

Parenting Connection

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Developing Effective Black Parents

With a major storm looming, twenty-two hearty educators convened on the Milwaukee Area on March 3 for the Effective Black Parenting Seminar.

Kimberly Porter of the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and Barbara White, Community Educator, led the group in discussing many topics relating to Effective Black Parenting today. These topics included father involvement, traditional versus modern discipline, and what is needed to lead Black parents on the road to success. The goal of the seminar was to develop an appreciation of cultural differences to better equip our inmate students in becoming better parents.

Growing up without role models can result in confusion and a troublesome life. Boys especially need role models to better equip them with the tools needed to become good parents in the future. The presenters talked about the definition of culture. Culture is a shared system that includes values, beliefs and assumptions expressed through a pattern of languages, customs and attitudes. Culture influences how children are raised. Several activities involving the group brought out how these differences influence us, not only in our daily lives, but as parents as well. These differences were analyzed to show how parents could bridge the gap for children to grow up seeing no color differences.

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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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The point made, is that culture is dynamic and ever changing. Statistics were shared as to what Wisconsin and Milwaukee look like at a glance and how poverty and imprisonment impact these figures. A strong family model can assist parents both imprisoned and non-imprisoned to help children grow up in loving and caring families.

Why do families discipline as they do? Is culture a factor and can changes be made? It can change and be strengthened with warm and loving family ties. Having clear rules and reasons for behavior along with positive strokes can assist parents in guiding their children to make better decisions that make for better futures. As educators, we can provide positive classrooms for parents to learn positive parenting techniques. As the wise African proverb states, "Knowledge is like a garden, if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested."

We are hoping to hold other parenting conferences in the future. Watch for further details!!!!

by: Cheri Woner
Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility



“Father/Dad/Daddy”

As I reviewed of the materials and ideas from the Effective Black Parenting Seminar, I sifted through things to plug into my Family Support Module at Redgranite (Wisconsin) Correctional Institution. I decided to use the “Father/Dad/Daddy” activity. The concept of the activity is to get the participants to recognize the different meanings of and roles of “Father”, “Dad”, and “Daddy”.

The topic of discussion in the group was “What Is a Man?”. When I put these titles on the board and asked the group of male inmates to say words that describe each, they easily identified different terms. Generally, the term “Father” prompted words such as provider; the term “Dad” prompted two categories that reflected provider and caring; and the term “Daddy” prompted terms such as funny.

The participants decided to add an additional term (“Baby’s Daddy/the man’s first name) and that category prompted the word uninvolved.

This activity was really an eye-opening experience as some of the guys had identified that they did not want their kids to call someone else Dad/Daddy. This helped each of them to question what role their fathers played in their lives, what role they play in their children’s lives, and what role they want to play in the future.

by: Donna McMartin, Redgranite Correctional Institution



Fulfilling the Promise: Supporting and Educating Parents Conference

The Fulfilling the Promise: Supporting and Educating Parents Conference held in Waukesha, Wisconsin on March 11&12 presented excellent, informative workshops, and an opportunity to network and learn from the diverse conference participants. Parent educators, home visitors, family resource coordinators, social workers, and so many others interested in the safety and well-being of children attended this conference. Every table of people, every row of participants reinforced the idea that the collective heartbeat of this group advocated for children and families.

Mary Sheedy Kurcinka author of the book *“Sleepless in America: Is This Child Misbehaving or Missing Sleep”* gave the keynote address. She addressed the topics of the link between behavior and sleep, what sleep deprivation looks like, and how to develop practical strategies for helping families get the sleep they need.

Sleep and arousal are on opposite ends of the same continuum. Without adequate rest, a child cannot manage his arousal system --- which means he cannot focus attention or manage emotions and when the arousal system is “over-activated”, a child cannot sleep. Children must be calm and stress free in order to fall asleep and have quality sleep throughout the night.

She talked of the “Green Zone” which is calm energy, focused and engaged, steady heart and pulse rate as opposed to the “Red Zone” which is tense energy, accelerated heart and pulse, and disengaged behavior. Children who are running wild, appearing to have limitless energy at 10pm are really just in the “Red Zone” and actually going to suffer from sleep deprivation. Their brain is on over-drive trying to keep awake. Children who are allowed to “drop in their tracks” are not going to get the right sleep to help their bodies refresh for another day. This leads to misbehavior and an irritable unpleasant child who will have a hard time learning in school or daycare.

She spoke of all ages of people and the same needs for the body and the brain to have adequate sleep. “We live in a culture that is too busy and prides itself on how little sleep we think we need.” Making sure that children get adequate sleep is preventive discipline. Caregivers cannot blame a child for misbehaving if he has been sleep deprived and cannot manage his arousal and emotions.

She gave many examples of how families can make bedtime more positive and how families can rearrange schedules to make sure that everyone in the family is getting a healthy amount of sound sleep. Charts provided described the sleep needs of everyone from babies to adults. Even a loss of 41 minutes can be devastating to a child.

Mary Sheedy Kurcinka PhD, links research-based information with typical challenging behaviors and provides practical solutions that really work. She comes from Minnesota and is the author of two other books, *Raising Your Spirited Child*, and *Kids, Parents, and Power Struggles*. She is an internationally recognized lecturer and parent educator and provides individual parent consultations for families and professionals.

by: Mary K. Knox
Wisconsin Resource Center





Five Protective Factors that Strengthen Families and Protect Children

1. Social emotional competence of children

Children who attend high quality early childhood education get support for healthy social emotional development in many ways. They learn how to identify their feelings, empathize with the feelings of others, share emotions appropriately, and problem solve with peers and adults. The children bring these skills home and affect the ways they interact with their families and how others interact with them.

2. Knowledge of child development and parenting

Parents with knowledge about parenting and their own child's development have more appropriate expectations and use more developmentally appropriate guidance techniques. Parents learn best when they are talking about their own child right now.

3. Concrete support in times of need

When families are in crisis, the children are more protected if the family gets access to the resources they need relatively quickly. Early childhood care and education professionals may not personally provide those resources but they can provide appropriate referrals and follow-up to families who need immediate support.

4. Social Connections

Whenever a family is isolated from family or community, the children are more at risk. Building trusting relationships with all families and helping isolated families connect with other parents strengthens parenting skills and protects the children.

5. Parent Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from difficulties. There are two parts to resilience. The first is to be able to recognize and acknowledge difficulties and the feelings that go along with challenging events and situations. The second part of resilience is the ability to have hope, to problem solve and to take action in the midst of difficult events and feelings.

For questions or more resources: Joan Laurion
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For more information on protective factors that reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway web page on Protective Factors:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/protectfactors>



Broken Bonds

In February, the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center published a Research Report titled, *Broken Bonds: Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents*. The Research Report was authored by Elizabeth Davies, Nancy G. La Vigne, and Diana Brazzell.

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and educational organization that examines the social, economic, and governance problems facing the nation.

Parental incarceration affects a large and increasing number of children. Over 1.5 million children have a parent who is currently in state or federal prison. These children face significant uncertainty in nearly every aspect of their lives.

This hardship only aggravates the trauma and stigma that often accompany the incarceration of a parent. Children typically display short-term coping responses to deal with their loss, which can develop into long-term emotional and behavioral challenges, such as depression, problems with school, delinquency, and drug use.

In response to the needs and challenges of this unique population and the individual children who comprise it, this report offers several recommendations to those involved in research, policy, and service delivery.

Contained in the report are sections discussing these topics: Scope of the Problem, Changes in Daily Life, Living Arrangements, Parent-Child Relationships, Financial Circumstances, Emotional and Behavioral Impacts, Protective Factors, Relationships with the Parent Before and During Incarceration, and Support from Family, Caregivers, and Members of the Community.



The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center Research Report *Broken Bonds: Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents* may be accessed at www.urban.org.

**“Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.”
-Ethiopia-**

An African Proverb shared in the Effective Black Parenting Seminar



Extra, Extra Read All About It

What is the new re-entry initiative and what does it have to do with Parenting. The concept of re-entry is really nothing new to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections. There is now a stronger emphasis on structuring a program in order to give an inmate more opportunities to prepare themselves for successful reintegration into society. One of the many problems that are facing the men today is how to reintegrate back into the family. Parenting as we all know doesn't come with an instruction book. So DOC is now looking for methods and materials to help all incarcerated individuals make the transition into their families more successful.

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections has been trying a new parenting program called *Inside/Out Dads*. Some institutions were fortunate to be able to attend a workshop put on by the publishers of the *Long Distance Dads* program. Randy Scott and Mary Dahl are presently instructors of parenting classes that have been using *Inside/Dads* and *Families in Focus* materials.

At the CEA-Wisconsin State Conference on May 5, 2008, Randy and Mary will present a workshop entitled "Extra, Extra Read All About It...Suggestions for Teaching Incarcerated Parents." Their presentation will include suggestions and ideas on how to utilize the two programs. The goals of the two programs are to keep incarcerated fathers connected with their children even when incarcerated for long periods of time and to assist offenders with getting out and reentering.

Randy Scott has also been incorporating a program called "United Through Reading" with which he has found great success. Randy is excited to get other institutions to take a look at it and incorporate the program into their parenting programs. He will cover the following information:

- Improving reading levels of inmates
- A successful avenue to connect incarcerated individuals with their children
- Ideas of how to enrich the visits between inmates and their children
- Helping to establish ways for inmates to videotape themselves reading
- Encouraging written communications with their children
- Encouraging inmates to create age-appropriate booklets to be sent to their child or children

Please come and gain more great ideas on how to get your parenting program off the ground, for those who are just beginning the program at their institution or come and add to your collection of ideas as well as offer ideas to all who are present. It will be an exciting sectional.

by: Mary Dahl, Green Bay Correctional Institution

"A chattering bird builds no nest."

-Cameroon-

An African Proverb shared in the Effective Black Parenting Seminar



Family as a Key to Re-entry

Another workshop to be presented at the CEA-Wisconsin State Conference on May 5 will be "Family as a Key to Re-entry." The presenters will be Laurie Bibo, Executive Director, Family Connections of Wisconsin, Inc., Art Besse, President, Art Besse Associates, LLC, Brooke Wardle, Program Assistant, Family Connections of Wisconsin, Inc., and Alon Andrews, Program Assistant, Family Connections of Wisconsin, Inc.

Family Connections is a volunteer driven, non-state funded organization whose mission is to foster reintegration by strengthening the ties between children and their incarcerated parents. Their primary programs at this time are centered on transportation and literacy, both allowing the children and parents to communicate, given different situations. Family Connections is currently operating at Taycheedah and John Burke Correctional facilities with plans for expansion.



When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang up my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I believed there is a God I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I LOOKED....and wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.

Thanks to Connie Back

Region III & IV CEA Conference to Include Two Parenting Workshops

Among the 35 workshops scheduled at the Region III & IV CEA Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota on April 10-11, 2008 will be two workshops relating to parenting programs in corrections. They are:

Reducing Recidivism through Community Connections – The Family Strengthening Model

This workshop will present the Family Strengthening Model used by the Council on Crime and Justice's Family Strengthening Project. This model is perhaps the first of its kind in the nation, providing resource referrals and assistance, education, and family counseling to inmates and their families simultaneously, during incarceration and after release.

Presenting this workshop will be Michael Kinzer. Michael is both an attorney and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. He provides family counseling to inmates of the Minnesota DOC and their families and teaches healthy relationship classes at Minnesota DOC facilities. Michael also provides organizational analysis for various demonstration and advocacy projects at the Council on Crime and Justice.

Positive Parenting Goes to Jail

This workshop will feature a parenting program that has worked successfully in a county jail and youth correctival facility, used weekly the past 7 years with both male and female participants. Parenting classes include parenting tools, discipline vs. punishment, communication, anger, parenting styles and more. Models of use and success stories will be shared.

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Presenters will be Kathleen Olson, Family Relations Educator; Jeannette Anderson, Parent Educator; and Janet Barber Adams, Program Director, Goodhue County Adult Detention Center.

Kathy Olson is a Family Relations Educator and Professor with University of Minnesota Extension. She is an educator with regional and statewide responsibilities in family relations, with a focus on parenting education. As an award-winning educator and trainer with Extension, Kathy co-authored (with 22 educators of the Positive Parenting team) the three Positive Parenting curricula and related materials and conducts training workshops. Her work focuses on development of educational materials in parenting education, training and consulting with professionals in parenting and family relations.

Jeannette has a Home Economics Education degree from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. She has taught parent education in her church, community, juvenile correctional facility and county detention center. She farms with her husband in Welch, MN and is the mother of two boys and a grandmother of six.

Janet has served as program director for the past five years in Goodhue County and has developed a wide range of programming for detainees. She is very supportive of the parenting programming and says, "It's the most popular and important class we offer!"

To obtain the Region III & IV CEA Conference registration form go the www.ceanational.org website and click on conferences and upcoming events. For more information, contact Helen Jaeb at helen.j.jaeb@state.mn.us.

Prevent Child Abuse America National Conference

The 2008 Prevent Child Abuse America National Conference will be held May 19-22 at the Midwest Airlines Center in Milwaukee. On line conference registration is now open! To take advantage of the "early bird" fees advanced registration must be made by March 31, 2008. The final registration deadline is May 6, 2008. This conference is full of great speakers and sessions.

For more information on the schedule and registration process please go to; <http://www.preventchildabuse.org>. Please share this information with others and I hope to see you there!

by: Kimberly C. Porter
Professional Development Coordinator
Milwaukee County UW Cooperative Extension



Updated Guide to Successful Parenting Programs Is Ready

Over the past few months we have been updating the *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections*. In May 2005, the Correctional Education Association's Parenting Special Interest Group and Wisconsin chapter of the Correctional Education Association partnered to publish the first *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections*. Originally it contained only programs from Wisconsin. Since June 2006, programs from Minnesota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington have been added.

As time passed, programs have been added or dropped and staff have changed. So it was time to update the *Guide*.

In February the updating of the *Guide* was completed. In late March, you should have received via email the updated edition of the *Guide*. If you didn't receive the *Guide*, contact jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com and it will be emailed to you.

If your institution's parenting programs are not listed in the *Guide*, we would like to include them. Please have the staff who teach Parenting classes, coordinate Parent/Child Literacy projects, supervise Parent Support Groups, or coordinate Parent Fairs send us information on your programs. Follow the format of the programs in the *Guide* when making the outline of your program.

Hardcopy additions may be mailed to:
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Electronic additions may be emailed to:
[**jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com**](mailto:jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com)

**"Many hands make light work."
-Tanzania-**

An African Proverb shared in the Effective Black Parenting Seminar



Editorial - Mary K. Knox

Happy Spring!!!! I felt fortunate to have traveled to some wonderful conferences this winter that have given me some new ideas and perspectives. The Reach and Teach Conference in Wisconsin Rapids presented by the Council for Children and Families Brain Team in January was cut a little short because of a bad storm warning. The topic of the day dealt with teaching parenting skills to parents who have some attachment problems themselves. Parents coming from a wounded background can impact their ability to know how to parent. I think this is so important for our incarcerated population, so we are kicking the idea around of how to get this training to our parenting educators in corrections. The Effective Black Parenting Workshop reviewed by Cheri in this issue was next and another storm threatened to cancel, it but it happened with only a few who could not make it. Next, I attended the Fulfilling the Promise, Supporting and Educating Parents in Waukesha, which I reviewed in this issue. The weather was beautiful for that one. I guess the weather will continue to be beautiful so those of us in Wisconsin can all meet up at the State CEA conference in Elkhart Lake on May 5th.

I love learning how to teach more effectively and gaining knowledge about parenting and families. Going to trainings and conferences is a great way to do it. Too bad the budgets for our training are being cut and in some cases eliminated. We know healthy/educated children are important and to get those we need healthy/educated parents and to get those we need informed, dedicated parenting instructors. How do we get those?

Keep up the good work! I hope to be seeing some of you in the future.

by: Mary K. Knox, Wisconsin Resource Center

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