

# Facing the Future Together: Living and Working Well in a Complex World

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## INTRODUCTION

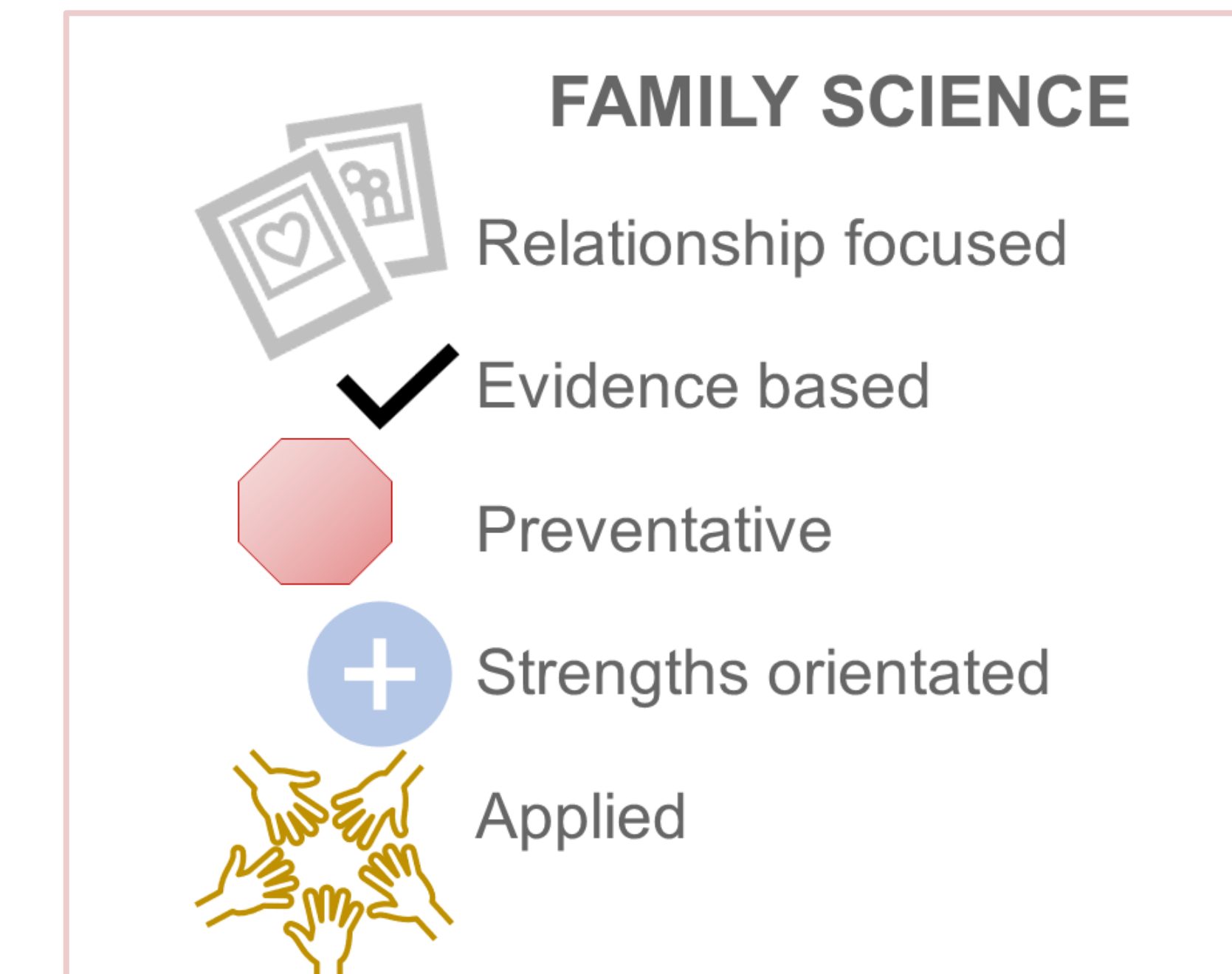
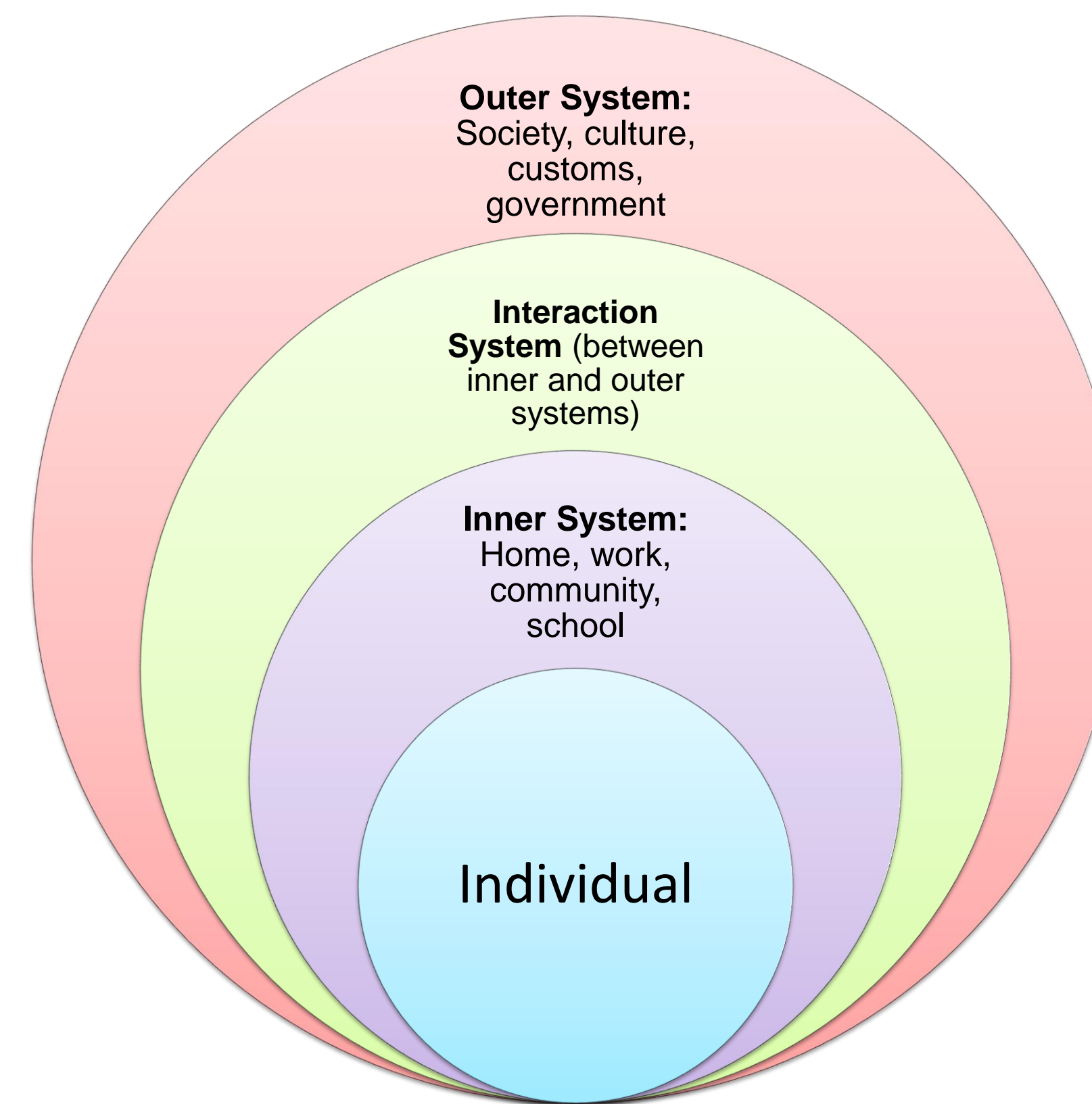
To envision future ways Extension educators can work together, we will share a few current examples of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Extension programming that utilize family science, systems theories, and the “science and art” or skill, imagination, and knowledge.

## SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL

The Social Ecological model aligns with the work of all four Extension Education Program Areas: Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Community Development, and Agriculture and Natural Resources. It can be used with partnerships to ensure that our programs are based on common ground and science to mutually benefit Extension partnerships as well as partnerships within our outreach and communities.

The Social Ecological Model, often used in public health and other related fields has been adapted over time from the Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. The Social Ecological Model shows the influence of family, neighborhood, school, work, community, policies, and culture on individual choices, opportunities, and development across the lifespan.

Social Ecological Model  
Adapted from figure 2, Scheer, 2020.



## CONCLUSION

Family and Consumer Sciences is for everyone and the work of Extension in the community is stronger when FCS is a partner. FCS can help leverage family science to strengthen the work of Extension and deepen impacts in our communities by empowering individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

How do you use family science and art to navigate our complex world?



## Examples of Extension Education Across the Lifespan

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Every \$1 invested in quality early childhood programs can yield returns as much as \$16. Quality early learning experiences increase school readiness, graduating on time, and lifelong success, and reduce the likelihood of serving jail or prison time and dependency on social welfare. (Heckman Equation)

### FINANCIAL LITERACY

FCS professionals offer *Money Smart* for preschoolers, *Real Money. Real World.* for youth, *Money 101* and Housing Education for adults. The state of Ohio requires all students to complete a one-half unit financial literacy credit prior to graduation, starting in the 2024-25 school year. One study showed 53% of individuals with higher financial literacy spent less of their income, and 65% had set aside a three-month emergency fund. (Lin et al., 2022)

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Leadership training for youth and adults is important in enhancing their career pathway and workforce preparation. Family and Consumer Sciences teaches knowledge, skills, strategies, and techniques to worksites and individuals that benefit the workforce and community and reduce social costs. For example, FCS offers professional development training for high-school post-secondary credits, Early Childhood Education credentialing and Serv Safe certification. This allows workers to demonstrate their content knowledge and the professional certification improves their employability.

### AGING AND LIFE TRANSITIONS

As we transition through various stages of the lifespan, we all experience changing needs. As individuals reach milestones in their lives, needs change. FCS helps individuals, families, caregivers, and communities age well. Educational programs include *Dining with Diabetes*, *Universal Design*, *Healthy Aging Telecast*, *Falls Prevention*, and *Simplify Your Space*.

### PARENTING PROGRAMS

Building family protective factors supports child well-being and family resiliency in the home environment. FCS supports skilled family engagement and advocacy in schools, communities, and programs. Parent education creates a strong workforce through increased family stability across the lifespan. Extension efforts include research that informs policy and shares evidence-based efforts and outcomes of family science.

### AGRICULTURE IN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio. Thanks to, *Agriculture and Natural Resources*, *Master Gardener Volunteers*, *4-H Youth Development*, *Farm to School*, Ohio families and communities can learn about food production from farms to backyards, patios, and community gardens. FCS connects families and communities to healthy foods through educational programming on food preparation, nutrition, managing chronic illness, sustainable practices, food safety and home food preservation. One example of both SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) helping individuals and families adopt healthy choices, including purchasing wisely at local farmers markets is to use SNAP benefits to purchase vegetable seeds and plants.

### HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Social emotional learning is of value across the lifespan. Educational programs examples include *Project KIND* for Pre-K, 4-H projects and *4-H Health Rocks* for older youth, *Mental Health First Aid*, *Mindful Wellness* for adults, and *Generation Rx* for kindergarten to older adults. OSU Extension has trained over 140,000 adults in Mental Health First Aid. Participants are more likely to increase their confidence, identify resources, and to manage social, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

## REFERENCES

For more information including references, please visit [go.osu.edu/complexworld](http://go.osu.edu/complexworld)