

# IMPACT REPORT



MAY 2023

## 1200+

JUST IN TIME PARENTING NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

## 580+

CO-PARENTING CLASS PARTICIPANTS

## 142

CHILDREN RECEIVED MAKING READING MEMORIES VIDEOS FROM A PARENT WHO IS INCARCERATED



## Supporting Children, Parents and Caregivers During Family Transitions

From welcoming a new child to the separation or divorce of parents, all families adjust to transitions throughout life. During these big changes, parenting stress is common and can lead to strained parent-child relationships and adjustment difficulties in children. **Extension's Family Engagement and Relationships program provides in-person and virtual educational support to Wisconsin's parents and caregivers during family transitions.** Rooted in the best research available, our local and statewide efforts help parents and caregivers cultivate the strong roots necessary for their children and families to thrive.

"It made me feel more confident in myself as a father and just overwhelmed with joy that [my child] will get to see me and hear me...it meant a lot."

*A father in jail reflects on creating a Making Reading Memories video for his child*

## 97%

*of parents felt the newsletters helped them have appropriate expectations for their children's development*

## 95%

*of co-parenting parents felt more confident they could keep their children out of the middle of parenting issues*

## 90%

*of parents in jail felt more confident reading to their children*

The Family Engagement and Relationships program partners with public health departments, family courts, and local county jails to provide Extension programs that support families experiencing big changes. During times of transition, children's access to confident, nurturing parents is essential for their well-being. In fact, strong bonds with parents protect children from the negative effects of too much stress and plant the seeds for resilience. Family support during family transitions benefits adults, too. **When parents and caregivers receive help from reliable sources, they develop attitudes and skills to better navigate changes, reduce their stress, and boost their confidence.**

## Providing Accessible Parenting Information Rooted in Science

Becoming a parent is both rewarding and challenging. From infants' earliest days of life, the Family Engagement and Relationships program provides parents with the **Just in Time Parenting Newsletter**, a free monthly resource for Wisconsinites. During the first five years of their child's life, parents receive 6 to 12 print or e-newsletters each year, filled with information about child development, raising healthy children, and common parenting challenges. In 2022, Extension educators in 14 counties promoted Just in Time Parenting to 3,458 parents, and 1,285 new people subscribed. Of 40 parents who received the newsletters and provided their feedback, **88% felt less stressed and 86% were more patient when their child was fussy or displaying challenging behavior.** The benefit extended beyond the subscriber with 20% of the parents sharing the newsletter with a spouse, friend, or childcare provider.

*"We are grandparents raising our grandson. Just the little reminders are wonderful."*

*Grandparent receiving Just in Time Newsletters*

## Strengthening Parent-Child Relationships During Big Changes

*"Several times my ex and I have agreed to keep our personal emotions and feelings out of a decision and keep conversations civil, so the best outcome is for the kids [is] a center focus."*

*Co-Parenting Class Participant*

Extension also supports children and their families during times of unexpected transitions. Extension educators work with family courts throughout Wisconsin to provide **co-parenting classes** for parents facing separation or divorce and for families experiencing changes in the custody of their children. Classes teach valuable skills for reducing parental conflict, improving communication, and supporting children during periods of uncertainty. In 2022, Extension educators in 15 counties offered over 60 co-parenting classes to more than 580 people. After attending, **95% of co-parents were more confident that they could keep children out of the middle of parenting issues, and nearly 75% reported conversations that would normally result in a conflict with another co-parent did not escalate.**

When parents and their children are separated due to incarceration, Extension educators support families to maintain and strengthen these essential relationships. The **Making Reading Memories program** for parents in jail and their young children provides opportunities for connection through recorded book readings. Extension educators coach and record parents reading a children's storybook. The book and recording are sent to the children, who are encouraged to read along. In 2022, Making Reading Memories served 96 parents and family members incarcerated in county jails and their 142 children. Extension educators recorded 186 videos of parents and family members reading children's books. Of 62 parents in jail that participated for the first time and provided feedback, **92% felt the videos made them feel closer to their children, and nearly all felt more confident reading to their children as a result of the program.**

*"It made me feel really great to do something that I feel separates me as a great dad...this actually made me want to read more. I will read more to my children."*

*Making Reading Memories Participant*



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