

Parenting Connection

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Redgranite Re-Entry Program

In January 2005, the Redgranite (Wisconsin) Re-Entry Program was developed to assist offenders in improving their ability to succeed in their reintegration back to the community, their loved ones, and their responsibilities in society. The program was designed to offer the necessary tools and resources to assist each individual to manage some of the common personal responsibilities and challenges that each person faces upon his release.

Partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Community Corrections (DCC), outside agencies and other groups, a multi-disciplinary unit team approach provides inmates nearing release with an array of activities and opportunities to increase their chances of obtaining employment upon release, reestablishing family ties, enhancing free society living skills, preparing them to respond productively to free society demands and pressures, and connecting them with resources and assistance upon release.

Re-Entry Program Staff:

Unit Manager

Psychologist

3 Unit Sergeants

E-East Social Worker

E Program Social Worker

8 Officers

E-South Social Worker

Teacher

The target population for this program includes inmates within 12 months of anticipated release. Unit capacity is from 150 to 175 beds.

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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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Redgranite Re-Entry Program (cont.)

The Re-Entry Program is a 12-week program that typically begins 4 months prior to release. The program is voluntary in nature, but once the offender agrees to participate in the program, he is asked to make a commitment to attend all component groups of the Re-Entry Program, simulating the expectations of job attendance. Living on the Re-Entry E-Unit is a mandatory aspect of the program. Classes are held Monday-Friday, 8:00-11:00AM and 1:00-4:00PM.

Components of the Re-Entry Program:

Life/Social Skills	Employment Skills	Consumer Skills
Education Options	Victim Empathy	Health Information
Character Enrichment	Financial Literacy	Available unit tutors
Hourly wages	OTJ/Work	Release planning
Recreation (optional)	Driver's License Info.	Parenting
Release clothes	Job Net Access	
Smart Support Groups (optional)		
Emergency Food/Housing/Financial/Resources		

Guest speakers may include representatives of the Department of Transportation, Probation & Parole, AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW), and Financial Aid for Continuing Your Education

Staff, particularly Unit Social Workers, work to assist offenders with the re-entry back to their community through individualized release planning, beginning 4 months prior to release including:

- Social Security/ SSI benefits screening
- As needed contacts with the agent for housing, support, programming needs, continuity of supervision needs, job issues, relationship concerns, etc.
- Birth certificate applications/driver's license issues
- Parole hearings documentation
- Program Review Committee updates
- Connecting family supports with offender
- Facilitating connections with sponsors/community resources
- Learning in classroom settings about the many components of successful living
- Encouragement of visitation/phone calls with family support

Special guest speakers to speak on relevant topics such as:

- Opportunities to make positive choices to practice for community living
- Support groups to offer a safe place to work through their concerns and stay on the road to success
- Resources and skills training to become self-reliant and better equipped for positive changes

by: Donna McMartin, CSW
Redgranite Correctional Institution



The Basics of Parenting Outline

The goal of this component of the Redgranite Correctional Institution Re-Entry Program is to use educational videos and provide additional information to inmates on basic issues of parenting. The Parenting component is a 12-hour (1-hour each) lesson plan to address information that is pertinent to all inmates as an overview to parenting. The following is the outline of the 12 lessons:

- Lesson 1: Introduction to the group
- Lesson 2: Childhood Emotional Development Stages
- Lesson 3: The Story of Fathers & Sons video & discussion
- Lesson 4: Self-Esteem is the Key video & discussion
- Lesson 5: Communication is Crucial video & discussion
- Lesson 6: Discipline Makes the Difference video & “Abuse Issues” packets
- Lesson 7: Single Parenting video & “Parental Stress” packets
- Lesson 8: Parenting from Prison Series: What Does It Mean to Be a Parent video & discussion
- Lesson 9: Parenting from Prison Series: Rights & Responsibilities video & discussion
- Lesson 10: Parenting from Prison Series: Keeping in Touch video & discussion
- Lesson 11: Parenting from Prison Series: Going Home video & discussion
- Lesson 12: Teen Issues packet & discussion

Parenting Sessions Scheduled for International CEA Conference

Among the sessions at the International CEA Conference in Atlanta on July 8-11 will be at least two relating to Parenting education.

DeNeal Ericksen, teacher at Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center, and Peggy Meyers, Education Director at Stanley Correctional Institution (both in Wisconsin), will present a workshop entitled “Nurturing Parents to Be Nurturing Parents.”

Nationwide, more than 2 million children have a parent incarcerated in prison or jail. Correctional educators have designed programs to teach parenting skills and encourage incarcerated parents to maintain positive relationships with their children. In this workshop a parenting curriculum that is adaptable to a variety of settings and projects which supplement parenting education, including Parent/Child Literacy Projects, Parent Support groups and Parent Fairs will be described.

Also at the conference, meetings for the various Special Interest Groups will be held. DeNeal and Peggy will host the meeting of the Parenting Special Interest Group. At this meeting, the services provided by the CEA Parenting SIG will be detailed and participants will have to opportunity to join the Parenting SIG



The American Prison Nightmare

In an April 12, 2007 posting on the *New York Review of Books*, Jason DeParle reviews the book *Punishment and Inequality in America* by Bruce Western.

Jason DeParle, a reporter for *The New York Times*, is the author of *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*. Here is part of his review entitled "The American Prison Nightmare":

Bruce Western makes a crucial point at the start of his important book, *Punishment and Inequality in America*: "If prisons affected no one except the criminals on the inside, they would matter less." But with more than two million Americans behind bars, the impact of mass incarceration is impossible to contain. Their fate affects the taxpayers who support them, the guards who guard them, the families they leave behind, and the communities to which they return.

Western's achievement—a large one—is to make them less vague. He identifies mass incarceration as a major cause of modern inequality, with large and uncounted collateral effects. Imprisonment does more than reflect the divides of race and class. It deepens those divides—walling off the disadvantaged, especially unskilled black men, from the promise of American life. While violent criminals belong in jail, more than half of state and federal inmates are in for nonviolent crimes, especially selling drugs. Their long sentences deprive women of potential husbands, children of fathers, and convicts of a later chance at a decent job.

Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Western estimates that a prison record reduces a man's annual earnings by 30 to 40 percent, through less work and lower pay. For the average black man, the lifetime loss comes to \$86,000. (Whites, with more to lose, lose more: \$114,000.)

Incarceration taxes family life, too, leaving disadvantaged men with even weaker prospects as husbands and fathers. A prison record reduces a black man's chances of getting married by 11 percentage points. Married or not, most jailed men have kids, making the prison boom a growing source of disadvantage for young people. . . . The whole family does the time. From 1980 to 2000, the number of children with fathers behind bars rose sixfold to 2.1 million. Among white kids, just over 1 percent have incarcerated fathers, while among black children the figure approaches 10 percent.

It may be tempting to view these men—dope sellers, petty thieves—as fathers in name only, with few ties to their kids. But nearly half are living with their children at the time of their arrest. And the perpetual surprise about bad parents is how much their children need them anyway. In marginalizing so many men, in the cause of stabilizing their community, the prison boom risks destroying the communities it aims to save. Mass imprisonment, Western writes, "may be a self-defeating strategy for crime control."

The entire review can be accessed at <http://www.nybooks.com/authors/13054>.

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Challenges for the Child and Caregiver

In his testimony on February 7, 2007, DOC Policy Initiatives Advisor Tony Streveler informed a Wisconsin State Legislature Special Committee of challenges facing children and caregivers of children of incarcerated parents. The Special Committee was established to study the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Program and the child welfare system to determine methods to improve collaboration between the two systems in order to support, strengthen, and, in some cases, reunify families.

Some national figures cited during the testimony include:

- An estimated 55% of persons incarcerated are parents of a dependent under the age of 18
- 70% of the women in custody have children --- a national average of almost 3 children
- On a national basis, it is estimated that 1 of every 3 children under the age of 18 have or had at one time a parent in jail or prison
- For incarcerated fathers, the primary caregiver for his children is the mother and mother's family
- For incarcerated mothers, the primary caregivers for her children are the grandparents

Tony cited challenges faced by the child and caregiver which hinder the maintenance of parent-child relationships. They include:

- Transportation can be difficult. In order to visit the parent in prison, the caregiver and child often must travel over 100 miles, sometimes from out-of-state
- Visitation times are limited. Security issues and the intimidating prison environment make visiting unpleasant
- Telephone access is limited
- Letter writing ability is often limited for both the child and parent

To break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration, Tony feels that corrections and community agencies must work together to improve the stability of the child's environment. The primary factor which can reduce the child's probability of being caught in the cycle of incarceration is the stability of the child's caregiver, home, peers, school, and relationship with the incarcerated parent.

Community services must provide support for the child and caregiver, during and after confinement. This requires correctional and community agencies to share data and information, coordinate services and efforts, and help the incarcerated parent and caregiver to navigate the system.

New Publication

The [Every Child Matters Education Fund](#) has just released a book called *Homeland Insecurity... American Children at Risk* to help spark debate about the need for major new federal investments in children and families. The book can be downloaded for [free](#) from their website.

Of particular interest to those working in the field of reentry is [chapter four](#) of the publication, which talks about the harmful effects imprisonment can have on children. It discusses children with incarcerated parents as well as juvenile incarceration.

by: Art Besse, President
Art Besse & Associates, LLC



Daddy, I Don't Want to Become a Statistic

This article by Shawn Kennedy was taken from *Trumpet* magazine, the February 2007 issue. It's a very powerful statement for our incarcerated parents.



Daddy for the past few months, I have noticed on the television, on the radio and sometimes even in the newspapers, people say that Black boys grow up to become a statistic. They say that Black boys die young, drop out of high school, join gangs, use and sell drugs, get incarcerated, do not complete college and grow up to become "no show" fathers who beat up on women. DADDY, I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A STATISTIC!

I know that as long as you have an active presence in my life, I will never grow up to become a statistic. I hope you always set good examples for me because I watch everything you do. I watch the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you treat others, how you handle crisis and how you love. Because I think so highly of you, I imitate almost everything you do. The examples that you show me are those that I probably will use to raise my future son.

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.

Mentoring Children of Prisoners

The Administration for Children and Families'; Administration on Children, Youth and Families'; Family and Youth Services Bureau is accepting applications for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program.



This program supports the creation and maintenance of one-on-one mentoring relationships between children of incarcerated parents and caring, supportive adult mentors. The intent of this program is to support the establishment or expansion and operation of mentoring programs, using a network of public and private community entities, in areas with substantial numbers of children of incarcerated parents.

The MCP program is designed to be a community-based mentoring program in which children and youth, ages four to 18, are appropriately matched with an adult mentor, who has been screened and trained, for a one-on-one friendship-oriented (non curriculum-based) mentoring relationship.

WHO: Faith-based and community organizations are eligible to apply.

WHEN: Applications are due by June 4, 2007

AWARD AMOUNT: 1-103 awards of up to \$100,000 per budget period

CONTACT: Courtney Workman at FYSB@dixongroup.com

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT: www.acf.dhhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2007-ACF-ACYF-CV-0029.html

Next Children's Bill of Rights Training Set

Jim Mustin of the Family and Corrections Network has announced the next training relating to the: Children's Bill of Rights. *Children's Bill of Rights #3: "I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent"* is scheduled for May 23, 2PM Eastern Time.

Increasingly tough sentencing laws, which have caused the U.S. prison population to increase fivefold over the past three decades, have also had a tremendous impact on children. But as it stands, sentencing law not only does not require judges to consider children when they make decisions that will affect their lives profoundly; in some cases, it actively forbids them from doing so. A more sensible and humane policy would take into account the fact that sentencing decisions will inevitably affect family members - especially children - and strive to protect their interests as much as possible without compromising public safety. Learn more about this right at www.sfcipp.org.

This training will help you and your agency work more effectively with children of prisoners and their families. The 90-minute telephone training session is presented by Family and Corrections Network, provider of the Children of Prisoners Library.

FACILITATOR: Dee Ann Newell, Arkansas Voices for Children of Prisoners, recipient of a 2006 Senior Justice Fellowship Award from the Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation, Director of the Bill of Rights Project.

REGISTER at www.fcnetwork.org/training/audio1.html - - or REGISTER BY PHONE by calling 1-434-589-3036.

LOCATION: Your office, conference room or any place you have access to a touch-tone phone.

PRICE: \$109 per call (\$99 for FCN members) For scholarships for family of prisoners and former prisoners, see <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=135566577E73165>



Editorial- Mary Dahl

Wow! What a fast paced year. It has been full of new skills for me. I have gotten much more familiar with my way around the computer, plus I've gotten much faster at typing. I have met many new and exciting people through all the email I have gotten. Having been on board when the paper went to the National level has been exciting. It has allowed me to be introduced to a wide variety of people who are actively involved with parenting issues. It has just amazed me to find out what other states have developed for the people who are incarcerated. There are lots of great things going on for parents of incarcerated men and women.

I do hope that there will come a time when Wisconsin will be allowed to create a curriculum that can be used by all who teach parenting, both in and out of the institutions, so that we may have consistency. Thus, if a judge court ordered a man or woman to take a parenting course while being incarcerated, the judge would know specifically what is going to be required/taught.

I put this out as a mission to future editors of this paper. Good luck to all who take on the important responsibility of keeping us all abreast of new developments in the parenting issues, especially those pertaining to the issues of incarcerated parents.

I want to thank all of you who helped to make this paper possible. I hope you have found the articles interesting and useful. Please consider giving Mary Knox, the next editor, a hand in the development of future papers.

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