

Central Oregon Partnerships for Youth (COPY)

Mentoring Children of Prisoners

Program Objective

COPY was designed to provide support and assistance to the children of incarcerated parents in Deschutes County, giving them equal opportunity to succeed. Volunteer Mentors provide positive role models and healthy relationships with adults outside the immediate family. Additionally, COPY seeks to offer a positive and fulfilling experience to volunteer mentors.

Mentor Qualifications and Requirements

To ensure our volunteers are as safe and well prepared as possible, the COPY Program has a number of critical elements required of all volunteers:

- Mentors must submit to a background check that includes fingerprint identification, assessment of their driving record, reference checks, and initial drug screen.
- Mentors need to own, or have access to, a properly insured automobile.
- Mentors will complete a training and orientation class.
- Mentors must be willing to devote a minimum of two to three hours a week on a regular and consistent basis to the relationship with their child.
- To ensure consistency with the child, Mentors are required to commit to a minimum of one year's involvement with the program.
- Mentors must adhere to program guidelines and child abuse reporting protocol.
- Mentors must refrain from using improper language or having inappropriate discussions in the presence of the child.
- The Mentor must be of good character, which includes being: dependable, honest, punctual, fun-loving, willing to adapt to change, mature, open to communication with their child, and exhibit mental and emotional maturity.
- Mentors must be willing and able to support the parent and/or caregiver.
- Mentors must be willing to participate in ongoing Mentor education.

Mentor Supervision

Mentors report directly to the Program Coordinator. They are required to check-in with the COPY program staff at regular intervals to discuss the mentor match and any difficulties they are encountering. All Mentors are required maintain a log of their activities and document the progress of their relationship. Mentors are encouraged to ask the program staff for help when they are encountering difficult situations.

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

- Mentors must accept each child where they are in their lives and provide encouragement and modeling to steer them in the right direction.
- Mentors are encouraged to be clear and transparent in their interactions with care givers, letting them know about activities, schedules, and whom the child is in contact with.
- The Mentor should take the initiative in setting up outings and take into consideration the interest and desires of the child.
- Mentors need to respect that children establish mentor relationships at different rates and respond accordingly.
- Children in the COPY program have gone through a traumatic experience by having at least one of their parents removed from their lives. It is critical that the Mentor is diligent in setting and making appointment with their child and letting the child know when they can expect to see you next.
- Mentors are required to respect the privacy of the child.
- If there are any concerns about the child's well being or the appropriateness of the mentor match, Mentors need to contact program staff immediately.
- Mentors need to keep program staff up-to-date with changes in their address, phone number, e-mail, etc.
- If the mentor match is unsuccessful, Mentors need to be sensitive to the child's concerns and needs, and work with the program staff to facilitate a positive end to the match.