



“4-H LIFE visits are ‘normal’ and allow me to be the mother my children need.”

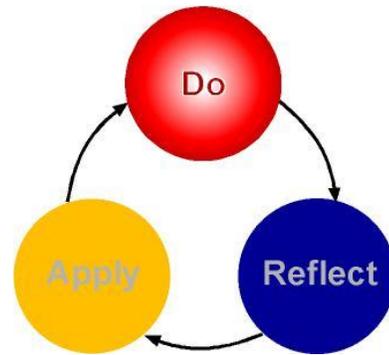
**Incarcerated Mother
4-H LIFE Program Participant**

Program Model

The 4-H LIFE model is based on the principles/foundations of positive youth development that occurs from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, relationships and the support to fully participate. Positive youth development takes place in families, peer groups, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

Experiential Learning Model

“Learning by doing” is a hallmark of all 4-H youth development programs. This hands-on approach helps youth explore new areas of inquiry, learn new concepts and develop life skills. The model is based upon the concept of “Do, Reflect, Apply.”



The National 4-H Council outlines four essential elements needed for youth to grow and thrive:

- **Independence:** Children in the 4-H LIFE program are given a chance to create a variety of projects, allowing them to demonstrate their motor skills and independence.
- **Belonging:** The 4-H LIFE club meeting encourages children to interact within their family and with other program participants of various ages.
- **Generosity:** Child participants in the 4-H LIFE club meetings are encouraged to share ideas, projects and leadership roles, creating attitudes and behaviors based on generosity.
- **Mastery:** Each 4-H LIFE club meeting provides new concepts, challenges and activities for youth to master.

Ecological Approach

Missouri 4-H uses Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979, 1986, 2005). This model suggests that humans are impacted by multiple systems. These systems operate at the individual, family, community and societal levels. Researchers have concluded that effective positive youth development and prevention programs must operate at multiple levels of human ecology.

