



A Program for Children with Incarcerated Family Members

This program was developed by University of Missouri Extension, the Missouri
Department of Corrections and Charter Members of the Potosi Correctional Center
4-H LIFE Program

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(CYFAR) and University of Missouri Extension

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Program



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Extension

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3. 4-H LIFE Impact Report including Life Skills Evaluation Instrument, May 2003
4. 4-H LIFE Case Study by National Collaboration for Youth, November 2005

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PROLOGUE

INTRODUCTION

The 4-H LIFE Guide was developed to serve as a resource primarily for Land Grant University Extension faculty and staff interested in developing the 4-H LIFE Program for children with incarcerated parents. The guide may also serve as a resource for correctional center administrators and human and social service professionals interested in planning parent education visits between incarcerated parents and their families.

The 4-H LIFE Program was initially funded by a five-year grant from the United States Department of Agriculture-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (USDA-CSREES) through the Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) New Communities Project (NCP). In 2006, the 4-H LIFE Program began replication at additional correctional centers in Missouri. The expansion of the 4-H LIFE Program is funded through the CYFAR Sustainable Communities Program, 2006-2011.

Readers of the 4-H LIFE Guide are not expected to replicate every step taken by the originators of the program at the Potosi Correctional Center. Each center will have its unique population, regulations, facilities, and culture. Our desire is that Extension and correctional center staff use this guide to start their own 4-H LIFE Program.

This guide was created by:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

4-H LIFE is a partnership with the University of Missouri Extension, the Missouri Department of Corrections, the National Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Initiative, and the incarcerated parents and their families.

The 4-H LIFE Program owes a great deal of gratitude to three key people who had the vision to enhance the lives of the children whose parents were incarcerated at the Potosi Correctional Center. The letters that follow are from these visionaries: Lynna Lawson, 4-H youth development specialist; Rick Secoy, former institutional activities coordinator 2000–2005; and Dennis Skillicorn, an incarcerated parent and cofounder of the Potosi 4-H LIFE Program.

February 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: 4-H Living Interactive Family Education Program (LIFE)

Thank you for your interest in starting the 4-H Living Interactive Family Education (LIFE) Program in your area. I can assure you this will be one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities you can have in your Extension career.

I have been involved with the 4-H LIFE program from its beginning in 1999. The first meeting with children, offenders and families was held in March 2000. Since that time, there have been many rewarding experiences—most of them connected to the enhanced relationships observed in the youth and their incarcerated family members. Families also have developed relationships with each other, providing an informal support group through their participation in 4-H LIFE.

I'm sure you have concerns about working with offenders and their families. You will discover they are neighbors in your community who have the same needs as yourself—they want their families to feel loved, respected and appreciated. Everyone deserves the opportunity to learn ways to achieve these goals in life.

The 4-H LIFE program has helped me to grow both professionally and personally. This manual will help you avoid some obstacles 4-H LIFE faced in the beginning and overcame through the efforts of the children, offenders, families, Department of Corrections staff, Extension Councils and other volunteers who were persevering pioneers in this unique family-strengthening project.

If you have any questions or would like assistance starting 4-H LIFE in your local correctional facility, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at lawsonl@missouri.edu.

Sincerely,

Lynna J. Lawson
4-H Youth Development Specialist

MATT BLUNT
Governor

LARRY CRAWFORD
Director



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State of Missouri
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Ad Excelleum Conamur - "We Strive Towards Excellence"

23 May 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been the Institutional Activities Coordinator (IAC) for the past five years for the Potosi Correctional Center (PCC). During my time as the IAC I have been the staff sponsor for the 4-H Living Interactive Family Education (L.I.F.E.) So, I have been intimately involved with all aspects of the group.

In a place where so much attention is given to the negative things, it is wonderful to be associated with a group that has a focus on positive things. The members of 4-H (LIFE) have not let the obstacles that are inherent in a maximum security correctional institution to deter them from their purpose. This purpose includes addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents and to provide the children and their incarcerated parent with a comfortable visitation atmosphere that is conducive to positive physical and verbal interaction.

Along with the interaction with the children, the incarcerated fathers also needed to be taught how to be a parent or how to be a better parent. One of the requirements of 4-H (LIFE) is that the fathers meet once a month for parenting classes. Failure to attend the parenting class meant elimination from the program.

The 4-H (LIFE) has been in existence at PCC for over 6 years. The group was begun when a directive was received from the Department of Corrections (DOC) Central Office to provide a program for the incarcerated parents at PCC. It was at this time that the Superintendent at PCC was approached by the local 4-H staff and it was decided that by modifying the standard 4-H program it would meet the needs of the incarcerated fathers and also of the directive from Central Office.

Over the past five years I have seen many changes in both the children, the fathers and the caregivers. It has been wonderful to watch the children grow up, getting taller and brighter each time I would see them. I also observed a change in the men involved with 4-H (LIFE). Their focus was no longer just on themselves and their situations but changed to include what their children were doing, what they were accomplishing and how their day-to-day lives were. The caregivers at first were not very involved with the program. The program evolved to include the caregivers and this set up a genuine family atmosphere. No longer was I dealing just with offenders but now I was dealing with whole families. I found the transition to be wonderful.

I strongly endorse this program for any institution. The program has brought about better children, better fathers, better families and a much better institution.

Rick Secoy

Rick Secoy
Institutional Activities Coordinator
Potosi Correctional Center

Dennis Skillicorn
Potosi Correctional Center
11593 State Highway O
Mineral Pt. MO, 63660
2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The offender members of 4-H LIFE at Potosi Correctional Center would like to encourage other incarcerated parents to become involved in this family-strengthening program. We want to emphasize to offenders the overwhelming positive impact this program can have on you, each of your children, and their caregivers. What we feel as incarcerated parents far exceeds the boundaries of any institutional confinement. This program reaches out to the inherent need we all have to be a loving, nurturing part of our children's lives.

The founding members of the 4-H LIFE Program were instrumental in establishing the bylaws and developing several materials that appear in this guide. We developed those bylaws and materials to ensure the integrity and longevity of the program. We urge you to adapt them as necessary in order to maintain the integrity of your own 4-H LIFE Program. We would like to explain how we run our 4-H LIFE organization and share some of the things we have learned.

Statistics show that children of incarcerated parents are far more likely to become incarcerated themselves. The 4-H LIFE Program creates an environment that will build your children's self-esteem and show them the importance of their life choices. They learn how to identify their ambitions, pursue their dreams and reach their full potential instead of following the wrong path. This program is not a way for you to pass time. It clearly can be one of the most crucial experiences of your child's life and is a way you can positively affect their quality of life.

Complete commitment by each offender is essential to the overall success of this program. Each member needs to take an active role in parenting, business, and 4-H Family/Club meetings. We designed our bylaws for a membership of 20 offenders and their families. That number may vary depending on institutional availability of visiting space. The number of participants is not nearly as important as the quality, sincerity, and commitment of club members. Effective screening of applicants by offender members will help you preserve the integrity of your program.

Offenders meet twice a month. One meeting is a parenting class taught by University of Missouri Extension staff. In these classes, you will learn how to better communicate with and relate to your child. You will learn how children think and how they process information at different stages of life. Classes will show you the importance of discipline as well as how to discipline your child constructively. By applying what you learn, you will help your child open up, overcome social shyness, and develop leadership skills. The results might be slow at first. However, after a period of time, you will see the change in each child as he or she experiences family time in a more normal, healthy environment, without the typical visiting room hindrances.

Offenders also meet once a month for the 4-H LIFE business meeting where we address issues such as club membership, fundraisers, and planning for the monthly 4-H Family/Club meeting. The bylaws provide specifics on the election and duties of officers. We follow Roberts Rules of Order in every meeting. This establishes order and provides for productive meetings. The bylaws also provide for an ongoing fundraiser and an annual fundraiser. Through a quorum vote, members determine

how to spend proceeds. We have used proceeds to send our children to camp or to state 4-H events. We also have donated some to charities chosen by our children.

Business meetings help us develop our own leadership skills, so we can teach them to our children. Leadership training and parenting classes are a provision of the by-laws and should be mandatory. Both provide a wealth of information and are essential contributions and you should utilize them to the fullest potential.

One important part of the business meeting is the planning of the upcoming 4-H Family/Club meeting. Each club meeting should have a life lesson as its theme, combined with traditional 4-H club activities such as games, crafts, snacks, and teamwork activities. We meet from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. the second Saturday of the month in one of the prison's visiting areas, a time that worked out best for most families. These sessions are the heart of this program and regular attendance is important. They provide an opportunity for physical interaction between children and their incarcerated parents. Our experience has been that children are far more likely to respect what their parents have to offer when we are able to share life lessons with them and show how we can help them meet their goals. Time spent as a family in a more normal, loving environment provides trust and stability in the child's life.

All those involved in 4-H LIFE should hold the purpose and integrity of this program in the highest regard. The seriousness with which you approach this program will be a reflection of how seriously you take the health and well-being of your child. The 4-H LIFE Program helps you be a positive role model to your child, contributes to your confidence as a parent, and takes your relationship with your child to a new level. As your program matures, you will see growth in each child in a way that would not be possible if not for 4-H LIFE.

Sincerely,

Dennis Skillicorn
Co-founder of the Potosi 4-H LIFE Program

GLOSSARY

4-H Living Interactive Family Education (LIFE) Program

A University of Missouri Extension family strengthening and support program designed to address the needs of children of incarcerated parents and their families.

Building Strong Families (BSF)

A research-based educational University of Missouri Extension program that helps families identify and build on their strengths, face challenges and make informed choices.

Caregiver

An adult raising a child of an incarcerated parent who may be a parent, grandparent, or family member.

Children of Offenders

Children whose parent is incarcerated; more recently termed children of incarcerated parents.

Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Initiative

Through an annual congressional appropriation for the National Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Program, the United States Department of Agriculture allocates funding to land grant universities for community-based programs for at-risk children and their families. CYFAR has supported programs in more than 600 communities in all states and territories. CYFAR is based on research on the human ecological principle of working across the lifespan in the context of the family and community. CYFAR also promotes the use of information technology to improve programs.

County Extension Council

A governing and policy making body at the local level, Extension Councils work in partnership with the state's land grant university extension to engage people to understand change, solve problems and make informed decisions using science-based knowledge. In Missouri, each county has an Extension Council mandated by the state whose members are elected representatives. Each state may differ in the organization and form of representation of their Extension Councils.

Enhanced Visit

Also called a therapeutic visit, these prison visits are characterized by a comfortable, family-friendly visiting room setting that is conducive to positive physical and verbal interaction between parents and their children. By contrast, traditional visits require parents to limit physical contact and affection with their children and remain seated with their hands visible on the tabletop.

Extension Faculty

University of Missouri Extension employees with a Master's degree who plan, implement and evaluate research-based programs at the county, regional or state level in partnership with many agencies.

Family and Community Resource Program (FCRP)

Formerly a statewide team of Extension faculty who used CYFAR and Extension funding to lead community-based programs for low-income children, youth and families. The original 4-H LIFE Program was a pilot program supported by FCRP.

Incarcerated Parents

Parent or other family member in a correctional center often referred to as an offender.

Institutional Activities Coordinator (IAC)

The corrections employee who supervises all prison volunteers and coordinates a wide variety of correctional center programs for offenders.

Land Grant University

A land grant college or university is an institution that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture and other practical arts to the average working class citizen.

Potosi Correctional Center (PCC)

Maximum security prison for men in Mineral Point, Missouri. Location of the original 4-H LIFE Program.

Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC)

State department overseeing the Missouri correctional centers and probation and parole offices.

University of Missouri (MU) Extension

A partnership of the University of Missouri campuses, Lincoln University, the people of Missouri through county Extension Councils, and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

University of Missouri Outreach and Extension (UOE)

The former name for University of Missouri (MU) Extension

Volunteer in Corrections (VIC)

An individual who has completed several steps to become an unpaid employee inside Missouri's state correctional centers. VICs are required to attend a free, six-hour orientation training about safety issues, policies and procedures. Additional requirements may apply. Extension faculty and staff who are part of the 4-H LIFE Program are required to become VICs.



CHAPTER ONE: WHY WORK WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES?

THE SITUATION

Rising incarceration rates have left an indelible mark on many families. Incarceration has taken an often overlooked toll on children with incarcerated parents. The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents reports that there are an estimated 2,473,300 children of male prisoners and 319,718 children of female prisoners in U.S. correctional facilities.

The Center gives more staggering statistics: 3% of all U.S. children (one in forty) under the age of 18 have at least one parent in a local jail or in a state or federal prison; incarcerated parents as a percent of total prisoners are 63% males in federal prisons, 59% females in federal prisons, 55% males in state prisons and 65% females in state

prisons; and 60% of parents in state prison reported being held more than 100 miles from their last places of residence.*

Regular visits with the incarcerated parent can have a positive impact and reduce the effect of negative stressors on most children of offenders. Reviews of existing literature provide ample evidence that maintaining contact through letters, phone calls, and visits help reduce the negative impacts of children's separation from their incarcerated parent. Yet the structure of regular visiting rooms can be overwhelming for children. Typical visitation settings allow only a minimal amount of physical contact and are extremely restrictive for children who want physical interaction with their parents.

An alternative to the traditional visitation setting is an enhanced or therapeutic visitation. Play areas with age-appropriate toys and activities, more natural interaction between child and parent, and more flexibility in visitation rules are common features of an enhanced visitation setting.

The 4-H Living Interactive Family Education (LIFE) Program was developed in 2000 as an enhanced visitation at the Potosi Correctional Center (PCC), a maximum security prison in Mineral Point, Missouri. Incarcerated fathers at PCC, local 4-H faculty, and correctional center staff developed the program to address the needs of the children and their families as described in Chapter Two. Improving the quality of prison visits for families was the original focus of the program.

From this experience, staff began documenting necessary steps to start an enhanced visitation program detailed in Chapter Three. Program managers believe it may be more successful to implement the 4-H LIFE Program with long term offenders and their families due to the increased amount of time that program staff have to work with the same participants.

ESTABLISHING A COMMON LANGUAGE

While terminology varies from state to state and agency to agency, it is important to begin with a definition of a few of the most commonly used terms. Additional terms and acronyms used in the guide are referenced in the glossary on page 13.

The term *children of offenders* is often used in many federal programs and refers to children whose parents are incarcerated whether in a city, county or federal prison. *Incarcerated parent* is becoming more widely used for the definition of a parent who is an offender. For our purposes, the term *incarcerated parent* refers to an incarcer-

* Source: The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents (2004), Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents: CCIP Data Sheet 3a. Retrieved June 16, 2005 from <http://www.e-ccip.org/publication.html>.

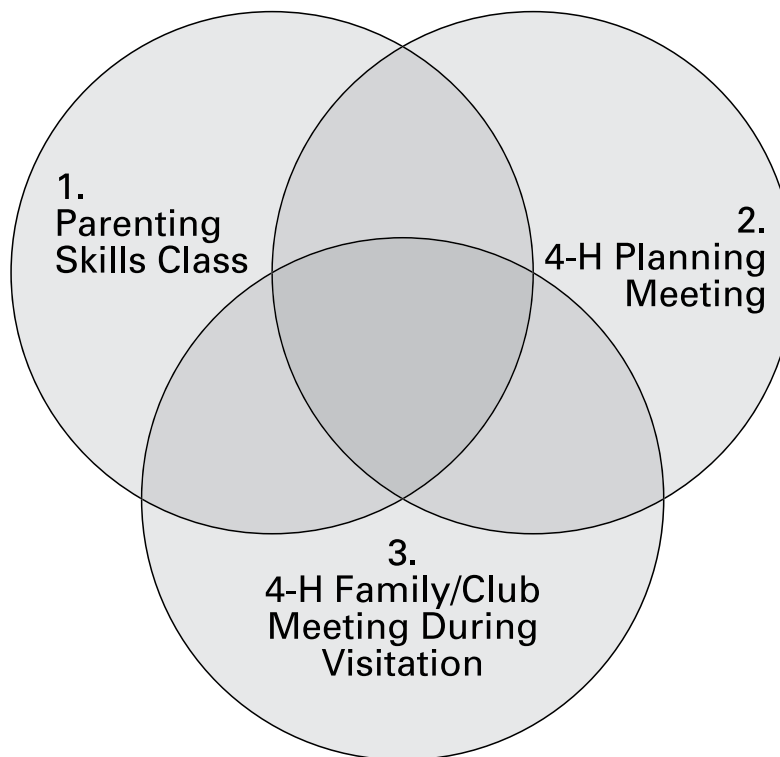
ated adult who serves in a family role to younger family members that may include older siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, stepparents, etc.

The term *caregiver* is used to identify adult family members who travel with the children to each prison facility and participate in the 4-H activities. These individuals may be spouses, parents, grandparents, or siblings of the incarcerated parent. Many of these individuals are grandparents who are raising the offenders' children.

OVERVIEW OF THE 4-H LIFE PROGRAM

The overall objective of the 4-H LIFE Program is to promote a strong, healthy, and nurturing family environment for children of incarcerated parents while helping the incarcerated parent become a positive role model. The target audience for the program is incarcerated parents and their children, grandchildren, and other family members. Extension faculty work with Department of Corrections (DOC) to plan and implement the program with the incarcerated parents.

A key element of the success of the 4-H LIFE Program is the belief that incarcerated parents are full program partners who have significant input in deciding family visit activities within the guidelines of the correctional center. The program empowers incarcerated parents to take more responsibility for meeting their children's physical,



social, emotional, and intellectual needs and provide opportunities for offenders to guide their children during family visits.

The 4-H LIFE Program consists of three integrated components. Each component is important to the overall goal of promoting a family environment as well as preparing incarcerated parents to be good role models for their children.

1. Parenting Skills Class

Incarcerated parents who participate in the 4-H LIFE Program must attend parenting classes to develop and improve skills needed to interact in positive, age-appropriate ways with their children.

2. Planning Meeting

The incarcerated parents work with Extension faculty and DOC staff to plan the 4-H youth and family activities for the monthly 4-H Family/Club meeting. The original 4-H LIFE members at PCC also used this meeting to plan fundraisers for the children's 4-H Club.

3. 4-H LIFE Family/Club Meeting

The monthly 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting takes place during visitation at the correctional center. Children, their incarcerated parents, and caregivers work together on traditional 4-H activities such as arts and crafts projects as well as other curricula-based activities that focus on subjects such as communication, decision making, and problem solving. Working together gives children an opportunity to show their parents their increasing ability and intellect. The meeting gives the parents an opportunity to show their children they are capable of providing parental guidance in a caring manner. The children are given opportunities to lead the 4-H Club business meeting each month.



BENEFITS OF THE 4-H LIFE PROGRAM

The 4-H LIFE Program has a positive effect on the children, the incarcerated parents, and the caregivers raising the children. Short-term impact data was collected from the children and incarcerated parents who participated in Potosi's 4-H LIFE Program from 2000 to 2004. According to the data, the benefits for each group include:

Children

- Build their communication and leadership skills
- Are increasingly excited about the 4-H Family/Club meetings
- See their incarcerated parent in a positive leadership role

Caregivers

- Enjoy meeting other caregivers who are experiencing similar situations
- Are satisfied to see their incarcerated family member interact with the child in a variety of healthy, structured activities

Incarcerated parents

- Talk more about family issues with other offenders
- Serve as role models within the context of the program activities
- Practice new parenting skills

CONCLUSION

The 4-H LIFE Program provides a unique opportunity for incarcerated parents and their children. In many cases, family programming is extremely limited, especially in male correctional centers. Research suggests that children of incarcerated parents tend to feel isolated and lack the necessary resources to build healthy relationships with their incarcerated parents. The 4-H LIFE Program provides educational and social programming for the entire family.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter One

1. 4-H LIFE Evaluation Methodology, April 2002
2. 4-H LIFE Impact Report including Focus Group Protocol, August 2002
3. 4-H LIFE Impact Report including Evaluation Instrument, May 2003
4. 4-H LIFE Case Study by National Collaboration for Youth, April 2005

CHAPTER TWO: MISSOURI 4-H LIFE PROGRAM MODEL

POTOSI CORRECTIONAL CENTER

Planning for the 4-H LIFE Program began in late 1999 at the Potosi Correctional Center (PCC), a maximum security prison for men in Mineral Point, Missouri. The program was a partnership between the University of Missouri (MU) Extension and the Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC). Grant support was provided during the first five years of the program by the United States Department of Agriculture-Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (USDA-CSREES) and Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR).

The incarcerated fathers at PCC and local 4-H MU Extension faculty and staff jointly developed the 4-H LIFE Program to address the needs of the children of eligible offenders. The men developed a constitution and elected officers in order to be recognized as an offender organization at the correctional center. The first program meetings were held in March 2000.

The overall objective of the 4-H LIFE Program is to promote a strong, healthy, and nurturing family environment for children of incarcerated parents while helping incarcerated parents become positive role models.

A logic model, adapted from E. Taylor-Powell, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1999, was developed for the program. A logic model establishes a link between program design and evaluation. The Potosi 4-H LIFE Logic Model is provided on page 22.

In 2004, the Healthy People...Healthy Communities National Network for Health awarded the National Priester Health Award to the 4-H LIFE Program. This award honors Extension programs that have a positive impact on the health of people and provide leadership to expand Extension's capacity to implement health programs effectively.

Supported by the 4-H system partners and coordinated through the National 4-H Headquarters and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), the 4-H LIFE Program was accepted as a National Program of Distinction (POD). PODs reflect high quality 4-H youth development programs that are occurring in communities across the United States.

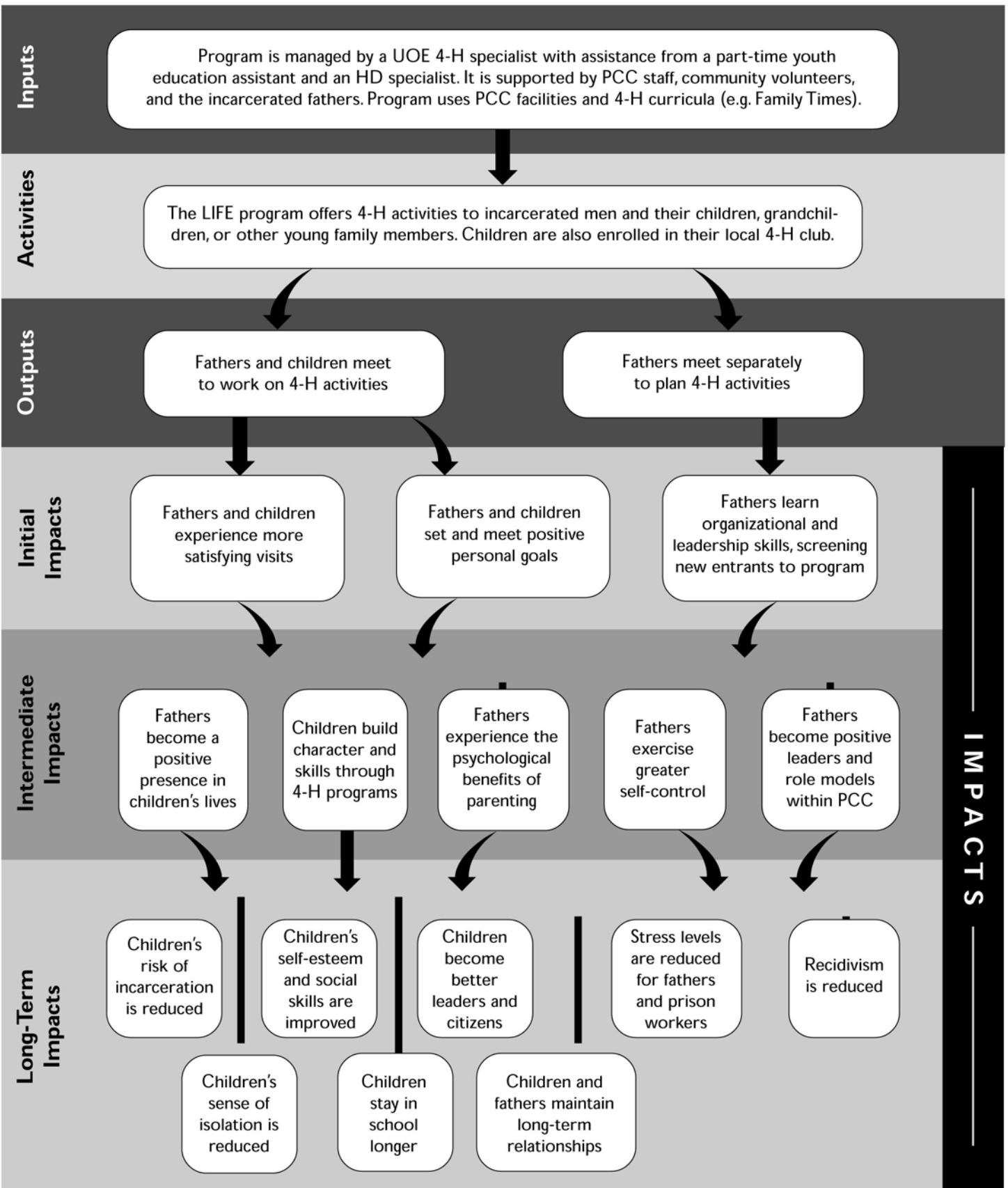
As a result of being a National Program of Distinction, the 4-H LIFE Program was selected as one of five programs in the nation to receive the Family Strengthening Award from the Annie E. Casey Foundation through the National 4-H Council.



Program Logic Model for

Potosi Correctional Center (PCC)

Living Interactive Family Education Program (LIFE)



IMPACTS

The award is for innovative, exemplary, and effective 4-H youth development programs that improve outcomes for rural, disadvantaged families.

4-H LIFE PROGRAM MODEL

Each of the three components of the 4-H LIFE Program were developed to promote an integrated family strengthening experience for incarcerated parents and their children. The incarcerated parents learn to become positive role models for their children through the Parenting Skills Classes and Planning Meetings. The 4-H LIFE Family/Club Meeting uses the traditional 4-H Club as the basic model. The incarcerated parents serve as 4-H volunteers and are the primary facilitators of the club. The children are the members of the club. The caregivers provide support and may participate in the planned activities. Community 4-H volunteers may also facilitate or assist with the program.

To enter the 4-H LIFE Program at PCC, interested offenders completed an application and were interviewed by a committee of current members of the 4-H LIFE Program. The committee then selected potential participants based on their interviews and applications. If a potential member met the membership criteria, the application was then screened by DOC staff who, in most cases, was the institutional activities coordinator (IAC). If no problems were found by the DOC staff, the applicant was inducted into 4-H LIFE and allowed to participate in all activities.

The criteria for acceptance into the 4-H LIFE Program may vary between correctional centers. The minimum criteria is that the incarcerated parent serve as a significant adult role model, have no sexual offense against a youth or adult, and maintain a specified period of time free from violations or offenses. The period of time for the offender to remain violation free is established according to programming and security needs of the correctional center.

In order to participate in all activities afforded to other offender organizations, the incarcerated parents at Potosi chose to form as an official offender organization. Becoming an offender organization is not required for the creation of the 4-H LIFE Program. The choice will depend primarily on the needs and structure of the correctional center.

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See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Two

5. Constitution and By-laws for the 4-H LIFE at PPC
 6. Offender 4-H LIFE Membership Application
 7. Permission for Family Contact
 8. 4-H LIFE Program Expectations and Goals
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1. Parenting Skills Classes

All incarcerated parents who participate in the 4-H LIFE Program are required to attend parenting skills classes. This 4-H LIFE component helps parents increase their understanding of child development and improve skills such as communication, anger management, and teamwork. Extension faculty facilitate the classes. Extension curricula such as *Tackling the Tough Skills* and *Building Strong Families* were used at PCC. The classes often serve as a support structure for incarcerated parents by providing an opportunity to meet with other parents to discuss their children.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Two

9. Curricula Used at Potosi 4-H LIFE

2. Planning Meetings

The incarcerated parents meet monthly to plan the next 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting. Because the incarcerated parents are part of the planning process and make decisions about program activities, they take more ownership for the program. Staff review the security guidelines of the correctional center as to whether the requested activity supplies can be brought into the facility. Sometimes activities have to be adjusted in order to meet the security guidelines.

The planning meetings also provide members an opportunity to discuss “house-keeping” items such as setting dates for potential member interviews, developing membership drive promotions, and other tasks. Because Potosi 4-H LIFE was a designated organization, the planning meeting was also used for making decisions on business items such as bookkeeping, donations, and officer elections and training.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Two

10. Missouri 4-H Is...
11. 4-H LIFE Club Agenda
12. Family Activities Used at Potosi
13. Family and New Friend Get-Acquainted Bingo

3. 4-H LIFE Family/Club Meeting

The 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting is held monthly during visitation at the correctional center. The meeting provides children, incarcerated parents, and caregivers with a comfortable visitation atmosphere that is conducive to positive physical and verbal interaction.



The 4-H LIFE Family/Club is considered a Missouri 4-H Club. The children are enrolled as 4-H members who can elect officers and conduct an opening business meeting. The children and their incarcerated parents then work together on typical 4-H Club activities such as arts and crafts projects or other curricula-based activities. Children attending the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meetings are enrolled as 4-H members. The group or individual enrollment forms are submitted to the local University of Missouri Extension Center with membership dues. Dues are minimal and based on the number of youth enrolled. The Potosi 4-H LIFE used fundraisers planned by the incarcerated parents to help cover membership dues.

Caregiver participation during the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting may vary. Some caregivers remain very hands on throughout each activity. Other caregivers use the time to observe the interactions between the incarcerated parent and the child. Either approach is acceptable.

4-H LIFE youth participants are encouraged to become involved in 4-H programs in their community. 4-H Clubs are active in almost every community in the nation. Clubs provide many opportunities for growth and development, and take many different forms to meet the needs of the participants. 4-H offers traditional 4-H Clubs, single project clubs, events, camps, and much more. Letters were sent to the local 4-H youth specialist about 4-H LIFE members in their area and to the 4-H LIFE caregivers to encourage them to participate in 4-H locally.

The heart of the 4-H LIFE Program are the children of the incarcerated parents. The 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting provides a positive, fun way for parent and child to communicate and interact.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Two

14. Missouri 4-H Youth Group Enrollment Form Y631
15. Missouri 4-H Member Enrollment Form Y630
16. Guidelines for 4-H Single Project Clubs
17. Sample Letter to MU Extension 4-H Youth Specialist
18. Sample Letter to Caregiver

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD) MODEL

In order to understand and use the 4-H LIFE model, it is important to understand the concepts and definitions that shape it.

Youth development is the natural process of developing one's capacities. While it occurs through young people's daily experiences with people, places, and possibilities, it is far too important to be left to chance.

Positive youth development 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.

4-H Youth Development Programs provide just such opportunities, relationships and support for youth to help them acquire the life skills necessary to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood. 4-H Youth Development uses experiential, research-based educational opportunities that help young people become competent, caring, confident, connected, contributing citizens of character.

4-H Youth Development faculty and staff plan, conduct and evaluate educational PYD programs. Both research and practical experience suggest that PYD requires caring adults engaging with youth in planned educational activities over time. This occurs by providing support, helping youth develop healthy relationships, and providing opportunities for growth and leadership. 4-H youth development activities help youth foster the life skills needed to thrive and meet the challenges of growing up.

Positive youth development comes from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, choices, relationships, and the support necessary for youth to fully participate in families and society (Smith, 2002).

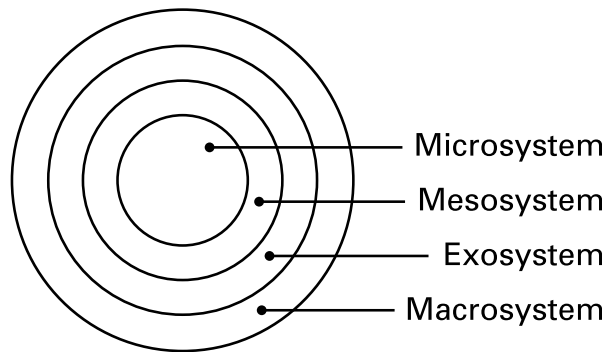
Effective PYD programs must:

- Consider the whole young person, not just a single characteristic or problem.
- Depend on family and community development as it occurs in the context of family, community and society.
- Focus on positive outcomes we desire for young people, not the negative outcomes we hope to prevent.

As a positive youth development program, 4-H LIFE is based on an ecological approach, essential elements, an experiential learning model, and participant engagement.

Ecological Approach

Missouri 4-H uses Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979, 1986, 2005). This model suggests that humans impact and are impacted by multiple systems. These systems operate at the individual, family, community and societal levels. Bronfenbrenner places the individual at the center of a series of concentric circles, surrounded by a *microsystem*



(face to face interactions), then the *mesosystem* (interactions among microsystems), then the *exosystem* (indirect influence of distant settings on individuals), and finally the *macrosystem* (overarching societal ideologies). The *chronosystem* (change over time), cuts across this series of concentric circles. Systems are dynamic, allowing study of change.

Researchers from a variety of disciplines have concluded that effective positive youth development and prevention programs must operate at multiple levels of the human ecology.

Four Essential Elements

According to research accumulated by the National 4-H Council, there are four (4) essential elements that youth need in order to grow and thrive. The four essential elements are:

1. Independence

Youth need to see themselves as active participants in their future and able to determine what they will become. They need to understand that when they have independence, they must also take responsibility for their decisions and actions.

4-H helps young people recognize the connection between independence and responsibility. In a successful 4-H club, youth can learn to set priorities as they develop their club program. They can also learn to manage their time so that they can choose among many worthwhile opportunities.

2. Belonging

Youth have a strong need to be a part of a safe group of friends who accept them for who they are. Youth also need at least one positive relationship with a caring adult. The need to belong is so strong that if youth don't have access to positive groups, they will join less desirable ones such as gangs.

Positive groups like 4-H help fulfill this need to belong. Volunteer leaders and club members provide this fellowship by showing interest in, actively listening to and encouraging 4-H youth.

3. Generosity

Youth need to feel that their lives have meaning and purpose. They need opportunities to connect to their communities and learn how to give back to others. Service builds bonds between youth and the community, and doing something valued by others helps youth feel worthy and competent.

By taking part in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect with and serve their communities. 4-H helps youth develop concern for others and take action to demonstrate that concern.

4. Mastery

Youth need to feel they are capable and successful. Mastery means that youth develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes followed by the competent demonstration of these skills and knowledge. When young people realize they are capable, they develop self confidence and a sense that they matter.

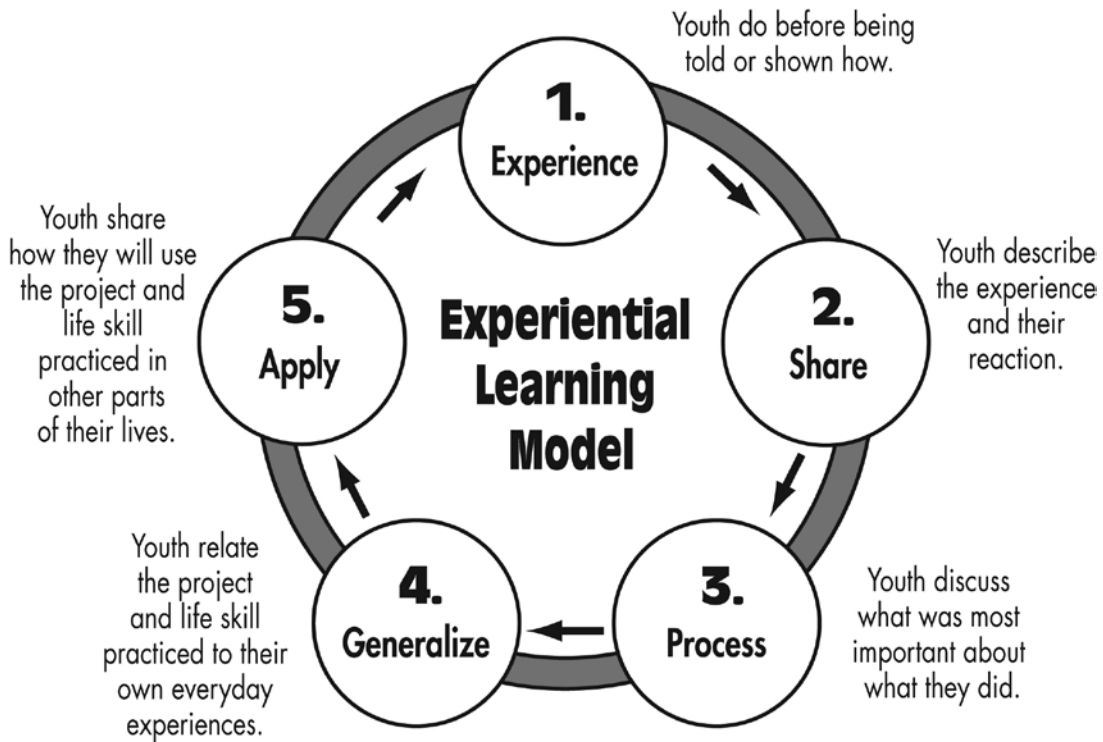
4-H youth develop mastery through the Experiential Learning Process. In this process, they experience, share what happened, process what was important, generalize the experience to the real world and apply what was learned to other situations. They develop a sense of mastery or achievement through 4-H project work such as building a birdhouse, preparing a meal or participating in a positive evaluation experience.

Through projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. Youth need to explore many topics thoroughly to be able to pursue their own interests. 4-H strives to create opportunities for youth to experience a sense of belonging, develop independence, and follow their interests to levels of mastery. In addition, the 4-H program encourages both youth and adults to value and practice service to oth-

ers. Volunteers provide safe and supportive boundaries for positive youth development to occur.

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.” Experiential learning occurs when the youth participate in an activity (Do - experience), next examine it critically after participation (Reflect – share, process), and finally, decide what aspects of the activity were useful and practical, and apply the relevant information to a new activity (Apply – generalize, apply).



Pfeiffer, J.W., & Jones, J.E., "Reference Guide to Handbooks and Annuals"
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Engagement

4-H LIFE is built on the idea that incarcerated parents, children, caregivers, corrections staff, community members, and program staff must have ownership for the program to be successful. The needs of each community and correctional facility are

unique, so stakeholder input is essential. Whether building the program logic model or modifying the program structure, engagement is critical to replication.

EVALUATION

One of the most powerful tools in creating and sustaining 4-H LIFE has been on-going program evaluation. Program evaluation results have been used to improve the program, educate others, and build support among funders, administrators, and community leaders.

At the same time, evaluation findings in the pilot program are limited (see the supplemental materials for Chapter One). When replicating the 4-H LIFE Program, additional methodologies and measures should be used to follow changes in individual children over time. Further, evaluation should expand to include data from key stakeholders such as caregivers.

CONCLUSION

The 4-H LIFE Program incorporates each distinct group of people into a unique family strengthening experience. Bonds are formed with those family members who do not have the opportunity to see each other very often. The 4-H LIFE Program at PCC has benefited not only children of incarcerated parents but also their caregivers and the correctional staff. The enhanced visitation setting allows for a more natural interaction during what otherwise is usually a non-productive, strained visit.



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CHAPTER THREE: HOW TO GET STARTED—WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

ASSESS INTEREST

Anyone can initiate the process to develop a 4-H LIFE Program; however, it takes research and a team effort for the program to succeed. Begin the process by talking with key individuals about the 4-H LIFE Program. Share this guide with interested individuals to gain support.

- **Extension faculty or staff** should contact the correctional center administrator, activities coordinator (IAC) or chaplain to determine interest.
- **Correctional center staff** should talk with colleagues and respected incarcerated parents. If there is interest in a program, contact the local Extension center.

- **Caregivers** should contact the local Extension center, meet with the 4-H Extension faculty or staff, and together approach correctional center staff.
- **Incarcerated parents** should talk with a respected staff member at the correctional center. Many caseworkers, as well as prison educators, may be open to the educational aspect of the 4-H LIFE Program.

After initial contacts have been made and support for a 4-H LIFE Program appears evident, arrange a meeting with the warden. The program may need to be proposed by the IAC or chaplain with assistance from the Extension faculty and/or the person who initiated the idea.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

19. About University of Missouri Extension

CREATE A TEAM

There are two key groups of people who must be involved in the planning process: the correctional center administration and the local Extension Council. *Written approval should be obtained from these two groups before proceeding further.*

Once written approval is obtained from the correctional center administration and local Extension Council, create a team of individuals who are willing to help plan and implement the program. Include Extension faculty who are familiar with 4-H programming and a correctional center representative authorized to make decisions about program details. 4-H LIFE is built on the idea that offenders, caregivers, children, corrections staff, community members, and program staff must have ownership for the program to be successful. The needs of each community and correctional center are unique so shared input and decision making is important.

Prospective Team Members

Correctional Center Representatives

- Correctional center warden
- Correctional center institutional activities coordinator (IAC)
- Incarcerated parents

Community Representatives

- County Extension faculty or staff (preferably in the area of 4-H and/or human development)
- Caregivers

- Local Extension Council members
- Community volunteers
- University interns

Most decisions will come from the team. The team should meet on a regular basis to identify and secure program resources.

DEVELOP A PROGRAM PLAN

Developing and presenting a specific plan is important to help others understand the benefits and goals of the program.

To maintain the integrity of the 4-H LIFE Program, the three integrated components must be included in the 4-H LIFE Program plans: parenting skills classes, planning meetings and 4-H LIFE Family/Club meetings.

A logic model may be a useful tool. The Potosi 4-H LIFE Program logic model referenced in Chapter Two and the impact evaluation reports found in the supplemental materials may be helpful.

Another useful tool may be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Corrections. Sections in a MOU might include topics such as communication, terminology, roles, eligibility for participation (offenders and family), and programming locations, components and responsibilities.

Consider adding an evaluation component to the 4-H LIFE Program. Evaluation can serve to build support as well as make improvements to the program. The PCC 4-H LIFE Program evaluation reports include evaluation instruments that may be helpful in choosing an evaluation method found in the supplemental materials for Chapter One.

Sample Program Goals

Improve children's self esteem and social skills

- Reduce children's sense of isolation
- Help children stay in school longer

Strengthen existing family relationships

- Strengthen relationships between child, incarcerated parent, and caregiver

Reduce the cycle of incarceration

- Help children become better leaders and citizens
- Reduce the risk that children will become incarcerated

Program Staff and Volunteers

The program runs more smoothly if there is one person implementing the three integrated components of the 4-H LIFE Program. This person needs to work for or closely with local Extension faculty and the local Extension center. It is highly recommended that the person in this position be paid to carry out the 4-H LIFE Program.

The Potosi 4-H LIFE Program was developed and directed by the St. Francois County 4-H youth specialist. She hired an extension associate with CYFAR funds. When the program expanded to additional correctional centers in 2006, a program associate was hired for each location using grant funds. The program associate is supervised by county Extension faculty. A sample associate job description is on page 46.

Recruiting volunteers is a great way to enhance the 4-H LIFE Program. Both staff and volunteers for the 4-H LIFE Program need to pass a background screening check. Many states, including Missouri, conduct Volunteers in Corrections (VIC) training to eliminate the need for the screening process each time they enter the correctional center.

Always remember that security and safety are of utmost importance at the correctional center and will affect almost every part of the program. When deciding who will implement the 4-H LIFE Program, consider the following questions:

- How will staff and volunteers be recruited to assist with the program?
- Does the correctional center require special training for 4-H LIFE staff and/or volunteers?
- Are there insurance issues to consider?

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

- 20. Missouri DOC Steps to Become a Missouri Volunteer in Corrections (VIC)
 - 21. Volunteer Recruitment Flyer
-

Program Cost

The cost of the 4-H LIFE Program is relatively small compared to the daily cost of incarcerating adults in state correctional centers. Refer to the sample budget on page 47. The following questions should be addressed by the team.

- How much will it cost to implement and evaluate the program?
- How much staff and volunteer time will be needed to implement and manage the program?
- Can funds be raised to offset program expenses?

Possible Collaborators and Funders

Groups and organizations that may have similar goals as the 4-H LIFE Program should be considered as potential partners.

Local Resources

4-H Clubs, Councils or Foundations
Charitable and/or Faith-based Organizations
Child Abuse and Neglect Councils
Child Care or School Age Care Associations
Colleges or Universities
Counseling Agencies
United Way

National Resources

Administration for Children and Families
American Correctional Association
Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents
Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect
Family and Corrections Network
National Institute of Corrections Information Center
The Foundation Center

WORKING INSIDE A CORRECTIONAL CENTER

Establishing a cooperative working relationship with the correctional center administration and staff is important. Permission may need to be obtained from various departments throughout the planning and implementation of the program. One department may handle volunteers who need a background check and another department may handle approval of the family visits. Each correctional center's staff and regulations may vary.

Correctional Center Policies

Because safety and security are the primary concerns in correctional centers, advance notice and approval for nearly every aspect of program implementation is necessary. Keep in mind that a considerable amount of paperwork and time is necessary for the approval process. General program considerations include:

- What visitation requirements are in place?
- Do visitors need pre-approval? What is the process?
- Do visitors need official photo identification? Do children also need a photo ID?
- What items are not allowed inside the visiting room?
- Are there any policies regarding participation of the child's caregiver?

- Do program participants need a certificate as proof of their program participation?
- What are the correctional center’s confidentiality policies?
- Does an official 4-H LIFE offender organization need to be created within the correctional center?

Additional factors such as offender population, space, transfers, security level, and staffing issues may affect day-to-day operations. Rules and restrictions may change depending on events that take place in the correctional center.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

- 22. Missouri Department of Corrections Visiting Application
- 23. Missouri Department of Corrections Special Visit Request

Incarcerated Parent Eligibility

Determining the criteria for 4-H LIFE Program participation is one of the most important decisions to make. The criteria should reflect the values of the correctional center and the 4-H LIFE Program. The criteria should be reviewed by all stakeholders annually to insure the eligibility guidelines remain relevant and lead to the program goals. The following questions may be useful when developing eligibility criteria for offenders.

- What is the security classification of the correctional center? How does this affect who can participate?
- Should an incarcerated parent be allowed in the program if visits from approved family members do not continue?
- How many conduct violations can an offender have and remain in the program?
- What types of family relationships are acceptable for an offender to participate in the program (other than parent or grandparent)?
- What type of intake process should be in place for incarcerated parents?
- Are there any restrictions by court or social services on parents’ rights to visit with their children?
- Are there additional eligibility criteria at the correctional center?

Meeting Space

The parenting skills classes and planning meetings typically take place in a classroom or chapel. The 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting will probably take place in the visiting room. Explore the following questions:

- What is the availability of classrooms? Are the classrooms conducive to participant learning?
- What is the availability of visiting room space? Is the visiting room environment conducive to a family friendly atmosphere? Is it possible to allow families to use secured outdoor space near the visiting room?
- Are there any scheduling conflicts with other programs?
- Are there conflicts with offender work schedules?
- What supplies can be brought into the correctional center? What are the requirements concerning food preparation?

The key to successful program implementation is to remain flexible and follow all current institutional policies and procedures.

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When planning a 4-H LIFE Program, it is helpful to understand a little bit about offender demographics. Approximately 60% of male and 75% of female offenders are parents. Due in part to the large number of individuals convicted of drug-related offenses, incarcerated parents reported lengthy sentences: more than 12 years in state prisons and 10 years in federal prisons.*

Evidence suggests that although mothers typically have shorter sentences than fathers, the effects on children are more profound since mothers typically live with children prior to incarceration and are more likely to have been their primary caregiver. It is worth noting that incarcerated mothers lack parenting skills and have high risk histories (such as depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence).**

Incarcerated parents may feel ashamed and guilty about being unable to share parenting responsibilities at their child's home. As a result, they may express great interest in building their self-esteem and parenting skills once they are in a correctional setting. At the same time, they may feel frustrated because of the limited opportunities they have to actually demonstrate these new skills within the correctional center. Program staff need to rely on the expertise of correctional center staff, who are often aware of the offenders who participate in programs to “look good on paper” in hopes of getting an early release date.

* Mumola, C. (2000). Mumola, C. (2000). Incarcerated parents and their children. NCJ 182335. Washington DC: USDOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

** Young, V. & Reviere, R. (2006). *Women behind bars*. Riennar: Boulder CO.

Providing parenting training with the opportunity to use those skills in the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting has been highly valuable to the offenders in the program. Extension's 4-H youth development and family studies curricula are research-based tools that staff can use to teach these concepts to the incarcerated parents.

By helping incarcerated parents understand and practice meeting their children's emotional and material needs within the enhanced visiting environment, the offender may gain a more realistic idea of what it takes to be a responsible parent.*

Most offenders are released to society and are provided with job seeking training within the correctional center prior to release. Incarcerated parents benefit from in-depth discussion and training on how to renegotiate parenting roles and responsibilities; how to communicate effectively with children and their caregivers; and how to financially support their children.

WORKING WITH CAREGIVERS

In order for the child to participate in the 4-H LIFE Program with the incarcerated parent, it is absolutely necessary to gain support from the caregiver raising the child. Caregivers have an enormous burden and may feel hesitant to get involved in the 4-H LIFE Program. Consider the following questions.

- How will caregivers be invited to participate in the 4-H LIFE Program?
- What communication formats will help caregivers understand the benefits of the program (such as brochures, videos clips, newsletters, personal contact)?
- What additional support can be offered to caregivers?
- Are there transportation issues that need to be taken into consideration?

Each caregiver's response to the invitation to be part of the program should be acknowledged and respected. Some caregivers will be enthusiastic and supportive from the start. Others may need time to rebuild trust in the incarcerated parent especially if the parent was not active in the child's life prior to incarceration.

Avoid trying to persuade a caregiver to bring an incarcerated parent's children to the correctional center. Many caregivers were unexpectedly forced into their current caregiver role and may not know the benefits of children maintaining a relationship with their incarcerated parent. Sharing some of the following information with the caregiver related to in-person contact visits in correctional centers may be helpful. The information comes from *Why Maintain Relationships?* referenced in the supplemental materials.

- Most children are relieved to see that their incarcerated parent is okay.

* Arditti (2008). *Overview: Incarceration and Families*, submitted for CYFAR 4-H LIFE Program.

- Most children’s idea of the prison setting is worse than the reality.
- Most children of an incarcerated parent need to have contact with their parents to assure themselves that their parents really love them and have not abandoned them.

Communication

Asking the incarcerated parent to take responsibility for sending program brochures and enrollment forms to the caregiver is a good place to begin. The incarcerated parent should be the one to fill out the necessary paperwork so that the caregiver and child are on the approved visitor list. You may also request the correctional center’s permission to personally contact the caregiver about the program’s goals, meeting dates and benefits. Depending on security guidelines, it may be necessary to request a waiver from the correctional center to contact certain family members.

A monthly newsletter is a good way to keep the 4-H LIFE families connected. Many families of incarcerated parents are scattered across the state. A newsletter can include such topics as upcoming meeting dates, parenting features or resources and regional and state 4-H activities.

Special Note: The 4-H name and emblem, protected under federal statute Title 18, U.S. Code 707, should be included in the 4-H LIFE newsletter. Refer to the 4-H Name & Emblem Guide on the USDA, National 4-H Headquarters site at <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/> for more information.

Transportation

Transportation can be a big issue for the caregiver. Most often, the caregiver will transport the children to visit their incarcerated parent. The location of the correctional center, access to public transportation, and the distance a family must travel affects program participation and the caregivers’ energy level upon arrival. Caregivers are given the chance to relax during the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting since incarcerated parents and program staff facilitate the meeting activities under the supervision of the correctional center visiting room officers.

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See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

- 24. FCN: *Facts and Issues: Why Maintain Relationships?*
 - 25. Invitation Letter to Caregivers to Join 4H-LIFE
-

WORKING WITH CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

Children of incarcerated parents come from both rural and urban areas and from a variety of family structures and living situations. Some children move from the home of one extended family member to the next depending on the gender, length of the



parent's incarceration and other circumstances. Ideally, staff should be aware of these living transitions in order to maintain communication with the person raising the child. Always be professional and respectful when communicating with children of incarcerated parents. Here are a few tips:

- Find out what the child's interests are and actively engage them in positive youth development programming.
- Keep in mind that responses to activities will be different depending on the age level, maturity, and emotional stability of the youth.
- Some youth may be withdrawn and isolated while others may be gregarious and outgoing.
- Use activities that allow all youth to succeed and take ownership/leadership roles.
- Use a simple survey to discover the interests of the children who attend 4-H LIFE Family/Club meetings. The incarcerated parents may be another source for information on their children's interests; however, there may be a difference between what the parent perceives and what actually interests the child.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

26. Youth Interest Survey

GETTING STARTED!

The following is a detailed look at the operation of a 4-H LIFE Program. 4-H LIFE staff carry out these work responsibilities in partnership with correctional center staff, incarcerated parents and the caregivers raising their children.

1. Recruit Program Participants

- Work with correctional staff to develop program recruitment materials such as flyers or brochures. These materials should include the program criteria, enrollment process, and meeting dates and times.
- Post the flyers in each housing unit and in the caseworker's office. The correctional center may also have a cable TV channel that will post the program information.
- Work with correctional center staff to identify and enroll eligible offender participants.
- Meet with offenders to identify their interests and strengths as well as their parenting/family strengths and needs. An enrollment form can capture much of this information. Also, obtain the caregivers' contact information (phone, email).

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

27. 4-H LIFE Program Recruitment and Eligibility Process Flowchart

2. Coordinate 4-H LIFE Program Delivery

- Communicate with the institutional activities coordinator (IAC) in writing to obtain written approval for supplies and/or for 4-H LIFE staff and volunteers to enter the correctional center to conduct 4-H LIFE programming. Pass along the IAC's written approval, often referred to as an Interoffice Communication memo, to other staff and volunteers as needed. The IAC may request an Application for Program Visit form be filled out for guest visitors.
- Take attendance and maintain a list of offenders' demographic information as well as attendance record at each 4-H LIFE class or meeting.
- Communicate on an ongoing basis with IAC about professional boundaries and safety, eligibility and recruitment of 4-H LIFE Program participants, status of classes and meetings, etc. Brief weekly meetings with the IAC are recommended.
- Participate in quarterly meetings with the warden, IAC, and 4-H LIFE staff.

- Inspect and maintain adequate supplies for the program. Shop as needed to replenish supplies.
- Plan the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting each month. Coordinate the meeting to ensure that all offenders are given time to serve as a leader. The 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting should provide youth an opportunity to experience the four (4) essential elements of positive youth development: independence, belonging, mastery and generosity.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

28. Sample Monthly Memos to the Correctional Center

3. Teach Selected Content and Skills to Offenders and their Children

Parenting Skills Meetings

- Hold weekly parenting skills classes with offenders with time for reflection and/or planning as needed.
- Assess, identify and understand offenders' collective parenting needs and desired learning topics.
- Review, select and implement research-based curricula lessons for use in parenting classes. Use a variety of interactive teaching and group process techniques with offenders including written reflection, public recording (flip chart), video clips with discussion, paired discussion, role playing, etc.
- Provide offenders with research-based handouts and reading materials such as University of Missouri Extension guide sheets.
- Provide parenting class certificates of completion to offenders and the offender's caseworker as directed by the local facility after designated number of parenting classes have been attended.

Planning and 4-H LIFE Family/Club meetings

- Provide offenders ongoing opportunities to make group decisions.
- Decide as a group who will carry out what duties during the 4-H Family/Club meeting. Written description of duties is often helpful.
- Serve as a strong support to the parents as they facilitate the monthly 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting.
- The 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting may include a theme, songs, life skill lesson for children, 4-H project(s), a craft, and healthy snack.

Note: 4-H LIFE staff should be prepared to observe some happy and emotional events between incarcerated parents upon their family members' arrival. The length and type of physical affection (for example, hugging) permitted between the caregivers and/or children and their incarcerated parents will vary from center to center depending on policy. Respect their need to spend time together as a family group upon arrival and before departing.

- Facilitate a group reflection process with offenders in the planning meeting that follows the 4-H LIFE Family/Club meeting. A reflection form may be used to document the group responses from the meeting.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

- 29. 4-H LIFE Family/Club Meeting Expanded Description
- 30. 4-H LIFE Reflection Survey

4. Serve as a Key Resource to Enrolled 4-H LIFE Program Offenders and the Caregivers Raising their Children.

- Provide enrolled offenders with research-based parenting, family, and child development resources. The offender should be encouraged to personally send this information to the caregiver.
- Provide 4-H LIFE caregivers with information about 4-H youth development programs and assist with completing the 4-H member enrollment form if needed. In addition, staff can provide caregivers with information about available parenting, family, and child development resources. Send materials to the incarcerated parent only when circumstances prevent the incarcerated parent from personally sending for the resources.
- Communicate with 4-H faculty and staff at the county level to identify 4-H activities and other pertinent Extension programs available to the family such as guide sheets, nutrition classes, 4-H Clubs, camps, etc.

See Supplemental Materials for Chapter Three

- 31. 4-H LIFE Resources
- 32. Suggested Reading for Children of Offenders and Their Families
- 33. Suggested Reading for Parents or Caregivers



SUMMARY

When implementing the 4-H LIFE Program, there will be many ups and downs. The challenge is to maintain consistency for the families while, at the same time, remaining flexible to changes within those families and within the correctional center.

Despite the challenges, the authors of this guide believe that replication of the Missouri 4-H LIFE Program, especially by Extension faculty and staff, can make a significant difference in the lives of most incarcerated parents, their children and their caregivers. Children of incarcerated parents need our support for a brighter future.

Sample Job Description of 4-H LIFE Program Associate

Functional Title: 4-H LIFE (Living Interactive Family Education) Program Associate

University Title: 4-H Program Associate

This is a regional non-exempt staff position with benefits. Positions are headquartered in Audrain County, Vandalia Correctional Center; and Cole County, Alcoa Correctional Center, Jefferson City. The pay is \$11.80/hr. to \$13.30/ hour.

The University of Missouri Extension 4-H LIFE Program helps children of incarcerated parents and their families build life and leadership skills through working on parenting skills and 4-H activities. Using research-based curricula and experiential learning strategies, the program associate works to help 4-H LIFE Program participants acquire essential life skills such as communication, decision making, and problem solving.

The 4-H LIFE Program associate will assist local MU Extension specialists in planning and implementing research-based family-strengthening curricula and hands-on 4-H activities to youth and adults within a correctional center visiting room. The position requires biannual travel to attend training related to programming with at risk audiences. The position requires one regularly scheduled Saturday each month in order to conduct 4-H programming with families.

Duties and responsibilities the employee must be able to perform:

- Serve as main contact at the 4-H LIFE Program located within a correctional center. Fulfill 4-H LIFE duties in accordance with MU Extension policies.
- Teach selected program content and skills to adults and youth. Have the ability to select and adapt materials to be used in conjunction with the approved curricula.
- Cooperate to plan, market, implement, and evaluate programs, including local adaptation of approved curricula.
- Communicate regularly with youth development or human development specialists concerning progress or issues regarding program, evaluation, and technical assistance.

- Coordinate local program delivery and use of resources (human, information, technical assistance, etc.) to involve other MU Extension staff and volunteers.
- Assist in the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, supervision, and evaluation of volunteer staff as delegated by the supervisor.
- Coordinate volunteer management systems (including internal and external advisory councils and committees) and report results to stakeholders.
- Report regularly at the 4-H and County Extension Council meetings on the progress of the program, evaluation, technical assistance, and/or budget.
- Prepare information for written reports and manage record keeping as directed by the supervising Extension specialist, USDA, MU Extension, etc.
- Plan with the 4-H youth specialist for sustainability and integration of the project into base programming.
- Participate in training and development opportunities appropriate for the position. Provide expertise and consultation regarding the project to other staff and volunteers.
- Carry out other duties assigned by the 4-H youth specialist.

Qualifications: must have a minimum of 60 hours of college credit, or an equivalent combination of experience and education. Must be able to pass the 4-H Youth Development and the Missouri Department of Corrections background screenings.

Preferred Qualifications: Must have 60 hours of college credit or equivalent experience in family studies, experiential learning, 4-H youth development, social work, or related topics. The ability to use and communicate through computers is highly desired. Must be passionate about family-strengthening programs and youth education. Must be able to travel to biannual training events. Must have an ability to work in strong partnership with the Missouri Department of Corrections staff.

A Sample Budget

The following sample budget is based on the annual expenses incurred at the Potosi Correctional Center 4-H LIFE Program. Actual expenses may vary.

Category	Calculation	Potosi's Approximate Cost	Your Estimated Cost
Personnel Salary: Youth Program Associate, .75 FTE or 30 hours/week	1530 hours/year X hourly wage of \$11.21/hr. =	\$ 17,160.00	
Personnel Benefits	0.30 benefits package X annual salary of \$17,160 =	\$ 5,148.00	
Transportation Personnel, interns and volunteers	(50 cents/mile X _____ miles per month X 12 months) =	Varies	
Supplies Craft supplies, refreshments, Monthly newsletter— postage and paper	\$30.00 per month X 12 months =	\$ 420.00	
Curricula 4-H Project Books & Helper Guides	\$30.00 per set, including helper guide	varies	
Training for Staff Building Strong Families Facilitator training (includes curricula)	\$125/person per person, one-time training x 1 person =	\$ 125.00	
Participant Costs 4-H annual membership fees, 4-H camp and/ or conference registration	\$10.00 per youth X 10 youth per year = \$50.00 per youth X 10 youth per year =	\$ 100.00 \$ 500.00	
Total Annual Cost			

EPILOGUE

A MESSAGE FROM TAMMY GILLESPIE, 4-H LIFE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

While the development of this 4-H LIFE guide has taken more time and energy than I ever thought possible, I want to speak to those of you who have read the guide and are still wondering if you really want to work with offenders and their families.

Are you asking yourself, “Should I do this program with children of offenders and their families? Do I believe that offenders can really learn to be better parents within the context of a correctional center environment? Do I think that correctional systems are ready to rethink the role of families during a loved one’s incarceration? Do I believe that communities will be safer if we invest in positive youth development programs now? Do I believe that the cycle of intergenerational incarceration can be broken?”

I asked myself those same questions. Working with 4-H LIFE Program staff, the children of offenders, their caregivers and even the incarcerated parents who serve as program volunteers has been a wise investment of my professional time and resources. This work has been incredibly rewarding as well. As a parent, I have been humbled by the enormous burden that caregivers bear each day. As a citizen, I have been encouraged and taught by the insights and regrets shared by incarcerated parents who see their children a few times each year – or not at all. And most of all, I have been energized by the positive leadership and sense of hope demonstrated by the 4-H LIFE children and youth.

In spite of all these good things, I am saddened to report that with the completion of this guide, one of our 4-H LIFE Program founders, Dennis Skillicorn, has an execution date associated with his name. I do not condone the actions that resulted in his incarceration. Despite all our years of work with offenders and their families, I still have many unanswered questions about the complex world of criminal activities, and the criminal justice system.

- How can we, as educators, social service professionals and correctional system staff help offenders tap into and share their positive ideas and energies while incarcerated so that they can become a positive role model to other offenders and even to their visiting children, stepchildren and others?
- Why doesn’t our society do more to reduce recidivism? Conservative estimates show that 95 percent of offenders are released back into communities. Why are programs such as the 4-H LIFE often considered “goodies” for offenders and not good community development?

- Can communities become more involved in offender re-entry, provide educational opportunities, restorative justice activities and mentoring so that offenders are released with stronger life skills and a more intact family support system?

I hope this guide serves as a catalyst for you to begin working with children of offenders and their families. Whether you replicate the 4-H LIFE Program or develop a different family-strengthening program with incarcerated parents and their families, be assured that you, like our program originators, are building an important bridge for the children and youth. As Thomas Fuller said, “He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven.”