

Extension Enhances Quality of Life

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of
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College of Agriculture,
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Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agents Provide Opportunities for Fathers to Build Parenting Skills and Family Bonds

Family and Consumer Sciences Extension
102 Erikson Hall
Lexington, KY 40506-0050
(859) 257-3887
<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/>



extension.ca.uky.edu
It starts with us



In 2018, over 450 participants came to the program at Grayson Lake that included biological fathers, step-fathers, foster fathers, uncles, grandfathers, neighbors and family friends with the children.

Children with active nurturing fathers do better in school behaviorally and academically, have higher self-esteem, and grow into more successful adults. Absentee fatherhood continues to negatively affect children. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children in America (one out of three) live in biological father-absent homes.

The Carter County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Advisory Council requested more programs to encourage positive parenting skills and help nurture families. With the support from the University of Kentucky Extension Specialist and Carter County community leaders, “Day Out with Dad” was developed to celebrate fathers and father figures in Carter County starting in 2013. The purpose was to encourage fathers to spend more quality time with their children and develop a better understanding of the value their role plays in children’s lives. The free annual event included fishing, birdhouse building, games, crafts, educational information, and healthy snacks and lunch. Fathers reported they were encouraged to spend more one-on-one time with their children and do more projects

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together.

The program targeted limited resource families by partnering with the Family Resource Centers in Carter County Schools, local churches, and the Drug Free Coalition. Each family went home with educational information about the important role of fathers and a book that they were encouraged to read to their children. In 2013, the first year of the program, 100 people participated. It has grown each year, with over 1,200 having participated to date.

One of the participants from a local men’s treatment center hadn’t been able to spend time with his children in two years because of incarceration and treatment. The facility directors arranged for his family to come to the event. This allowed him an opportunity to spend the day with his children. The Carter County Fatherhood Initiative continues to meet to discuss these emerging issues and make plans for innovative programs. “A Day Out with Dad” opened doors and opened minds to show the people of Carter County that parenting programs are not just for mothers. If the community comes together and shares resources, fathers can be reached and families can be changed.

Dads play a special role in their young children’s lives. That’s a message that every father needs to hear, but is especially important for those who are new to fatherhood, as well as those who spend time away from their children. Extension strengthens and grows positive, healthy, and enjoyable father-child relationships in all families.

“Day Out with Dad” is one of the most important programs that is offered in our County. My kids and I look forward to it every year. Life gets busy and sometimes as a Dad I forget how important my role is and don’t make the time I should with my kids. It’s nice to have one day set aside just for us. It reminds me how important it is that I make time to spend quality time with my kids.”

- Carter County Participant