

Parenting Connection

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Family Living- Effective Black Parenting

Milwaukee County University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs respond to local community needs with research based education and partnerships that support families and communities. Together, we help to strengthen families and communities by providing low cost comprehensive training, parent education services, public awareness, and advocacy activities. Family Living is committed to eliminating child abuse and neglect and infant mortality in Milwaukee County.

According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (2006), an African American infant in Milwaukee is at greater risk of dying in his or her first year than an infant in Malaysia, Jamaica, Panama, Costa Rica or Chile. In 2004, the number of infants who died within the first year of their lives was 19.4 (per thousand) according to the Milwaukee Health Department. The factors contributing to Milwaukee's high infant mortality rates are lack of prenatal care, lack of basic parenting skills, stress, abuse, lack of access to health care and poverty.

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The Parenting Connection is a publication of the Parenting Special Interest Group and the Wisconsin Chapter of the Correctional Education Association

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Family Living- Effective Black Parenting (cont. from pg.1)

Milwaukee County is home to numerous parent education services for families. Sadly, few community organizations in Milwaukee are utilizing programs that are culturally relevant and evidence based. In an effort to help, UW-Extension will offer families and Home Visitors education and training in the **Effective Black Parenting Program** (EBP). EBP is a nationally acclaimed model parent skill-building program that teaches parents and others about child development. EBP is grounded in clear theoretical foundation and has been carefully implemented and evaluated.

Because of our efforts, a unique collaboration with the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring (CICC), the foundation of the program has been formed.

- CICC will allow UWEX to conduct instructor-training workshops in the Quad County area of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, and Waukesha) at a reduced rate.
- CICC is also interested in working with UW-Extension on developing a culturally competent prenatal curriculum for African American families.
- Our first program began last fall. To date, 12 families have benefited from the research based materials and eight workers have been trained to work with families.

UWEX looks forward to expanding its work with underserved populations and developing future materials that are culturally sensitive to the populations that we serve.

Participant Comments

"A refreshing reminder of how to integrate our heritage in a positive forte!" -2006 EBP Participant

"Very needed, useful and appreciated. I learned new information on how the history does apply to how we raise our children and how we can set clear and reachable goals for families to help them move ahead." -2006 EBP Participant

by: Kimberly Porter
UW-Extension
Family Living Programs

Promising Life Skills Programs for Incarcerated Audiences

UW-Extension/Cooperative Extension has authored a document titled "Promising Life Skills Educational Programs for Incarcerated Audiences." The document is intended for educators to select educational resources, both curricula and supplemental materials, which have resulted in promising outcomes with incarcerated audiences. Information in the document was researched and reviewed by UW-Extension state specialists. The document is available at www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/families/criminaljustice.cfm.

by: Jennifer Caravella
UW-Extension



Oregon's Parenting Inside Out Program

Approximately 60% of state and federal prisoners in the U.S. have at least one child under the age of 18 years. In 1999, prisons held the parents of over 1.5 million children, accounting for 2% of the entire population of minors in the country. The children of incarcerated parents are an "at risk" population. Parent criminality is related to serious and violent child delinquency, and there is some evidence that parent criminality influences child behavior through parenting practices. Given this, one way to begin to break the intergenerational transmission of criminality might be to change the way that incarcerated parents and the caregivers of their children parent during and after incarceration.

While there are many parenting programs around the country that have been delivered within prisons, very little is known about whether or not these programs make a difference in the lives of the children of incarcerated parents. Further, based on a national review conducted in 2002, these programs tend to either be non-standardized, non-research based programs developed by an individual practitioner, or to be programs that were developed for families outside of the correctional environment. A variety of preventive focused parenting programs have been developed and been shown to be effective through research, but these programs appear to have had little effect on prison-based parenting programs.

Parenting Inside Out (PIO) was created to bring the best from the research and practitioner worlds to parenting education in corrections. PIO was developed by a team from the non-profit Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC), a research center dedicated to the development, testing, and refinement of research-based programs for children and families, and the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC), which over the past several years has pioneered the "Oregon Accountability Model", a multifaceted corrections approach intended to provide a solid foundation for inmates to lead successful lives upon release.

The core content of PIO comprises the research based parenting practices of encouragement, supervision/monitoring, discipline, and problem solving. Effective techniques for teaching skills in these areas are drawn from existing research based "parent management training" (PMT) programs. PMT is considered the "best practice" in parenting education, and versions of PMT have been nominated as such by several federal agencies and professional organizations, as well as numerous peer reviews in scientific journals.

In 2003, OSLC was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to study the impact of PIO on incarcerated parents, their children, and the caregivers of their children. When complete in 2008, the study will include over 400 male and female inmates and their families, followed for up to 6 months following release from prison. This will be the largest, most scientifically rigorous study of a prison-parenting program ever conducted.

For further information on research relevant to PIO, contact Dr. Mark Eddy, Research Scientist and Licensed Psychologist at the Oregon Social Learning Center in Eugene, 541-485-2711 or marke@oslc.org

by: Tracy Schiffmann
Children's Justice Alliance Training Institute



FPC-Yankton Offers Common Sense Parenting

Common Sense Parenting is a product of years of research compiled by Girls and Boys Town, Nebraska. This program is a proven, systematic guide to raising responsible kids and building happy families. It teaches skills to help parents build better families.

The state of South Dakota offers Common Sense Parenting to help parents make their homes more peaceful, enjoyable and safe for the whole family.

Through the efforts of Karen Abbott, a volunteer from a family services agency in Yankton, South Dakota, the Common Sense Parenting curriculum has been modified to meet the needs of offenders at the Federal Prison Camp –Yankton. Karen comes to the institution regularly to teach parenting classes to groups of minimum security inmates.

Topics covered in Common Sense Parenting are:

- Parents as Teachers
- Positive/Negative Consequences
- What Is Behavior?
- Effective Praise
- Preventive Teaching
- Corrective Teaching
- Staying Calm
- Teaching Self-Control
- Family Meetings
- What Is Discipline?

Topics added specifically for correctional inmates are:

- Social Skills/Problem Solving
- Relationship Building
- Putting It Together

By taking the course, students learn how to:

- Reduce Family Stress
- Support Success in School
- Enrich His Relationship with His Children
- Reduce Problem Behavior
- Diminish Yelling and Fighting
- Increase His Confidence as Well as His Child's Confidence



For more information on FPC-Yankton's program, you may contact Karen Abbott at butchdl@vyn.midco.net or check out Common Sense Parenting at www.boystownpress.org.



Parenting Special Interest Group Update

As a result of the Parenting workshops presented at the Region III & IV CEA Conference held in Yankton, South Dakota on April 18-29, 2007, the CEA-Wisconsin State Conference held in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin on May 7, 2007, and an inquiry from Oregon parenting instructors; the membership of the Parenting Special Interest Group has continued to grow. The Parenting SIG has now has 124 members from 20 states. An updated email list has been sent to all of the Parenting SIG members.

Earlier this month, DeNeal Ericksen and Peggy Meyers from Wisconsin presented a workshop entitled "Nurturing Parents to Be Nurturing Parents" at the International CEA Conference in Atlanta. They also hosted the Parenting SIG meeting. Those attending the International Conference had a chance to sign-up for the Parenting SIG email list at both of these events.

As is the procedure for this newsletter, each July, a new editor for the *Parenting Connection* assumes her/his duties. The new editor taking over this issue is Mary Knox, a teacher at the Wisconsin Resource Center.

Mary Knox has been at WRC for the last six years. She has taught child development and parenting for most of the last twenty years. She also teaches ABE classes and helps students prepare for the HSED. Her background is Special Education in the public schools and owning a child care center while teaching as adjunct faculty at Fox Valley Technical College.

Mary is the third person to act as editor of the *Parenting Connection*. Diane Birch, a teacher at Stanley Correctional Institution, was the newsletter's first editor. She was replaced by Mary Dahl, a teacher at Green Bay Correctional Institution.

Cheryl Wontor who teaches at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility has volunteered to be the new co-editor. She will replace Mary as editor when her term expires in July 2008.

Cheri works at a medium security facility in downtown Milwaukee. As a Basic Adult Instructor, the goal of the program is to give the inmates transitional tools to become employed, support their families and be contributing members of their communities. Cheri's background includes teaching on the elementary level in special education, as well as, teaching for Milwaukee Area Technical College and Concordia University in the Business Division for ten years.

If you would like to submit an article for the next issue of the *Parenting Connection*, you may send it to Mary Knox at knoxmk@dhfs.state.wi.us.

The cattle is only as good as the pasture in which it is raised. (Ethiopia)

A proverb used in the "Effective Black Parenting Program".



New Materials Support Parent/Child Literacy Projects

In the May/June 2007 Parenting Connection newsletter, a poignant article entitled, DADDY, I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A STATISTIC, underscored the importance of reading programs for incarcerated parents and their children.

“Read to me, with me and have me read to you. Take me to the library and show me the wonders of the world through books. Give me a reason to want to read. Show me articles of interest in the newspaper other than the comics. Check my homework every day to make sure I understand what has been taught to me in school. Ask me about my day at school, my teacher and my peers. It is important to me to see your face at my school events and extracurricular activities. Show me love, not just in how you treat me, but how you affectionately interact with me.”

Two former human resources marketing executives have recently published a line of very creative career guidebooks that can satisfy multi-dimensional objectives of literacy programs involving parents and children.

Called *CareerWise: Grow Up. Get a Job*, the engaging materials help parents and children explore and discuss the many possible answers to the important question “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

The materials are written in an easy, contemporary tone. They provide practical information about the working world and the many exciting possibilities that exist for people of all ages, backgrounds, skill levels and education, while at the same time helping to hone reading and vocabulary skills. They foster important dialogues between children and their parents and help children feel their parents care about them and their futures. They also help parents stress to children the importance of staying in school and the connection between strong values and achieving dreams in life.

The very stylish designs of the book make reading fun. Content includes basic work-world vocabulary words (in English and Spanish) that provoke valuable discussions about the benefits of having a job; practical advice about how to behave and what to expect in the workplace; 1001 job titles in every possible industry to explore and consider; entertaining and fun activities that parents and children can do together to uncover their talents and build self-esteem; and a charming fairy tale that engages and excites kids about their futures and all the adults who care about them.

While providing practical information, these materials will get parents and their children sharing dreams, plans, hopes and fears. They easily allow parents to nurture, support and guide their children toward a brighter future, while preparing for their own re-entry into the workforce.

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Parent/Child Literacy Programs (continued from page 6)

The Administration for Children and Families' Administration on Children, Youth and Families'; Family and Youth Services Bureau will also find these useful products for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program. Materials can be reviewed at www.GetCareerWise.com or you can contact one of the founders of the company, Susan Schneider, at susan@tailwagstudio.com.

by: Susan Schneider



“Holding Hands”

As part of the Parenting Program at the Federal Prison Camp in Yankton, SD, the inmates are strongly encouraged to maintain a long distance relationship with their children. Hand tracing is one activity that is used to help relationships with their children. Hand tracing is one activity that is used to help keep in “touch”. Upon entering the Parenting Program, all students are asked to trace their hand on two separate pieces of colored paper for each of their children. Each child is sent a letter home with the two traced hands asking the child to trace his/her hand on top of the hand traced by their dad. The child is asked to send one sheet back to their dad while posting the other tracing in their bedroom or somewhere highly visible to the child to see that this is a way of “holding hands” while dad is away.

Normally, while describing this hand tracing activity, most of the inmates will give you the “you’ve got to be kidding, this is too childish” look. To share a true story from a few years ago, an inmate appeared in my office with a tear in his eye expressing his gratitude for sharing the activity with him. He explained that he thought, too, that this activity was a bit too childish for his 16-year-old daughter. However, after tracing his hand several times, each landing in the garbage, he finally decided it would not hurt for him to give it a try. A couple of weeks later, he not only received a traced hand back from his daughter but clearly, you could see a tear drop on that same tracing left by his daughter. He was truly ecstatic to receive the tracing, but was more thrilled to know that his daughter still cherished their relationship despite his mistake that put him in prison.

by Beverly A. Wieseler, Parenting Coordinator
Federal Prison Camp, Yankton, SD



Strength for Their Journey-- Five Essential Disciplines African American Parents Must Teach Their Children and Teens

By: Robert L. Johnson, MD & Paulette Stanford, MD

In this first black parenting book to focus specifically on discipline, two leading authorities on African American child-rearing share their practical wisdom for helping children and teens fulfill their true potential.



The result of more than twenty years' collaborative work focusing on the heart of successful parenting, the acclaimed five-discipline program developed by Drs. Robert L. Johnson and Paulette Stanford has helped thousands of African American children cope with the myriad challenges they confront each day. Now making this special prescription available to all parents, *Strength for their Journey* offers insight into five specific areas:

- Traditional Discipline: The strength to embrace parental boundaries
- Racial Discipline: The strength to negotiate the realities of being a racial minority
- Practical Discipline: The strength to excel in school, career, and financial pursuits
- Mind-Body Discipline: The strength to maintain a positive physical, mental, & spiritual health

In this culture, that often grants fewer safety nets to nonwhite children. *Strength for Their Journey* is a crucial book that African American parents can turn to again and again, paving a path of confidence and joy for future generations. This book will show educators and parents alike how to:

- Inspire young African Americans to feel good about themselves and their heritage
- Choose the most effective ways to instill discipline
- Help young people deal with prejudice and racial profiling
- Give students the tools and motivation to succeed in school
- Help young people develop financial responsibility and career skills
- Fortify children against the dangers of violence, substance abuse, and unsafe sex
- Give boys and girls the strength to resist negative peer pressure

by: Cheryl Wonter
Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility



Wanted: Stories about Inmates Children

Drawing on 18 years of experience teaching parenting and family relationship classes to correctional inmates, Jan Walker has authored several books on parenting curricula and the effect that the incarceration of a parent has on children.

Jan is currently working on two more books. One is a young adult novel about a boy whose mother is in prison.

The other is nonfiction meant to increase awareness for school teachers and the general populace on what happens to children when a parent is in prison. Jan is collecting stories (names changed) to be included in her book. Jan would love to hear from any correctional educators who have stories to share about their students and what they hear about their children's struggles and successes.

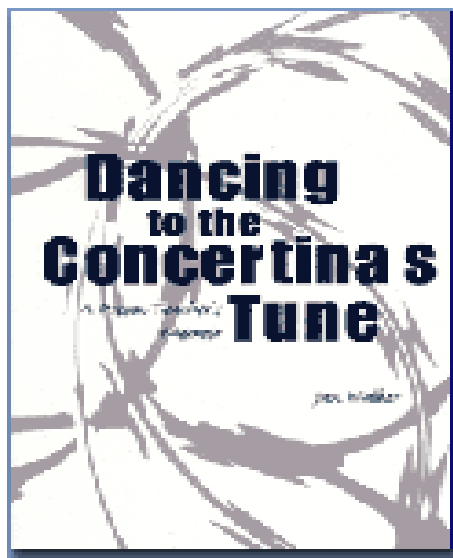
To contribute a story, contact Jan at janwalker@earthlink.net.

Recently, the Washington state librarian has named Jan's memoir, "Dancing to the Concertina's Tune", and her middle grade novel, "An Inmate's Daughter", as Washington Reads books.

The memoir, "Dancing to the Concertina's Tune", is being offered at a special discount if it is ordered from her website www.janwalker-writer.com.



"America's soaring prison population is separated from the outside world by concertina, the rigid spirals of razor wire that top the high chain-link fences of state and federal penitentiaries. For nearly two decades, educator Jan Walker crossed this line at medium- and maximum-custody correctional facilities to teach adult felons. "
– Northern University Press



Editorial- Mary Knox

Wow, this is my first newsletter as Editor of the Parenting Connection and I am very excited to be working on this project.

There has been a tremendous response to our call for articles and they made for some interesting reading. I think the resources sited in the material presented will be very helpful for your information files. Let me know how you have used this information and what you think of it. I would welcome dialogue for future newsletters.

I have been a teacher at the Wisconsin Resource Center for six years. Before coming to corrections, I taught Child Development and Day Care Management at a technical college as adjunct faculty for 15 years. Teaching others about developmentally appropriate practices for young children has been my passion for my entire career.

Parent education, in this setting, has been rewarding for me in two ways. One, I have learned so many things from my students that I have incorporated into the lessons I present. The second reward has been that I realize if only one child in one place has a better life because of something I presented to my students, then I have been successful. So parenting educators, let us change this world for children, one parent at a time. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Mary K.

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