

Parenting Connection

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New Sounds of RECAP Babies in Jail

There are new sounds in the RECAP (Rock County Education and Criminal Addictions Program) units at the Rock County (Wisconsin) Jail. The sounds of babies crying, cooing, and students making tending noises are becoming the new normal. There is also the occasional, "Can't you keep him quiet so a guy can get some sleep?"

The RECAP Parenting Curriculum has been expanded to include five computer babies purchased from RealityWorks™ of Eau Claire, WI. We are proud to introduce our babies: Winona-Native American girl, Marie-Hispanic girl, Aran-Asian boy, Barack-African American boy, and Kenneth-Caucasian boy.

These five infants have the uncanny ability to accurately simulate real infant behavior and needs. Each will cry to be fed, changed, burped or rocked if feeling fussy. Each of these babies is specifically programmed and assigned to a parent for about three days and two nights. The babies are electronically identified to their parent from the onset of care. At the end of the experiment, the babies offer up a computer printout of care, missed care, and mishandling. Every baby requires neck support and tender care at all times.

The RECAP team and Rock County Jail officers have been supportive of this effort. Sgt. Sprecher led the way in getting this advanced teaching tool into our hands. Every effort has been made to accommodate and include all in our attempts to educate and rehabilitate our students. People have made room for us, our car seats, and other things. Officers have been patient and vigilant of the needs of the students with infants.

Everyone seems attuned to the possibilities here. If we can cause a moment of thought about bringing an infant into the world, if we can make the life of an existing child more positive, if we can raise awareness about the commitment of parenting; we are all so successful.

by: D.W. Hahn, Blackhawk Technical College Instructor
Rock County Jail

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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:

Mary K. Knox
Wisconsin Resource Center
P.O Box 16
Winnebago, WI 54985
mary.knox@wisconsin.gov

Co-Editor : Jerry Bednarowski, CEA-Wisconsin

Proofreader : Laura Reisinger, Chippewa Valley Literacy Volunteers



Seussville... at SCI

Winter 2009 brought changes to Stanley Correctional Institution (Wisconsin). Dr. Seuss moved in -- to the visiting room that is. The education and programs departments teamed up to paint a large mural of Dr. Seuss characters along an entire wall of the visiting room. Laurie Prochnow, teacher, came up with the idea of a colorful Seuss inspired mural. The education staff brainstormed which characters to use in the design.



Hobby workers created a small model of the project before it got underway. The team of four inmate artists was supervised by several different staff members as the project unfolded.

Once completed, the reaction of children to the mural was one of delight. One would think that visiting a loved one in prison might bring fear, apprehension and anxiety to a young child. With the *Things 1 and 2* and *The Cat in the Hat* in the room, young visitors feel much more at ease. The mural helps to take away some fear, and adds a bit of comfort to an uncomfortable situation. The children enjoy the mural and often play nearby. Many have pulled those classic Dr. Seuss books off the bookshelf to read with their fathers.

This mural has sparked quite a few more smiles than the plain, white concrete wall that was visible before. Photographs are now taken regularly in front of the mural. Children and their families are photographed as if they are sitting on the couch. Offenders and their visitors regularly take pictures in front of the Cat in the Hat.

On Monday, March 2, 2009, in celebration of Read Across America, the SCI education department sponsored a variety of activities featuring Dr. Seuss throughout the week. Mini activity books and coloring pages were available in the visiting room for children. The education building was decorated with posters of Dr. Seuss characters for this celebration. Within classrooms, a day of reading was planned and bookmarks featuring Dr. Seuss were distributed. A Seuss trivia contest was planned so the entire institution could be involved in the Read Across America celebration.

by: Lori Koenig, Stanley Correctional Institution
reprinted from the Wisconsin DOC website: DOCnet, *Inside DOC*

CEA Invites You to Join Bill Cosby in Promoting Family and Community

As you may have read in CEA's national newsletter, *News & Notes*, CEA Executive Director Steve Steurer announced that Bill Cosby has set aside 10,000 copies of his book *Come On People* to distribute to the nation's adult prison inmates. Dr. Cosby hopes to positively affect offenders' thinking and future behavior. Dr. Cosby has long been the champion of responsible parents, vibrant families and strong communities. In his book, Dr. Cosby talks about personal responsibility and the need for a strong family and community --- messages that dovetail with the purpose of correctional education

Copies of the book, which Dr. Cosby co-authored with Dr. Alvin Poussaint, are being made available through CEA for adult correctional education agencies to disseminate in schools and libraries.

To make maximum impact of the donation, instead of simply sending each state a few boxes of books to disseminate, it was decided to encourage educators create innovative ways to influence the minds of incarcerated adults with *Come On People*. In order to participate and receive up to 200 books for their programs, educators are asked to submit a one-half page proposal to CEA. Some possible ways to use the



book may include creating book club discussions, library displays, classroom activities, media events, essay contests, or other events.

To participate in this project, e-mail Steve Steurer the following information in your proposal:

- one name and address for the location to send the books
- one-half page proposal describing the activity(ies) planned
- the number of staff and students involved
- how you will report the results
- the way to create local or state publicity

Thus far, over 30 state agencies of correctional education have developed activities around the reading of ***Come On People***. After you have started your activity, we would like to hear how it worked. Send a note to Steve so he can highlight the results of this campaign through media releases and at the upcoming 2009 Annual CEA Conference in Madison. You are also encouraged to submit an article about your experiences for this newsletter and posting on the Parenting Special Interest Group Discussion Forum on the www.ceanational.org website.

CEA is currently working on an arrangement for Bill Cosby to speak via videotape to the Annual CEA Conference in July. Stay tuned for more details. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Steve Steurer at ssteurer@ceanational.org.

Journal Features Two Parenting Papers

The March 2009 issue of the Journal of Correctional Education contains two papers relating to parenting education programs conducted in correctional facilities. Below are abstracts of the papers. The complete papers may be found on the www.ceanational.org website. You must be a CEA member to access the Journal on the CEA website.

If I Could Only Say It Myself: How to Communicate with Children of Incarcerated Parents by Avinash Thombre, David R. Montague, Jennifer Maher, Israt Tusty Zohra

This study examined inmate perceptions of what are important American criminal justice system concepts that should be communicated to children of incarcerated parents. Inmates interviewed at two facilities in Arkansas claimed that they knew little about meanings or consequences of their actions before and after indictment. Intervention into these families is necessary to break the cyclic nature of incarceration patterns. Thematic analysis of open-ended interviews with inmates provided a list of topics appropriate to teach children to avoid being incarcerated. Education of concepts of the American criminal justice system provides children with the tools and means necessary to understand the system. The findings emphasize inmate involvement in communicating knowledge about the prison system in order to reduce future crime.

Parenting Education for Incarcerated Mothers by Suzanne S. Kennon, Virginia H. Mackintosh, Barbara J. Myers

A parenting curriculum, developed for incarcerated mothers in Virginia state prisons, was evaluated using a pretest, posttest, follow-up design with 57 women. Developmental psychologists delivered a 12-session curriculum focused on parenting issues unique to incarcerated parents. Each class met for 2 hours and followed a prepared curriculum that was experiential and discussion-based. In assessments at the end of the course and at an 8-week follow-up, mothers showed significant improvements over their pretest scores in parenting attitudes, self-esteem, and legal knowledge regarding parental rights and responsibilities. Mothers' open-ended comments showed they gained an understanding that children need love, letters, and consistency and that they should show the caregivers respect, gratitude, and support. There was no change in frequency of letters written home, however, despite much emphasis on letter-writing during the course.



Conference Review:

“The Consequences of a Criminal Record in Wisconsin and the Remedies Under the Law”

On Thursday, April 2, I had the pleasure of going to Art Besse’s workshop in Wauwautosa, Wisconsin. The workshop titled “The Consequences of a Criminal Record in Wisconsin and the Remedies Under the Law” was advertised in a past newsletter. The workshop attendees were a diverse group of Advocates, Public Defenders, Social Workers, and a Parenting Instructor. The amount of information and statistics presented to us by Art and Iris Christenson in those six hours was amazing. Every little nuance of the consequences of a criminal record was addressed. As Art says “It would just be easier to not get the criminal record in the first place.” The information provides great conversational points for parents of teenagers.

The conference materials included fact sheets and information on corrections, SSI, parental rights, child support, driver’s license, deportation, employment restrictions, education financing, general remedies, and housing options. The Glossary of Terms used in the legal system is very worthwhile. The questions asked by the participants were insightful and led to more discussion, further enhancing the presentation by Art and Iris. Overall, it was a day of learning more than I could absorb. I was relieved I had the great materials to review when I arrived back at work the next day.

We also received a book, hot off the press, called *Staying Connected: Rights and Responsibilities of Incarcerated Parents in Wisconsin*. The Family Law Project of the Frank J. Remington Center, the University of Wisconsin Law School, and Family Connections of Wisconsin, Inc. put this book together. A ten-dollar donation was suggested. The book answers every question one might have concerning parenting while incarcerated. I have referred to it several times in my Fathers’ Support Group. The book is available from artbesse@netzero.net.

The *Parenting Connection* will have a posting of these workshops in the future and I recommend attending one. It is worthwhile for gaining legal information to help the participants in our parenting classes.

by: Mary K. Knox, Wisconsin Resource Center

Brain Insights

- ▶ With April 19-25 dedicated as the Week of the Young Child, it is perfect timing to announce the availability of the latest brain development activity packet!
- ▶ *Play with Me While I'm Three.....* is now available!
- ▶ The *Brain Insights* series now has packets for each year from birth to age five!
- ▶ To introduce this new packet and recognize the Week of the Young Child, all packets are 10% off! Just go to www.braininsightsonline.com to order yours today.

For old issues of the *Parenting Connection* newsletter, go to www.ceawisconsin.org



Book Review:

The Boy Who Was Raised As a Dog and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing By Dr. Bruce Perry M.D., Ph.D. and Maia Szalavitz

This beautifully written book chronicles some of Child Psychologist Dr. Perry's most interesting cases. Dr. Perry is Senior Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy. He has served as a consultant to the FBI and is the former Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital, as well as former Vice-Chairman for Research in the Department of Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine. His research in Brain Development has led to groundbreaking changes in how early childhood practitioners work with children birth to three.

The book is interesting while disturbing, with real life histories of some seriously abused children. It takes scientific descriptions of some gruesome details to explain the science of what happens to a child's brain in the case of horrible trauma in their lives. What happens when a child is terrorized? How does the terror affect a child's mind and what can be done to help the child recover? These detailed accounts help the reader understand the science in a very real way. The science is so explicit the reader will never look at a disturbed child or adult in the same way again.

This book is not only important reading for individuals who work with adults or children who have mental health difficulties, but also for parents trying to understand their child's brain and how it's developing, as well as individuals who teach parenting classes.

What point does a parenting instructor want to make when teaching about attachment and bonding between babies and caregivers? What point does an instructor make when trying to teach that physical punishment is a bad practice? How can learning about brain development improve our practice of teaching parenting skills, especially to people who may have attachment disorder themselves?

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog is an excellent resource for parenting instructors. The information in this reading will strengthen the base knowledge of child development and leave a parenting instructor searching for how to share those concepts with their students.

by Mary K. Knox, Wisconsin Resource Center

Join Us in Madison



Join Us in Madison, Wisconsin for the 64th Annual CEA Conference, ***Moving Forward: Focusing at the Future*** at the Concourse Hotel. Conference participants will be coming from throughout the United States and several other countries. The conference planning committee is working hard to make the conference an excellent professional development opportunity for attendees.

Conference registration materials can be found on the national website: www.ceanational.org. Open to the home page and look for the yellow column (Hot Topics) on the left. Click on "64th Annual Conference." Everything you need to register is there.

For more information, check out the CEA-Wisconsin website at www.ceawisconsin.org, the national website at www.ceanational.org, or contact Conference Co-Chair Peggy Meyers at peggy.meyers@wtcsystem.edu



Fathers Sharing Books Program Honored with Celebration of Literacy Award

Many things go well together: horse and carriage, chocolate and peanut butter, and pen and paper. Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. and Wisconsin Institutions Literacy Council (WILC) are two organizations that work well together. Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. is a statewide agency that was initially formed in 1985 as a coalition of adult, family and workplace literacy providers for the purpose of supporting one another through resource development, information and referrals, trainings and advocacy. WILC is an organization which promotes literacy and life skills through a learner-centered environment. This is accomplished through tutoring services offered by individual institutions for inmates enrolled in school, and also for inmates in the general population who wish to improve their math, reading, writing and keyboarding skills in order to prepare for re-entry into society, family life and the workplace.

One of the activities, in which Wisconsin Literacy and WILC partner, is the annual Celebration of Literacy. On Thursday, May 7, 2009, Wisconsin Literacy hosted its 7th Annual Celebration of Literacy at the Edgewater Hotel in Madison. Seven awards were presented. WILC submitted nine nominations. Of those nine – three won awards.

One award category is **The First Lady Jessica Doyle Award for Family Literacy**. This year's recipient is the Fathers Sharing Books program at Stanley Correctional Institution (SCI).

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader." This quote by W. Fusselman is a good summary of the Fathers Sharing Books program at Stanley Correctional Institution.

The Fathers Sharing Books program began at SCI in 2004 with the purpose of keeping fathers connected with their children. Other important goals of the program include improving the literacy of the fathers involved and potentially breaking the cycle of crime. This reading program allows incarcerated fathers to stay in touch with their children.

Once enrolled, men attend class to learn why reading to children is important, how to select age appropriate materials, and where to find books and materials. Classroom sessions encourage the fathers to discover what their own educational values are and to express those values in personal journals.

When they have completed the class, time is reserved for each of them to burn a CD as they are reading a book they have personally chosen. They may read more than one book because each father is allotted 30 minutes to read to their children. The CD is paid for by the father and mailed to his child/children. Men are allowed to make additional CDs (same cost) by simply contacting the instructor to reserve a time to read another book for their child/children. The program is offered 3 to 4 times per year at Stanley Correctional Institution. At least 50 men a year have the chance to read a book to their children and are able to promote family literacy.

This program has an incredibly positive effect not only on the inmates, but also on their families. The instructor has received letters of support and thanks from some of the families. They are grateful for the connection being made between the inmate and their children. The books that the inmates read are readily available for families to have in their homes. The effort made by these men to contribute to and be a part of their families' lives is invaluable. Encouraging their children to read and follow along as Daddy reads is an integral part of developing family literacy, even from a distance.



Besides honoring the award-winning adult learners, tutors and literacy advocates in Wisconsin, the Celebration of Literacy helps raise necessary funds to support 58 literacy programs throughout the state.

This year's keynote speaker was Michael Feldman, award-winning host of the nationally syndicated radio show *Whad'Ya Know?* The Celebration also featured a silent auction of a wide range of items, including signed books by some of Wisconsin's best authors.

by: Kay C George, WILC Co-Director & Tutor Supervisor
Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility

Professional Development Opportunity Gets Tremendous Response

About a month ago, Realityworks published a notice about two new courses it has created:

- **Infusing Active Learning Strategies into Your Early Childhood Development Program**
- **Incorporating Core Academics into Your Early Childhood Development Program.**

This notice was forwarded to CEA Parenting Special Interest Group members.

Realityworks had a tremendous response within hours and the offering filled immediately. The courses will be offered in Milwaukee and Eau Claire.

In these initial sessions, Realityworks trainers will test two courses before taking them nationwide. They will involve groups of 10+ teachers each. Each course is two hours in length. Participants may choose to stay for both or attend just one.

Because Realityworks is testing these courses, the training is free. If participants would like to receive university credit, credits are approved and offered through Pacific University for only \$60.00 per credit for up to three credits. Realityworks will provide all the paperwork to receive credits for the sessions. Participants will need to work through the University after the sessions to obtain coursework (usually a paper) and pay for the credits. Realityworks will only deliver the content of the courses.

This is a great addition to any training that one has already received from Realityworks for their Infant Simulator programming.

Libby Vaughn, Realityworks Product Consultant, values CEA Parenting Special Interest Group as a great partner. If all goes well with this pilot class, these courses will be offered for a fee in the near future.

Libby will keep us posted or you may contact her for more information at:

Libby Vaughn, M. Ed., Realityworks Product Consultant
Phone: 800-830-1416 Ext. 1178
Email: libby.vaughn@realityworks.com
Website: www.realityworks.com

Check out the Parenting Special Interest Group Discussion Forum at www.ceanational.org



Editorial

Happy Spring! In Wisconsin, that has different meanings. We dream of daffodils, but pray the flowers can survive six inches of snow. They do!

This is my last newsletter after two years of editing this rag. It has been a pleasure even though some deadlines didn't seem they were going to be met. The terrific team who prints and collates have been very patient with me and I applaud their work. They will continue after my departure and I may even be involved with helping them get future newsletters out in time. I will let the new Editor, Mary Pohlman of Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution, introduce herself in the next issue. I wish her luck and plan to help in any way I can.

Those who have read these newsletters in the last two years know my passion for the Science of Brain Development. I admit I am always on a mission to learn more and incorporate it into my parenting classes. My Early Childhood/Child Development background is where this passion comes from and I plan to continue my studies in this area. I am eternally grateful to the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families for their continued offerings in Brain Development.

I recently had the pleasure of hearing a book presentation by Wisconsin author Michael Perry during the Fox Cities Book Festival. His latest book *Coop: A Year of Pigs, Poultry, and Parenting* was featured in the talk. He gets an "A" in Parenting 101 for his funny yet touching stories of the birth of his daughter with a mid-wife at home and his special relationship with his "Given Daughter" (step-daughter). What a great Dad! I recommend the read if you get a chance.

I am looking forward to the International CEA conference this summer in Madison, Wisconsin. I hope to see you all there. I will sign off by wishing you all luck in your parenting instruction and thanks for helping children --- one parent at a time.

Mary K. Knox Wisconsin Resource Center

Mary K. Knox
Wisconsin Resource Center
P.O. Box 16
Winnebago, WI 54985

