best about the course?
- Q7. What was the one thing you didn't like about the course?
- Q8. Was the presentation too short?
- Q9. Was the presentation too long?
- Q10. Overall, how would you rate the presentation today?

Key focus group findings include:

- Participants found the topics presented interesting (75% responded with a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5).
- Participants viewed the videos, facilitators, and pictures used in the presentations favorably.
- Participants described videos equally as OK, Great, and Weird. Popular characters (i.e., Shrek!) in videos seemed to increase educational material retention.
- Participants preferred videos when they perceived them funny or having a fun part to them.
- Participants strongly preferred in-person presentation as opposed to virtual interactions.
- Participants preferred pictures and videos framed in school settings.
- The timeframes for the presentations were comfortable and appropriate.
- The module on bullying seemed to be the most easily relatable.
- Most focus group members thought they would discuss the topics in the modules with their peers.
- A potentially useful tool for facilitators is a current lexicon of emojis and their use within this age group.

## Results

Seven hundred fifty-seven students from seven school districts and 31 cohorts entered the Future Leaders program in Year 1. Of those, 41% did not record more activity beyond enrollment. For students participating beyond enrollment, the level of

participation varied across schools and cohorts with overall participation rates ranging from 52% to 100%. Participation also varied across modules within cohorts. Activity levels, as measured by the activity record in the (LMS), were high. See Table 1 for Fall 2021 activity level as an example.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Page Views</b>
assignments	9,757
collaborations	8
conferences	20
discussions	5
files	1,749
general	24,734
grades	4,513
groups	79
modules	25,627
other	11,156
pages	5,668
quizzes	37,720
Total	121,036

**Table 1-Activity Levels by Category**

### **Pre- and Post-Knowledge Test Results**

Information from Personal Development modules was obtained by data extraction from Canvas and exported to a statistical analysis spreadsheet for further analysis. Some data elements, such as facilitator name, day and time of class, and other similar elements were merged into the data manually. Data fields such as student or facilitator ratio at the individual module level were calculated via the statistical analysis package. Data completion increased over the first year of the project, particularly after the new environment created in Canvas. Data are internally consistent.

Post-tests for Personal Development modules show significant knowledge gain. On average, students were able to correctly answer post-test questions 73% of the time as compared to about 33% on the pre-test. There is no significant variation in these results across metropolitan, micropolitan, or rural student cohorts.

Facilitators documented student participation for 63.5% of modules presented. Student participation is measured across 4 parameters (engagement, department, teamwork,

and leadership) and is measured on a score of 1-16 points (4 each). On average, across all modules, students scored 15.58 out of 16, suggesting a high level of participation.

### **Fidelity to Curriculum and Facilitator Satisfaction**

Facilitators indicated that they presented the modules as designed 89% of the time. Within the remaining 11% (those modules not delivered per design) facilitators most commonly indicated that the lack of resources, such a table, chairs, audio-visual equipment, etc., was the reason they adapted the module. This finding is closely followed by adaptation needed because of local barriers to full implementation related to school policy and modification needed to fit the physical setting. One facilitator indicated that they had modified videos or discussion in one instance for students to take in the educational content.

Facilitators reported that they were extremely satisfied with their experience with a module 76.6% of the time. Of the remaining 23.4%, facilitators reported that they were somewhat satisfied with their experience with facilitating a module. About 2% of the time facilitators reported that they were somewhat dissatisfied with their experience with a module.

Facilitators indicated that no change was needed to the modules 56.14% of the time. Facilitators made suggestions for content change to about 23% of modules taught. Facilitators reported that they had time issues or insufficient time to complete a module in a little over 7% of modules facilitated. Facilitators asked for added activities for about 2% of the modules taught.

Facilitators felt that students were mostly satisfied with the module 84% of the time. Facilitators reported that most students expressed both satisfaction and dissatisfaction at various points in the module for about 10% of the modules. Facilitators noted that most students expressed dissatisfaction with the module in about 2% of the modules facilitated. Facilitators felt they couldn't judge student levels of satisfaction in about 1.7% of modules.

Not all modules were evaluated by facilitators regarding their satisfaction with the module. The lack of a facilitator satisfaction score does not seem related to the student knowledge score, nor does lower facilitator satisfaction ranking seem related to the student knowledge score in the Personal Development dataset. In addition, student participation score (1-16) doesn't seem to vary by facilitator satisfaction.

## **Benefits of Future Leaders Expressed by School Administration**

Key Findings:

- 100% of administrators cited improved awareness in the student population of the concerns and issues associated with teen development.
- 71% of administrators reported that the program increased awareness of teen parents and their children.
- 28% of administrators reported improved policies around teen development and improved support for teen parents.
- 57% of administrators reported improved familiarity with the rights of parenting adolescents.
- 14% of administrators reported improved availability of subsidized childcare.

Other benefits of the Future Leaders program to the school included appreciation for the program facilitators and their ability to build positive relationships with students and that it was nice to have another adult that students felt connected to.

## **Impact on Students**

Ultimately, the goal of the Future Leaders program is to provide education and support for middle school aged students. Post-course, several students provided feedback about the Future Leaders program and their experience with it. These students answered four queries:

1. The three most important things I learned from the Future Leaders program are...
2. How or why would you encourage someone else to take the Future Leaders program?
3. What would you like to tell us about the Future Leaders program? Any takeaways or things you will remember? Be honest!
4. Scariest things about entering adulthood.

Here are examples of what they had to say:

1. The three most important things I learned from the Future Leader's program are....
  - "How to save money. How to take care yourself. How to prepare yourself before having kids as teen."
  - "How to be an adult. How to take care of ourselves. How to use money."
  - "Learned about what happens if you had a child at a young age. How to control myself. How to keep my money right."



- “Learn how to save. Don't have kids. In be mature.”
  - “Don't have kids as a teen. Be kind. Something about conflict and resolution.”
  - “How to save money. How to take care yourself. How to prepare yourself before having kids as teen.”
2. How or why would you encourage someone else to take the Future Leaders program?
- “Because it could help you with your life and give you good advice on life. If they want to learn more about life.”
  - “It will teach you things, you probably never thought about.”
  - “I would be like, It'll keep you away from bad things.”
3. What would you like to tell us about the Future Leaders program? Any takeaways or things you will remember? Be honest!
- “I kinda like it sometimes.”
  - “It was good. I learned a lot. Maybe we could play some type of games to go along with the assignments.”
  - “Some stuff you already know.”
4. Scariest things about entering adulthood.
- “People could ring your life and get talked about.”
  - “Getting talked about to my family”
  - “Paying bills, having kids, get a job, etc.”
  - “Working, paying bills”

In conclusion, the information gathered for this project brief is based on information gathered throughout the first half of the program. This information and will help us enhance our curriculum and activities to positively affect students who participate in the Future Leaders Program.