Limited Environmental Influence from Child to Parent

Do children who participate in environmental education influence their parents’ environmental behavior? Authors of a new article published in Natural Sciences Education investigated intergenerational environmental communication (IGEC). Both the child and parent completed a pre- and post-survey after the child participated in a water resources environmental education (EE) program.

The water resources EE program increased child knowledge but did not significantly increase parent knowledge. There was also a significant difference between perceived levels of environmental communication (EC) between child and parent, with parents indicating higher levels of EC than their children. Participants reporting low EC levels had significantly less interest in, concern for, or knowledge about environmental issues. Several key factors initiated IGEC between children and their parents, including saving household money by changing environmental behaviors, exposure to media sources that reported environmental news, and school activities such as homework related to environmental issues.

The results from this study reinforce the need for continued research on IGEC and the influence, or lack thereof, on child-to-parent environmental knowledge and behavior. This investigation provides a starting point for developing intergenerational frameworks that provide researchers a foundation to investigate the process of household EC and the impact on environmental decision-making. The authors found very different child and parent perceptions of EC and behavior. Understanding these discrepancies will play a role in increasing IGEC and understanding the role of children as environmental catalysts.


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Worth 1,000 Words

Each month, we highlight a photo that demonstrates great techniques to illustrate research. This month, we thank Kerry Clark for this photo of a crimped cover crop plot. This photo:

• shows scientists in the field;
• shows tools in the foreground;
• represents science as a collaborative process; and
• avoids shadows cast on faces from sunlight.

Read the web story about the research here: www.agronomy.org/science-news/cover-crimp-cultivate. For more about the value of good photos in science communication, see http://bit.ly/2hTml5t. Don't let those photo opp moments pass you by! Keep your camera, or cell phone, ready to capture the exciting visuals of your science!

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