

Parenting Connection

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Justice Center Guide Calls for Child Support Policy Changes

A new Justice Center Guide calls for policy changes to increase child support and victim restitution payment for people released from prisons and jails.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center recently released a publication on why victims and children of people released from prisons and jails often do not receive the restitution and support they are owed. Repaying Debts is a first-of-its-kind comprehensive guide, supported by the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, that details how policymakers can increase financial accountability among people leaving correctional facilities, improve rates of child support collection and victim restitution, and make individuals' transition from prisons and jails to the community safe and successful.

People released from prisons and jails typically must make payments to a host of agencies, including probation departments, courts, attorneys general's offices, and child support enforcement offices. While coordinated collections efforts among these agencies could increase rates of repayment to victims, families, and criminal justice agencies, there is rarely a single agency tracking all of an individual's court-ordered debts and facilitating payment.

"People leaving prison and jail often owe huge sums to their children, their victims, and to several criminal justice agencies, yet have no resources, marketable skills or legitimate employment to help meet these obligations," said State Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie (D-Nevada), who served on the advisory group for the project. "Further, no single government agency can tell you how much these individuals owe in total. Even worse, criminal justice agencies often work at cross purposes, which can leave children and victims at the end of the payment queue."

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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.

Send articles and comments to:

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In addition to child support, an average of \$178 million per state in court costs, fines, fees and restitution has gone uncollected. Failure to pay--even by those trying in good faith to repay debts--may even result in individuals' reincarceration, during which time those owed money are not being paid and taxpayers are footing the bill for their corrections costs

"States must make some important policy changes that facilitate payment of child support, prioritize victim restitution, coordinate collections among many different agencies, and support people leaving prison and jail in ways that advance long-term payment of these debts," said State Senator Alan Cropsey (R-Michigan), also a member of the project's advisory group.

The report recommends very specific strategies to improve how people released from prisons and jails meet their court-ordered financial obligations. It also provides examples from states that have successfully implemented some aspect of these strategies, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The report and a summary of its findings and recommendations can be downloaded for free at http://justicecenter.csg.org/media/press_releases/.

For more information, contact Martha Plotkin at (240) 482-8579 or mplotkin@csg.org, or Danielle Langone at (240) 482-8583 or dlangone@csg.org.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. It provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies--informed by available evidence—to increase public safety and strengthen communities. For more information, visit us on the web at www.justicecenter.csg.org.

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Effective Black Parenting Seminar

The Parenting Special Interest Group of the Correctional Education Association has contracted with Kimberly C. Porter of the UW Extension System to offer a one-day training seminar on Effective Black Parenting.

Joining Kimberly to provide the training will be Barbara E. White, Community Educator; Terri Birt, City of Milwaukee Health Department; and Kim Tolbert, of Next Door Foundation.

The Effective Black Parenting Seminar on **March 3, 2008** will take place at the Quality Inn in Brookfield, Wisconsin.

The seminar will be limited to a maximum of 50 participants.

Workshop Description: With growing interest in evidence based prevention programs comes an increased concern about the cultural appropriateness of programs for families of various cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. In this workshop, participants will become familiar with the Effective Black Parenting Program (EBP).



EBP is an award winning, research validated, parent tested, and culturally affirming program. Created in the 1970's; it is the first parenting skill building program that respects and honors the unique history and traditions of people of African descent. Additionally, the program teaches its skills in a manner that is both culturally sensitive and culturally affirming. Effective Black Parenting focuses on ways to encourage achievement and healthy development for Black children.

Workshop Objective: This one-day seminar will teach a shortened version of several of the program's parenting strategies and skills. The topics presented will include:

- **Overview of the Effective Black Parenting Program**
 - What Works in Wisconsin
 - Culturally tailored programming
 - Adaptation of programming to fit participant needs
 - EBP Class content
 - Research validation
 - National use of the program
 - Ways to bring the program to your community
 - Additional resources
 - Limits and opportunities on current research
- **Traditional Black Discipline verses Modern Black Self Discipline**
 - Typical word association and meaning of discipline
 - Origins of discipline-Traditional Discipline
 - Modern Discipline
 - Effective and/or new methods
- **Father Involvement**
 - Benefits of father involvement
 - Challenges with involving fathers (focus on African American fathers)
 - Ways to engage and/or involve fathers in programming
 - Is your organization father friendly?
- **The Path to Success for Black Children**
 - Life goals
 - Characteristics
 - Model and teach appropriate behaviors
 - Behavior change theory
 - Afro centric ideology

Why is the training necessary? Race, ethnicity and cultural experience have a profound effect on how individuals perceive and react to the world around them. Assessing whether an intervention is appropriate for a particular audience means considering how all of those things and other factors will affect participant's experiences in a program and/or curriculum.

Who requires the training? Anyone that provides programming to African American parents or caregivers of African American children.

For more information contact: Jerry Bednarowski at jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com or 920-734-5902.



Effective Black Parenting Seminar

Quality Inn
Brookfield, WI
March 3, 2008

Registration Form

| Registration Information | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Name: | Organization: |
| Street Address: | Worksite: |
| City/State/Zip: | Position/Title: |
| Phone: | E-Mail: |

Registration Fees

Early Registration – Before February 1, 2008

CEA Members \$25
Non-CEA Members \$50

Late Registration – After February 1, 2008

CEA Members \$50
Non-CEA Members \$75

Registration includes continental breakfast, lunch, and break

If you would like to request vegetarian meals, please check here: _____

Payment Options:

Purchase Order: Purchase Order Number _____

Check payable to CEA-Wisconsin

Sorry, we are unable to accept credit cards or P-cards

Non-CEA members who would like to join CEA and pay the CEA member rate may join CEA on the www.ceanational.org website or at the workshop on March 3, 2008. If joining at the workshop, a check payable to CEA for \$55 must be submitted with a completed CEA membership form at the workshop registration table.

Mail completed form with payment to:

**Jerry Bednarowski
CEA-Wisconsin
W6443 Old Highway Road
Menasha, WI 54952**

For further information, please contact:

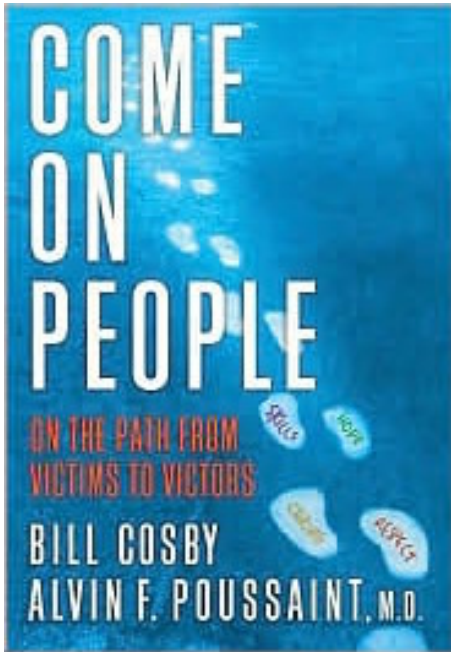
Jerry Bednarowski at 920-734-5902 or jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com

Cancellations: A \$10.00 administrative fee will be charged for any cancellations. Cancellations must be received by February 20, 2008. **No refunds will be issued after February 20, 2008.**

Lodging Information: To reserve a room at the state rates, call the Quality Inn - Brookfield directly at 262-785-0500. Tell the agent that you are attending the Effective Black Parenting Seminar. The hotel accommodations include continental breakfast and complimentary wireless internet.



Book Review: Mary K. Knox



Bill Cosby has been in the news recently stumping his new book, “Come On, People: On the Path from Victims to Victors.” He and co-author Dr. Alvin Poussaint, appeared with Tim Russert on Meet the Press for the whole hour talking about their book and what they observe to be the problems in the black community.

They spoke of the epidemic of fatherless black families. Mr. Cosby imagined a young fatherless child thinking, “Somewhere in my life a person called my father has not shown up, and I feel very sad about this because I don’t know if I’m ugly—I don’t know what the reason is.” Dr. Poussaint, a professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School and a staff member at the Judge Baker Children’s Center in Boston, referring to boys who get into trouble, added: “I think a lot of these males kind of have a father hunger and actually grieve that they don’t have a father. I think later a lot of that turns into anger. ‘Why aren’t you with me? Why don’t you care about me?’ ” He said, “The absence of fathers, and the resultant feelings of abandonment felt by boys and girls, inevitably affect the children’s sense of self-worth.

The book outlines the difficult road ahead black people will need to travel to free the many still trapped in prisons of extreme violence, poverty, degradation and depression. In a chapter titled “What’s Going on With Black Men? The authors write, “You can’t land a plane in Rome saying, ‘Whassup?’ to the control tower. You can’t be a doctor telling your nurse, ‘Dat tumor be nasty.’ ”

They spoke of racism still being a plague, but that many blacks are able to succeed in spite of it and there are more doors open today for black people than ever before in the history of America. In his Op-Ed in the New York Times Bob Herbert wrote, “Racism disgusts me, and I think it should be fought with much greater ferocity than we see today. But that’s no reason to drop out of school, or take drugs, or refuse to care for one’s children, or shoot somebody.”

“The most important step toward ending the tragic cycles of violence and poverty among African-Americans also happens to be the heaviest lift—reconnecting black fathers to their children.” Herbert wrote. In an interview with Dr. Poussaint he said, “You go into whole neighborhoods and there are no fathers there. What you find is apathy in a lot of males who don’t even know that they are supposed to be a father.”

The writers cover all the subjects preached repeatedly—the importance of family and education and hard work and mentoring and civic participation. It has practical advice and the undercurrent of deep love for community and the absolute importance of maintaining one’s personal dignity and self-respect.

In summing up the book Bob Herbert wrote, “Hard times and rough circumstances are not excuses for degrading others or allowing one-self to be degraded. In fact, they’re not excuses for anything, except to try harder.” It sounds like this book would be a worthy resource and an interesting read. I think I will put this one on my wish list.



‘Good People Make Mistakes Sometimes’ Booklet Project Teaches Inmates’ Children about Life in Jail

The little paper booklet is simple in appearance, with large text and colorful pictures. The story it tells, however, means a lot to Heidi Rogers.

Up until Sept. 25, Rogers was an inmate in the Kennebec County Correctional Facility, sentenced to 5 ½ months for violating her probation. Away from her two young sons, Rogers said trying to stay connected to her children and reassure them she was eventually coming home was a day-to-day struggle.

“I talked to them on the phone and sent them letters, but it wasn’t the same,” said Rogers, 26. “I still could not be with my children.”

Then Rogers found out about a book-making program for female inmates, Bookmaking Behind Bars. Funded by a mini-grant from the Mid-Maine United Way and the Family Violence Project, the program produced a book geared toward children that explains what incarceration is and what happens when a parent goes to jail or prison.

Rogers felt the program was something she could do, to teach not only her children, but the community at large, about the prison population—many of whom also are parents

The finished product, a booklet titled “My Mommy’s Castle,” is now for sale through the Family Violence Project. Told from a child’s point of view, the story focuses on a young boy who visits his mother in prison.

Six female inmates – collectively, the mothers of 12 children – started the project, with the assistance of Robin Miller, a family advocate and shelter manager of the Family Violence project safe house. “Nothing like this had been done before,” Miller said. “We had no idea what the outcome would be, but the women were excited about doing it.”

The process of authoring and drawing pictures for “My Mommy’s Castle” started in mid-May. Then, women met weekly throughout the brainstorming, writing, designing and binding stages. The booklets were finished in August, with 500 copies published. “Positive feedback,” Miller said, “was almost immediate.”

“A DHHS worker said she used the book with a child and his grandmother, and it worked perfectly,” she said. “People have different experiences trying to explain to their children they’re in jail, and here we have a straightforward way that speaks to children.”

Children are not the only beneficiaries from such a program, said Erica Patterson, program director at the Kennebec County jail. “Sadly, we have an increasing rate of female inmates, and some are felons who will have a difficult time getting a job when they leave”, Patterson said. “By creating this booklet together, these women get a sense of accomplishment. They can move on with their lives and better themselves.” This is exactly what Rogers wants.

Describing herself as “just like anybody else,” Rogers said she hopes the book will also speak to the population not incarcerated. Now reunited with sons Hunter, 6, and Isaac, 4, Rogers said she is determined to work through her substance abuse problem and raise her children. She said she would like to go back to school. “I used to feel very hopeless,” Rogers said of her past lifestyle. “This project has given me so much self esteem. Now I know there are several talents I have that I can use to better myself.”

by: Meghan V. Malloy, Staff Writer
Kennebec (Maine) Journal Morning Sentinel





Helping Your Child Deal with Bullying



Dads, you are often the last to know that your child is the victim of bullying. Children often do not share that they are being bullied with their parents due to shame and embarrassment. So it is very important that you ask your child open-ended questions about his/her

day frequently and provide helpful advice once you have discovered that he/she is being bullied.

The following are tips to help your child handle school bullying.

- Do not instruct your child to fight back. Contact your child's school and learn about the school policy and how to access available resources.
- Talk with your child about meeting new friends that are supportive and who have common interests. Teaching your child appropriate social skills that build self-esteem will make them less likely targets.
- Encourage your child to speak with an adult at the school. Teachers, principals, or guidance counselors are available to help them stop the bullying.
- Ask your child if he or she has ideas about how they will address the bullying. Dads, you can role play with your children in order to help them feel comfortable and confident in their approach.
- Finally, it is important for you to explain to your child that sometimes all that is necessary is avoidance. Bullies may give up if they don't get attention.

Dads, it is important to consider that all instances of bullying are critical and meaningful to your child. Remember that the goal is to support your child's overall well-being.

Best wishes for a bully-free school year!

from: National Fatherhood Initiative website
www.fatherhood.org
submitted by: Mary Dahl
Green Bay Correctional Institution

“M others hold their children’s hands for a short while, but their hearts forever.” -unknown-



Home Alone -- What Are the Effects?

As school approaches, many parents wonder about how to deal with the after school situation for their youngsters. Several guidelines indicate who is best to do this and who might still need guidance until the parent arrives home. Several indicators are helpful in determining this risk. The following factors are helpful in determining who can be left at home safely.

The personality characteristics of the child who is ready

- Not fearful, feels at ease in the world and is self confident
- Calm, not excitable, when something unexpected happens
- Outgoing, talks about his or her feelings and thoughts readily with parents
- Admits wrongdoing, even when expecting disapproval
- Has courage enough to resist pressure from friends and others

The skills of the child who is ready

- Can clearly state and spell his or her full name, address and telephone number
- Can clearly state his or her parents' names, employers, work addresses and telephone numbers.
- Knows how to dial 911 and can give information
- Knows not to enter the home if it looks suspicious
- Knows what to do if he or she is followed
- Knows not to play alone outside of home
- Knows how to answer the telephone when alone at home
- Knows what to do in case of fire
- Plays "What if?" games with his or her parents
- Helps to make the family's rules and knows the emergency back-up plan

Milestones of maturity of the a child who is ready

- Assumes responsibility with pride and pleasure
- Follows directions well
- Is a good problem solver
- Takes initiative without being asked
- Has learned "life skills" which include good conflict resolution, age appropriate competence, identity linked to real abilities and a strong sense of worth
- Has good peer relationships and is involved in community service and programs

Environment, Neighborhood and Readiness

In addition to the child's readiness to be alone before and after school, certain characteristics of the home environment and neighborhoods need to be considered:

- The safety of the neighborhood--can a child safely walk home, or get to and from school to the door without risk?
- Are there adults nearby and accessible, always available, and familiar to the child or children? Is there a backup plan?



- How much time is involved? How long must the child be alone? Is there a structure of activities planned for the time alone?
- Are there siblings? Pets? What are the ages of siblings?
- Can the child respond to an emergency alone? Are there phone numbers posted, neighbors or relatives to call? Are the weapons, medicines and alcohol locked up and non reachable?
- Can the child safely obtain a snack, do homework and respond to callers at the door or phone?

Other Options

- Can the child stay with a neighbor or friend until a parent arrives at home?
- Can the child attend an after-school program until they can be picked up or safely walk home?
- Can the child volunteer at the neighborhood library or church program until you can get them?
- Can the child tutor a younger sibling or neighbor child until you get home?
- Can the child be part of a neighborhood program such as Boys and Girls Club?
- Can the child have music/voice lessons or sports until you can pick them up?

In the words of T. Berry Brazelton, of Harvard University: "During these all important years between childhood and adulthood, kids really do need something constructive to do after school. They also need to have these activities supervised. Most of all, they need to know parents care about them, are involved in their lives and do have their best interest in mind."

From: New York University School of Medicine
Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Wanted: Parenting Presenters

The Wisconsin Chapter of CEA will be hosting its second State Conference at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on May 5, 2008. Among the wide variety of workshops, we are hoping to have a couple that feature parenting programs. This is your opportunity to share information about your program with other correctional educators.

A "Call for Presenters" has been published in the November/December issue of the *CEAW News Review* newsletter. Deadline for submission of proposals is December 7, 2007. You will be notified by January 31, 2008 if your presentation is selected.

If you do not receive the CEAW News Review newsletter, you may access it on the www.ceawisconsin.org website or you may contact the Conference Program Co-Chair Mary Stierna at stiermb@dhfs.state.wi.us.

Early next year, a "Call for Presenters" for the Region III & IV CEA Conference to be held in Bloomington, Minnesota on April 10-11, 2008, will also be published. You are encouraged to submit a proposal to present a parenting workshop at that conference.

"Children are natural mimics: they act like their parents in spite of every attempt to teach them good manners." *Anonymous*



Editorial-Mary K. Knox

It is hard to believe we are in the last two months of 2007. If we have not completed our goals for the year we can get busy and get it done. Then again, we could reorganize and make plans for new more realistic goals in the New Year. Either way I hope everyone takes time to enjoy the end of the year festivities with their families and loved ones and appreciate what is truly important in this world.

Recently, I had a speaker come in for my Fathers' Support group from the Family Court. He is a mediator for child custody and spoke about parental rights and how decisions are made regarding visitation and placements. Two of the men in the group recently found out their children were adopted from foster homes and their parental rights terminated without their knowledge. No contact for X amount of years resulted in the loss of something they didn't realize was so precious until it was gone. That was a hard lesson to learn.

There is a sign up form in this newsletter for the Effective Black Parenting Workshop. I hope that all of you who are planning to come to this workshop take the time now to get the necessary approval to attend before it is too late. We want to see a good turnout to what looks like an informative and interesting day. Another thing I hope you are planning for is what you will send me for the next newsletter. I know there are many interesting things going on with this readership and we would like to hear about it. So send it along before the end of the year.

I sincerely hope you all have a wonderful year-end and Happy New Year to all of you.

Mary K. Knox, Wisconsin Resource Center

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