

CYFC Web site:

web1.msue.msu.edu/cyfc

An Introduction to the Children, Youth, Families and Communities (CYFC) unit of MSU Extension

In February 2008, two MSU Extension units—Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and 4-H Youth Development—merged to form a single administrative unit within Extension. With input from county and state FCS and 4-H staff members, the new unit was named Children, Youth, Families and Communities (CYFC). After a selection process, Cheri Booth was named Assistant Director for MSU Extension and State Leader for Children, Youth, Families and Communities.

- Through a series of surveys and other means, CYFC county and state staff members provided input to determine the focus areas within the CYFC unit. Through a selection process, coordinators for each focus area were appointed. The six focus areas and their coordinators are:
 - Program and Organizational Support, Judy Ratkos
 - Family Resiliency and Human Development, Dawn Contreras
 - Leadership, Citizenship and Service, Cyndi Mark
 - 4-H Youth Development, Julie Chapin
 - Family Economics and Consumerism, Erica Tobe
 - Food, Nutrition, Health and Well-being, Cheri Booth (temporary)
- State CYFC staff members have all been assigned to one of these six focus areas or to the overall management of the unit. The attached list shows who is in each focus area. Please note that this is very much a work in progress, as many staff members haven't yet defined exactly what their new responsibilities will be. **For the most current information you should always check the CYFC Web site at web1.msue.msu.edu/cyfc.** In addition to this program area list, there will also be a staff list organized by last name posted on the Web site.
- A definition of each focus area is included at the beginning of each focus area section of the attached list. Please be aware that these are draft statements and may change. Again, check the CYFC Web site for the most current definitions.
- The consolidation of FCS and 4-H is designed to improve efficiencies within Extension and take advantage of our curriculum development skills to create new programming that spans the life cycle.
- Savings achieved through improved efficiency will be used to increase our investment in tenure stream faculty and academic specialist positions in areas pertinent to CYFC programming.

- One of the expected benefits of the CYFC consolidation is the creation of new curriculum materials that are part of efforts to provide programming across the lifespan. These materials could be completely new, expansions of existing materials, modifications of existing materials, or result from combining materials from several existing curricula.
- All current brands under the CYFC umbrella will remain for the time being. There are no current plans to do away with the 4-H brand or any of the FCS program brands.
- All county staff members currently working in 4-H or FCS program areas may continue to use their current title. Officially, all educators at the county level have the title “Extension educator.” Any designation that has been added to that title to help describe the nature of an educator’s work may continue to be used, for the time being.

FAQs

1. Why will this work today when it did not work a few years ago?

- a. This process really started with our Issue ID process two years ago and our strategic planning processes in 4-H and FCS. All these processes, as well as regional and national efforts to focus Extension programming, point to the need for programs that provide consistent messages across the lifespan. Research shows that consistent programming across the lifespan is essential for behavioral changes in individuals, families and communities.

2. Will this change the structure of our county MSUE offices or local employee duties?

- a. The structural changes on campus will not have an impact on the structure of our county offices. Our county offices will still be structured to meet the needs of the county. Campus staff will now be poised to provide greater support to our county staff.

3. Will this diminish the 4-H brand?

- a. Absolutely not! 4-H is a flagship program in MSUE, and that will continue. We will continue to co-brand our 4-H program with the clover logo and the MSUE logo. MSUE’s commitment to 4-H is evident in Director Coon’s intensive efforts in youth programs, from his membership on the Michigan 4-H Foundation Board of Directors to his participation and membership on the National 4-H Council.

4. What about the Food and Nutrition Program, EFNEP, Better Kid Care and other FCS brands?

- a. The purpose of this restructuring is to strengthen the programs that we have been delivering for many years. We’re not throwing out our tried and true brand identities. We are not doing away with FNP, EFNEP, BKC or

any other programs. These are critically important programs for struggling families across the state, and we intend to bolster them with this reorganization. We are not doing away with family financial management programs or the Breast Feeding Initiative. But we do intend to make these programs even better by connecting them to campus-based faculty and reducing our own overhead in administering these programs. What we're changing is the way we are organized to develop and deliver these and other programs related to the needs of Michigan's children, youth and families and communities

5. Is this a pilot for other areas of MSUE?

- a. We will continuously examine the most effective and efficient methods for achieving our mission. However, this is a model designed specifically for CYFC programs as we transition to having more specialists in academic units available to assist with research and extension programming for CYFC. We will continue to seek opportunities to economize and reduce redundancy in all of our programs.

6. How will this help Extension educators meet the needs of their local communities?

- a. Better programs. Better curriculum. Greater access to the knowledge being created on campus.