

# Parenting Connection

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## Reducing Recidivism: The Family-Strengthening Model

Strong families are a key to reducing recidivism. The Family Strengthening Model created by the Council on Crime and Justice is perhaps the first of its kind in the nation, providing resource materials and assistance, education, and family counseling to inmates and their families simultaneously, during incarceration and after release.

In a workshop at the Region III & IV CEA Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota on April 10-11, Project Analyst and Family Counselor Michael Kinzer detailed the mission and goals of the Family Strengthening Model.

Founded in 1957, the Council on Crime and Justice's mission is to identify causes and consequences of crime through demonstration projects, advocacy, and research. One of the primary initiatives of the Council is the Family Strengthening Project. The Projects goals are to:

- Intervene early with a family experiencing incarceration, increasing the likelihood that they will stay connected
- Strengthen commitment to relationships by building effective communication, parenting skills, and conflict resolution skills

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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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- Improve both parents' ability to support and foster healthy connections with their children upon release
- Increase the family's economic self-sufficiency to provide a stable base for continued growth

The Family Strengthening Model is a multi-faceted project comprised of:

- Employment skills training opportunities for both parents
- Financial education
- Mentorship opportunities
- Case advocacy and support
- Family counseling
- Parenting and relationship classes

For many years prior to the Family Strengthening Project, the Council on Crime and Justice provided parenting classes in Minnesota DOC facilities. The 10-session *Families in Focus* curriculum topics include:

- Breaking the chain (of abuse)
- Anger
- Self-esteem
- Discipline
- Talking with children
- Cooperation
- Assertiveness

The Council on Crime and Justice also offers 10-week courses on healthy relationships to its clients, both in correctional facilities and in the community. These classes are based on the beliefs that:

- Higher levels of commitment, effective communication, and conflict-resolution without violence and hostility can lead to stronger family relationships
- A stronger family can enhance success for incarcerated persons re-entering the community by offering a place of physical and emotional safety and support

The Family Strengthening Project has selected the *Within My Reach* curriculum for its Relationship classes. Topics covered in the *Within My Reach* curriculum are:

- What is a "healthy relationship"
- Better decisions about who to be with
- Knowing yourself, what you want in relationships
- Dangerous patterns in relationships
- Communication and conflict-resolution
- Infidelity, trust, and forgiveness
- Commitment
- Blended (Step) families

For more information on these parenting and relationship classes and the other initiatives of the Family Strengthening Project visit the [www.crimeandjustice.org](http://www.crimeandjustice.org) website or contact Michael Kinzer at [kinzerm@crimeandjustice.org](mailto:kinzerm@crimeandjustice.org).



# Father Factor in Child Abuse

Compared to living with both parents, living in a single-parent home doubles the risk that a child will suffer physical, emotional, or educational neglect. (Source: *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being. Table Special 1. Washington, D. C.: Federal Interagency Forum on Child & Family Statistics, 1997*)

- ❖ The overall rate of child abuse and neglect in single-parent households is 27.3 children per 1,000, whereas the rate of overall maltreatment in two-parent households is 15.5 per 1,000. (Source: *America's Children: Key national Indicators of Well-Being. Table Special 1. Washington, D. C.: Federal Interagency Forum on Child & Family Statistics, 1997*)
- ❖ An analysis of child abuse cases in a nationally representative sample of 42 counties found that children from single-parent families are more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than children who live with both biological parents. Compared to their peers living with both parents, children in single parent homes had:
  - a 77% greater risk of being physically abused
  - an 87% greater risk of being harmed by physical neglect
  - a 165% greater risk of experiencing notable physical neglect
  - a 74% greater risk of suffering from emotional neglect
  - an 80% greater risk of suffering serious injury as a result of abuse
  - overall, a 120% greater risk of being endangered by some type of child abuse

(Source: *Sedlak, Andrea J. and Diane D. Broadhurst. The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report, U. S. Department of Health & Human Services. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Washington, D. C., September 1996*)

submitted by: Cheri Wontor  
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## Great Truths About Life That Little Children Have Learned

1. No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
2. When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
3. If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
4. Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
5. You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
6. Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
7. Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
8. You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
9. Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
10. The best place to be when you're sad is Grandma's lap.



# Re-Parenting Yourself – Parenting Your Children

One study states that 7 out of 10 children with an incarcerated parent will end up behind bars unless there is intervention on their behalf. Incarcerated parents, especially mothers, can provide such intervention by re-parenting themselves and using the skills they develop to better parent their children, even from prison.

At the Region III & IV CEA Conference in Bloomington, Minnesota on April 10-11, Jan Walker outlined the process of re-parenting in her skill-building workshop.

Jan taught parenting, family relationships, and social responsibility courses to female and male inmates for 18 years prior to her retirement. Jan's published works include a parenting text, *Parenting from a Distance: Your Rights and Responsibilities*; a prison teacher's memoir, *Dancing to Concertina's Tune*; and a middle grade novel, *An Inmate's Daughter*.

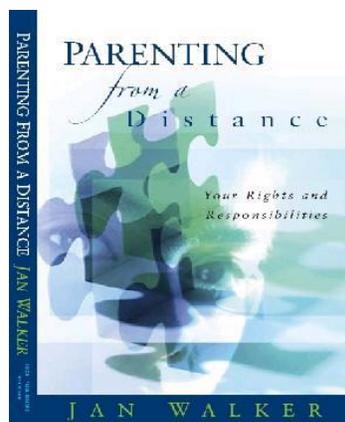
Workshop attendees were shown how to use re-parenting concepts to help clients identify their personal developmental tasks and skills that need work, and to assist them in using the skills with their families prior to, during, and after reentry.

Handout materials included an 11-page guide for facilitators on balancing structure and nurture in the classroom and beyond and a 9-page activity and affirmation guide for clients.

The re-parenting for self growth concept places on the client the responsibility for reworking developmental tasks of infancy and childhood. It draws from the book *Growing Up Again* by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson.

The presenter, Jan Walker, taught the concept to female and male inmate students in behavior management classes in Washington state prisons. It was also part of a mandatory twenty-hour social responsibility program for male offenders at McNeil Island (Washington) Corrections Center.

More information on the Re-Parenting Yourself curriculum and Jan's books may be found on her website, [www.janwalker-writer.com](http://www.janwalker-writer.com), or by emailing [janwalker@centurytel.net](mailto:janwalker@centurytel.net).



# Action Points for Committed Dads and Moms

- ✓ Affirm a specific character trait in your child. Then add a comment like, "But I love you no matter what."
- ✓ With a young child, get down on his or her level to give your undivided attention whenever you're listening.
- ✓ Leave your child a note of encouragement. Slip it into his school books, send a text message, or post it on her Facebook wall.
- ✓ Write a note to your adult child offering your support for some challenge he or she is facing.
- ✓ Learn your child's specific "love language" (or your teenager's) and make a conscious effort to show your love in that language.

For more information, go to: <http://support.fathers.com/site/R?i=bXw7AZ3-Fa2BTFxikRgvww> . .

## Fatherhood Facts

Twenty-eight percent of children live in single-parent homes, up from 9 percent in 1960.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the increase in children living with never-married mothers was from 221,000 in 1960 to 5,862,000 in 1995.

More than one-third of the nation's children -- 36.3 percent -- live without their biological fathers.

National Fatherhood Initiative research also shows the consequences for this change in society: Children without fathers are 50 percent more likely to drop out of school, use drugs and alcohol, join gangs and commit crimes.

- ❖ They are three to five times as likely to be involved in out-of-wedlock pregnancy.
- ❖ They are two to three times as likely to have emotional and behavioral problems.
- ❖ They're more likely to commit suicide, have serious illness and or have physical problems.

And there's this: The National Fatherhood Initiative says 60 percent of rapists, 72 percent of adolescent murderers and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates come from fatherless homes.

\* \* \* \* \*

To join CEA go to: [www.ceanational.org](http://www.ceanational.org)

To access old issues of the Parenting Connection newsletters, go to:

[www.ceawisconsin.org](http://www.ceawisconsin.org)





- My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her.  
- **George Washington** (1732-1799)
- I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life.  
- **Abraham Lincoln** (1809-1865)
- Men are what their mothers made them.  
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**
- **Happy Mothers' Day to all the Moms!**



## Nurturing Parents to Be Nurturing Parents

Four years ago the Parenting Special Interest Group was created to promote the establishment of Parenting classes, Parent Support Groups, Parent/Child Book Projects, and Parent Fairs.

In a workshop at the 2008 Annual CEA Conference in Denver, Chair of the CEA Parenting Special Interest Group Jerry Bednarowski will review the resources developed by the Parenting SIG aimed at helping correctional educators network with each other and implement programs to teach parenting skills and encourage incarcerated parents to maintain positive relationships with their children.

Included in the discussion will be the *Parenting Connection* newsletter, Parenting SIG email list, conference and training workshops, the *Guide to Successful Parenting Programs in Corrections*, incarcerated parent handbooks, and the CEA website SIG Discussion Forum.

Anyone attending the 2008 Annual CEA Conference who is involved in the delivery of parenting programs in corrections is encouraged to participate in the workshop and become part of the CEA's Parenting SIG.



# Save the Date: Effective Black Parenting



## Train the Trainer Seminar

**August 4-8, 2008**

Effective Black Parenting (EBP) is a skill-building program designed to foster:

- ❖ Effective Family Communication,
- ❖ Healthy African-American Identity,
- ❖ Extended Family Values,
- ❖ Optimal child growth and development;
- ❖ Positive self-esteem in children

EBP uses African proverbs as it teaches highly effective and easy to use parenting strategies and skills. Don't miss the chance to enhance and enrich your parenting classes.

website: [www.ciccparenting.org](http://www.ciccparenting.org)

or call: Kim Porter, UWEX @ (414) 290-2421

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## Inside-Out Dad Program CD Available

National Fatherhood Initiative has announced that the Inside-Out Dad Program activities/certificate CD is available at no cost to educators who attended Inside-Out Dad Program training in Madison, Wisconsin last July. The CD is advertised on their website.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of this CD, contact

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[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)



## **Editorial-Mary K. Knox**

Spring has arrived and you may be reading this at the CEA-Wisconsin State Conference in Elkhart Lake. This will be a great day for correctional teachers in Wisconsin. I had to rush to get the newsletter out before the conference so I hope I have not forgotten anything important in the content.

I want to wish all the Mothers in our readership a "Happy Mothers' Day"! I also want to wish anyone who is a mentor in a child's life a "Happy Mothers' Day, because that's just as good as being an actual mother. A child only needs one person totally committed to them to be a healthy individual. Of course, the more the better, but one will do. So all of you enjoy the day!!!!

We just cannot seem to read enough of Jan Walker's material for our parenting class preparation. Some of you were at the Region III & IV CEA Conference in Minnesota and got to see her and talk to her. I did not have that opportunity but my time is coming. I was told we would be receiving some great information that Jan shared at the conference at the CEA-Wisconsin State Conference.

In May, I will have the opportunity to begin teaching a new parenting class for the Wisconsin DOC re-entry initiative. I will be using the Inside/Out Dads program and the Families In Focus for this class. I am anxious to teach this as up to now my parenting class has only been part of our Pre-Release program. Our Fathers' Support Group will be an after care program for the class. This will give more parents and opportunity to take parenting earlier in their release planning. I will let you all know how it is going.

Have a great time planning for those summer vacations!

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