

Understanding the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents in the Child Welfare System



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Handouts

- SFCIPP “Bill of Rights” of Children of Incarcerated Parents
- RISE issue no.10 (2008), “Parenting from Prison”
- SF Sheriff’s Dept, “One Family” Program Description
- Law Enforcement Role and Responsibilities at the Time of Parental Arrest
- Fact Sheet on the Intersection of Corrections and Child Welfare

Workshop Goals

- UNDERSTANDING THE NEED/An introduction of the issues and impact on children in the child welfare system with an incarcerated parents
- PROMISING PRACTICES/Provide an overview of the partnership between the SF Sheriff's Dept, SF Human Services Agency, Friends Outside, and Community Works
- NEXT STEPS/Individual and agency actions to address this need and develop best practices.

Incarceration Facts & Figures

1 in 100 adults in America is in jail or prison (Pew Charitable Trust, 2008)

1 in 31 adults in America are in jail, prison or on probation (Pew Charitable Trust, 2009)

1 in 15 general fund dollars was spent on corrections. In the past two decades, state general fund spending on corrections increased by more than 300%. Only Medicaid spending has grown faster. (Pew Charitable Trust 2009)

Men vs. Women

Men are incarcerated at a rate 5x that of women
(1 in 18 men vs. 1 in 89 women) (Pew Chritable Trust 2009)

80% increase in the # men in state and federal
prison (from 1990 to 2001) (California Research Bureau 2003)

114% increase in the # women in state and
federal prison (from 1990 to 2001) (California Research Bureau
2003)

Children of Incarcerated Parents

52% of all incarcerated men and women were parents.
Two-third of the incarcerated parents population is non-white. (The Sentencing Project, 2009)

75% of incarcerated women are mothers. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009)

There are great parental racial incarceration disparities
(Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008)

- Black children (1 in 15)
- Hispanic children (1 in 41)
- White children (1 in 110)

Children of Incarcerated Parents

Child's Current Caregivers: Fathers in State Prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008)

- 88% with child's mother
- 13% with child's grandparent
- 5% other relatives
- 2% foster home or agency

Child's Current Caregivers: Mothers in State Prison

- 37% with child's father
- 45% with child's grandparent
- 23% other relatives
- 11% foster home or agency

Child Welfare Outcomes

Children of Incarcerated Mothers (Vera Institute 2004)

- More likely to age out of the foster care system
- Less likely to reunify, enter into subsidized guardianship, get adopted or leave foster care through other means
- Reunification rate is 21% vs. 40% for all children

Disruption to Children's Lives

- 1 out of 5 children whose parents were arrested were present at the time of arrest
(California Research Bureau 2005)
- Depending on the age of the child, children feel fear, worry, confusion, sadness, guilt, embarrassment, isolation, and anger at the parental arrest.

Research on Parental Arrest

- Most police departments do not have policies that direct officers to deal with children of dependent persons at the time of arrest unless the arrest is because of child abuse, domestic violence, or drug endangered children.
- Few police dept have policy governing care of child whose sole caretaker was arrested

Understanding the Jail Setting

- What every social workers should know about the jail setting (i.e. locating parents, visitation rules, etc.)
- Transportation and other barriers facing relatives, caregivers and foster parents
- A social worker's role in facilitating communication with both mothers and fathers
- Providing best practice (i.e. court notification, TPR, good bye meetings)

Providing Quality Services to Parents

- The importance of social worker having a non-judgmental, holistic viewpoint regarding the parent/child relationship
- Quality Matters – jail programs which provide quality services (i.e. One Family, Parenting Inside Out, Charter School)
- Using the “Crisis Opportunity” for quality parent/child interaction and wrapping services both inside/outside jail setting

Next Steps

Questions and More Information Available at:

San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents
(www.sfcipp.org)

Family to Family – an Annie E Casey Foundation
child welfare reform initiative
(www.f2f.ca.gov)

What can you do as an individual or agency to
address this issue?