

Parenting Connection

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New Books

An Inmate's Daughter

By Jan Walker

ISBN 0-9714161-9-2 Baker and Taylor

The author captured all of the fundamental psychological crises that children of incarcerated parents struggle with every day, and she did it in a context of typical early adolescent development. It is a gripping story of a young teen whose father is in prison and whose mother insists that it be kept a secret. It brings a new and compassionate view of families in this kind of difficult yet challenging situation.

Parenting from a Distance: Your Rights and Responsibilities

By Jan Walker \$14.95 email janwalker@centurytel.net

Jan Walker has taught parenting, child development and family courses to incarcerated dads and moms for 18 years. She wrote this book to help incarcerated parents reach out to their children. It will help parents separated by incarceration to teach how to explain prison and crimes in ways children can understand.

New Network

The National Incarcerated Parents/ Family Network is a nonprofit organization established in 2004. Their mission is to dedicate all of their services to improving the lives of children of incarcerated parents and families through:

- Working together
- Education
- Commitment
- Awareness
- Respect
- Example

"Children are our most important asset. We must try to do everything possible to insure that they learn, grow, and develop into quality individuals and citizens. Mothers' and Fathers' responsibility to their children does not stop due to their incarceration. Parent/parents need to come home prepared to take on responsibilities and have the necessary tools to be a "Responsible and Committed Parent/parents"."

We're Growing

The Region III & IV CEA Conference gave an opportunity for the Parenting Special Interest Group to expand its membership.

As a result of more Parenting instructors joining CEA and the interest stimulated by the workshops and Parenting SIG Roundtable, our SIG membership has increased to 45.

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Parenting Special Interest Group Report - June 2006

Originally formed as by the Wisconsin chapter of CEA in the Summer of 2004, the Parenting Special Interest Group's early development has been rapid.

A state Chair, Co-Chair, and Liaison to the DOC Education Directors Council were selected.

A bi-monthly newsletter, *Parenting Connections*, was begun in November, 2004.

In January, 2005, a *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections* booklet which summarizes all of the Parenting classes, Parent Support Groups, Parent/Child Book Projects, and Parents' Fairs in Wisconsin correctional facilities was assembled and made available to all Parenting providers and institutions.

A *Recommended Parenting Curriculum* was drafted and forwarded to DOC administrators for approval.

The Parenting SIG helped Parenting instructors to conduct workshops at professional education and corrections conferences

As the word spread about the Wisconsin SIG, in April 2005, International CEA officers asked if the Wisconsin group would be interested in expanding to a national organization. The invitation was accepted and Jerry Bednarowski became the first national Chair.

The 2005 International CEA Conference in Des Moines held in July 2005 was seized as the opportunity to expand the SIG. As the result of a workshop entitled, "Establishing a Parenting Network," interested individuals from throughout the U.S. became members of the SIG.

Since going national, the scope of the Parenting SIG's has continued to expand.

In May, the Parenting SIG published its 10th issue of the *Parenting Connection*, bi-monthly newsletter. With the next issue of the newsletter in July, Mary Dahl of the Green Bay Correctional Institution will take over the editing duties from the original Editor, Diane Birch of the Stanley Correctional Institution. In the past few issues of *Parenting Connections*, SIG members from Minnesota, Ohio, and Virginia have contributed articles.

The newsletter has varied in length from 4 to 6 pages. Hardcopies of the newsletter are distributed to teachers and administrators in Wisconsin and the newsletter is emailed to SIG members nation-wide.

News & Notes to Feature SIGs

The next issue of CEA's national newsletter, *News & Notes*, will be devoted to the Special Interest Groups. Included in the newsletter will be an article entitled, "Nurturing Parents to Be Nurturing Parents." The article will summarize the short, yet eventful, history of the Parenting Special Interest Group.

Back-Up Needed

At the 61st International CEA Conference in Anaheim, a time slot is set aside for Special Interest Groups to meet. The SIGs will meet in Salon F on Tuesday, August 1 from 4:00-5:00.

I will not be attending the conference. I am looking for someone to host the meeting and lead the roundtable discussion. Possible topics to be discussed include:

- ❖ Parenting programs at participants' facilities
- ❖ Effective methods and materials you use
- ❖ Recruiting new Parenting SIG members
- ❖ Ideas for improving the *Parenting Connections* newsletter
- ❖ Adding your program description to the *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections*
- ❖ Presenting Parenting workshops at conferences
- ❖ Other services that the Parenting SIG can provide

If you are planning to attend the International CEA Conference and would like to chair the Parenting SIG meeting, email me at jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com or phone me at 920-734-5902.

I will send extra copies of the *Parenting Connection* newsletter and *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections* and other background information you can distribute at the meeting.



New Resource Review

After reviewing the Families in Focus parenting curriculum developed by the Council on Crime and Justice in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I became anxious to use some of the material.

The first topic focuses on different styles of parenting and the difference between a nurturing environment and a non-nurturing environment. The students are encouraged to remember and think about their early years at home. If they are willing to look into the past, they may be able to predict what kind of parents they will be. We tend to parent our children the way our parents raised us, even if we do not want to. If the students do not want to make the same mistakes made in their childhoods; there will have to be some hard work done to change some thinking patterns. Some patterns of abuse most likely lie just below the surface of consciousness and could surface in a devastating way, if not examined early on.

I talk about parenting styles in my class, but never right at the beginning. This was something new to try and it was very successful. It appeared that the students became aware sooner of the need to examine their thinking for each of the other topics presented in the course. We defined what the goal was from the start. I like this approach and will continue to build my program using this topic at the beginning. It is also a great way to evaluate how open the participants will be and how sensitive they are to certain issues.

In contrast, I did not feel confident discussing forms of child abuse and the damage done to families before the students learn some positive things about children and families. The population here at Wisconsin Resource Center may be unique in the way that we have more clients who came from very abusive backgrounds and suffer from mental difficulties because of them. I have to be very sensitive when bringing up the topic of child abuse. I prefer to do that later in the course when the students feel more confident with each other and me.

The curriculum also includes some great quotes and essay type material that have a "chicken soup for the soul" feel to them that the students enjoy and like to collect.

I am looking forward to including other portions of this material in my class as I study the curriculum further. What a wonderful resource for parenting classes in corrections.

by: Mary Knox, Wisconsin Resource Center

15 Ways to Be a Better Parent

1. Be a good example. Your children will be influenced by how you spend your time, how you express your emotions, etc.
2. Respect your child as a person. Be cautious to feelings and privacy of each child as an individual—not comparing him/her to other children or adults.
3. Keep a sense of humor.
4. Take time for yourself. Remember to take care of yourself first.
5. Plan for the future. Include everyone in the family when making plans--giving everyone's ideas a chance to be included
6. Have reasonable expectations for your child. Let him/her know you always love them no matter what they do or say.
7. Help your child think for herself. "Because I said so" establishes parental authority, but doesn't give the child the ability to learn or think for him/herself.
8. Remember what's important.
9. Lean on your friends and family.
10. Forgive your parenting mistakes.
11. Spend individual time with your child. Plan on a movie in the evening or a visit to the museum.
12. Talk to your child. Be specific on your expectations and outcomes.
13. Read and sing to your child often. The first five years are key.
14. Help your child foster relationships with others.
15. Find the child in yourself.



10 Ways to Change Your Thoughts

1. Keep things in perspective. Nothing is all bad or all good.
2. Things change. Today isn't forever.
3. Acknowledge the negative, but focus on the positive.
4. Accept and affirm the positive.
5. Don't take things personally or try to predict the future.
6. Be kind to yourself. Remember your strengths.
7. Don't let emotions get in the way of seeing things objectively.
8. There is more than one correct way to do things.
9. We are more than our mistakes or imperfections.
10. Don't take the blame for others' behavior.

Editor's Notes

Summer sure is a busy time for all of us. What with our vacations, work assignments, and doing things for our families. Being that this is my first paper I put together I really appreciate all the articles that I received but I truly hope that there are many more for the September/October issue. Please take some time and toot your own horns. Let us all know of new things you learn or what heading to look up on the internet. I discovered a variety of other types of curriculum ideas being used in other institutions in the United States. I will continue to keep you abreast of those sights. I hope all your programs are running well for you. Please let me know what areas you would like more information on. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Mary Dahl





