

We Promote Strong Social Ties

HAVING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS IS CRUCIAL FOR OUR WELL-BEING, BOTH AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS PART OF A COMMUNITY. Social cohesion is the strength of connections among people in a community. It includes things like sharing resources, supporting each other, and being part of social networks. The Human Development & Relationships Institute helps create social cohesion by connecting families to agencies and organizations so they can use resources effectively.



“When I showed my daughter the video of her dada reading a story her eyes lit up like I’ve never seen before. She listens and smiles the entire time. It’s part of our nighttime routine.” [Literacy Link Participant]



The Literacy Link

The Literacy Link program fosters strong family relationships by promoting positive, literacy-focused interactions between parents in jail and prison and their children. One of the challenges children face when a parent is incarcerated is the ability to connect. Between 2020 and 2023, 289 parents completed an evaluation after participating in the program. Parents experienced significant improvements in their attitudes and confidence regarding reading aloud and interacting with their children. Ninety-five percent of parents expressed their intention to maintain a strong bond with their children, and 81 percent planned to read more frequently to their children.

After receiving a video recording of parents in jail reading a picture book, we interviewed 43 caregivers who were living with their children during their parents’ incarceration. Ninety-three percent of these caregivers agreed that the videos helped their children stay connected to the parent in jail, and 56 percent reported reading to their children more often after receiving the video.

“I have never read to my children before. Now I want to when I get home. I’m not afraid anymore.” [Literacy Link Participant]

93%

Caregivers agreed that the videos helped their children stay connected to the parent in jail.



View our full report at
extension.wisc.edu/family/#spotlight

We reached **over 600** participants



View the Wisconsin Fatherhood Needs Assessment Report and our fatherhood podcasts: parenting.extension.wisc.edu/fatherhood-in-wisconsin

through our **fatherhood** programming

2018

We began exploring **fatherhood as a priority.**

2019–2023

Since then...

In 2018, we were beginning to **understand the need** to support fathers specifically and their connection to their children. Extension had little support for fathers despite their important role in their children's development.

We have completed a large, statewide needs assessment and shared the results all over the state and country, **designed and held father-specific programs**, inspired others to focus on fathers, developed a podcast for fathers, and held a Fathers in Focus Research Symposium.

3

Total times our **staff/faculty's reports** about work mentioned "fathers" or "dads"

43

0

Number of programs specifically **delivered to fathers**

21

1

Number of internal or **research/program development** efforts about fathers

8

0

Number of our efforts about specifically **designing programs** for fathers

7

0

Number of programs **delivered to professionals**, including fatherhood content

4

Social Isolation

Extension conducted a survey to evaluate how local agencies across Wisconsin are addressing *social isolation and loneliness* among older adults. The survey aimed to understand the effectiveness of their efforts. The findings from this survey have been compiled into a report. The report serves as a valuable resource for agencies across the state that serve older adults, providing insights on how to address social isolation within their own communities. Additionally, it facilitated connections between these agencies and local Extension offices, enhancing their capacity to respond effectively to the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.



View the Social Isolation and Loneliness Report:
aging.extension.wisc.edu/articles/pandemic_programming_report

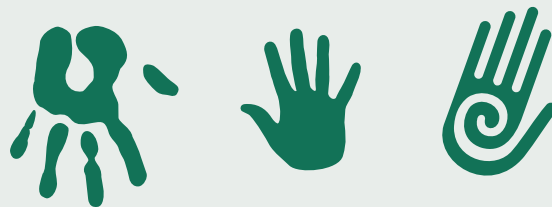


NEARLY 100%
felt they significantly improved their knowledge of how to support their child's development

Focus on Fathers

The *Focus on Fathers* program is designed to bring dads together. It provides a platform for fathers to learn about social and emotional skill development. During the program, dads have the opportunity to share their experiences and insights with each other.

The results have been promising: nearly 100 percent of the respondents who participated in the program during the first eight months reported that it significantly improved their understanding of why their child needs to develop social and emotional skills, as well as their knowledge of how to support their child's development. Additionally, they felt a stronger sense of connection to other fathers and support networks.





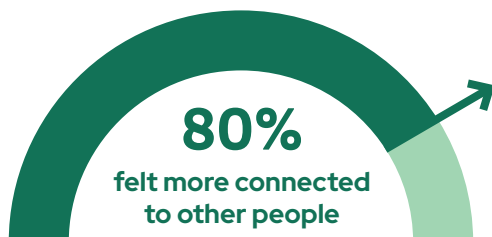
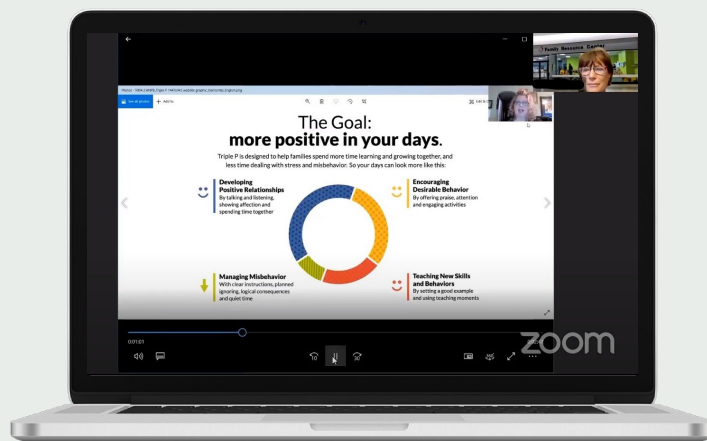
98%
learned something
valuable from Triple P
to enhance their family
interactions, making
them more positive



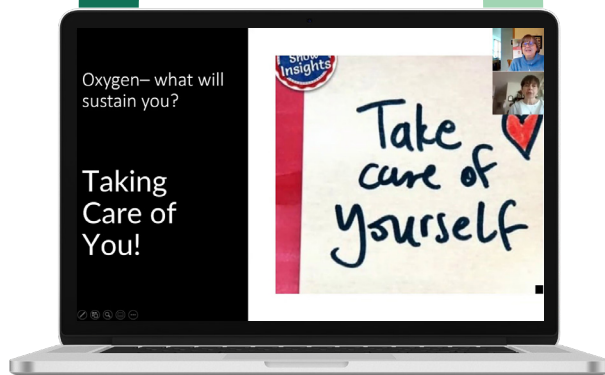
Triple P: Positive Parenting Program

The *Triple P: Positive Parenting Program* is a highly effective parenting program supported by over 35 years of research. It provides parents with straightforward and practical strategies to build strong, healthy relationships with their children.

Between 2021 and 2023, we collected post-class surveys from over 800 participants. The results were encouraging. Ninety-eight percent of participants reported learning something valuable that could enhance their family interactions, making them more positive. Additionally, 78 percent felt a stronger connection to community resources as a direct outcome of this class.



80%
felt more connected
to other people



Wise Wisconsin Series

Wise Wisconsin offers knowledge and resources on various topics with the goal of strengthening participants' social connections. By learning from others and sharing their own experiences, attendees built a sense of connection with others. Nine-hundred people registered for this series, and nearly all attendees who completed an evaluation felt connected to resources they were previously unaware of.



**Human Development &
Relationships Institute**
DIVISION OF EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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