

# Parenting Connection

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## Federal Workgroup Identifies Opportunities to Support Children

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2007, an estimated 1.7 million children under the age of 18 had a parent in prison, an increase of almost 80% since 1991. The negative consequences for children with an incarcerated parent can be substantial, including financial instability, changes in family structure, shame, and social stigma.

However, research also shows that supporting healthy and positive relationships between these vulnerable children, who are the innocent bystanders of adult decisions, and their families has the potential to mitigate negative outcomes.

On June 12, 2013, the Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative's Interagency Working Group issued a report on its plans to address these issues. The interagency group which includes the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education and Agriculture and the Social Security Administration has partnered with stake holders both inside and outside of government to identify opportunities to support these children and their caregivers. The initiative includes:

### Capacity-Building Training for Service Providers

The Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide its signature capacity building/grant-writing training to community-oriented service providers working with children of incarcerated parents and their families. The training is principally tailored for emerging and intermediate organizations and will strengthen local capacity to serve children impacted by a parent's incarceration. The initial trainings will take place in Camden, NJ and Baltimore, MD.

### Webinar for Faith-Based Leaders

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and Center for Faith-Based and  
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Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Justice (DOJ) are hosting a webinar for faith leaders to discuss the potential impact on children who have an incarcerated parent — including the impacts on the health and safety of youth at risk of delinquency due to parent absenteeism, and how these leaders and their congregations can become change agents in their communities.

### **Mitigating the Impact on Children at the Time of a Parent’s Arrest**

Research indicates that the arrest of a parent can have significant negative impacts on a child’s wellness and perceptions of authority, especially when the parent is apprehended in the child’s presence. The arrest of a parent also may present serious challenges for arresting officers who may be called on to meet both law enforcement and child protection goals. To address these challenges, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, with funding support from DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, is developing a model protocol and training on protecting the physical and emotional well-being of children when their parents are arrested.

### **Promising Practices for Local and State Governments**

DOJ’s National Institute of Corrections will provide funding to develop a framework to guide state and local governments interested in enacting policy changes that will mitigate the impact of a parent’s incarceration on children. The framework will examine the potential impacts to children at the various stages of the criminal justice system, including arrest and detention, the pre-adjudication phase, trial, and re-entry. The project will highlight innovations and promising practices with proven records of success.

### **Improving Facility-Based Programming and Policies Improving Family Connections**

The President’s FY14 budget seeks \$5 million for demonstration grants to enhance parental and family relationships for incarcerated parents as an offender reentry and recidivism-reduction strategy and \$2 million for the Bureau of Prisons to support visitation and education programs to strengthen family and parental ties.

### **Enhanced Parenting Programs**

Approximately 58% of offenders in the federal prison system have children under the age of 21. To assist these incarcerated parents, the Bureau of Prisons provides reentry programs designed to build positive parenting skills and foster family ties, where appropriate. Information about new model parenting programs is available in the Bureau’s new model programs catalog available to staff at all federal prisons.

### **Guidance from the Bureau of Prisons**

Bureau of Prisons Director Charles Samuels will issue a message to the inmate population underscoring the importance of inmates’ role as parents. The Director is encouraging inmates to cultivate meaningful relationships with their children, family and communities through visitation, telephone calls, electronic messaging, and written correspondence. Inmate parents also will be encouraged to participate in parenting and other reentry programming (e.g., substance abuse, education) to strengthen their role as a parent, both while behind bars and upon release.

### **Incentivizing Research and Data Collection Workshop on Children of Incarcerated Parents**

The National Science Foundation is sponsoring a workshop on the effects of a parent’s incarceration on children. The workshop will convene researchers and policy makers to review what is known about the life-course effects of the incarceration of parents on the well-being of children, and develop an agenda for further study and integration of future research and policy formation on the topic.

### **Improved Data Collection**

The Bureau of Justice Statistics Survey of Prison Inmates (SPI) generates nationally-representative estimates of the characteristics of prisoners, including the number of incarcerated parents and their minor



children. The SPI now will go a step further and also measure, among other relevant data, the involvement of incarcerated parents in the lives of their minor children prior to the parent's incarceration and the extent to which children maintain connections with their incarcerated parents after the parent's incarceration. The SPI also will identify who is taking care of the minor children of incarcerated parents during the parent's incarceration, including the rate at which minor children are placed in foster care. Following a pilot test, the new and improved SPI will be released in 2014.

### **Video Visitation Research**

Through a National Institute of Justice Grant, the Vera Institute will research the impact of video visitation on incarcerated parents and their families. The study will analyze the State of Washington's deployment of video visitation technology and the potential impact on the frequency and nature of visits to incarcerated individuals, these individuals' compliance while in custody, and reductions in recidivism.

### **Support for Evidence-Based COIP Mentoring Programs**

OJJDP will host a *Mentoring for Children of Incarcerated Parents Listening Session* to explore the dimensions of existing mentoring programs and evidence-based models to ensure successful and constructive mentoring relationships. OJJDP will use the information to adjust existing programs, where possible, and develop future opportunities to assist children of incarcerated parents.

### **Innovative and Promising Practices for Public Housing Authorities**

HUD is surveying eight model Public Housing Authorities to identify proven and promising reentry housing models, including those that focus on family reunification, parental supportive services, and permanent supportive housing to help end chronic homelessness. Promotion of these model reentry housing programs, which incorporate support for children of incarcerated parents, will enable collaboration among local stakeholders and housing providers, as well as better leveraging of local, state and federal resources.

### **Amplifying Public Awareness and Outreach Children of Incarcerated Parents Web Portal**

This website will consolidate, in a single online location, information regarding federal resources, grant opportunities, best and promising practices, and ongoing government initiatives that support children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. The portal provides user-friendly information for stakeholders, including local and state governments wishing to initiate their own collaborative processes to improve support for these children.

### **COIP Myth Buster Series**

These one-page fact sheets correct common misperceptions and raise awareness to help service providers better care for and meet the needs of children of incarcerated parents and their families. The *Children of Incarcerated Parents Myth Busters* are part of a larger series designed by the Federal Interagency Reentry Council led by the Attorney General.

### **"Mommies and Daddies in Prison" Booklet**

The Bureau of Prisons has collaborated with authors of an existing publication, "Mommies and Daddies in Jail," to create a Bureau-based version entitled "Mommies and Daddies in Prison." The booklet will provide children who have a parent in federal prison with information about their parents' daily experience, as well as details regarding visitation, correspondence, and other topics. The goal is to help allay children's fears about their parents' situation, help them understand what to expect when visiting and corresponding, and, where appropriate, nurture the parent-child bond.

**For past issues of the Parenting Connection newsletter, go to [www.ceawisconsin.org](http://www.ceawisconsin.org)**



# Fatherhood Program Earns Evidence-Based Program Listing

A new Fatherhood Program for prison reentry, substance abuse recovery and returning military populations developed by the Louisville-based Council on Prevention and Education: Substances, Inc. (COPES) is now listed on the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's NREPP represents a key part of the federal government's efforts to help states and communities make informed decisions about selecting and using evidence-based interventions for the prevention and/or treatment of mental health and substance use disorders.

Ted N. Strader, Executive Director of COPES has developed a curriculum series to address substance abuse and mental health issues entitled, *Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC)*. The Original CLFC Program has been listed on NREPP since 2007. In July of this year, the *CLFC Marriage Enhancement Program* (for married and/or committed couples) was also listed. Now, the most recent CLFC program listed on NREPP is the *CLFC Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration*. This new CLFC component has demonstrated powerful results for fathers, men in father-like roles (e.g., mentors), and men who are planning to be fathers. Each of Strader's programs in the *CLFC Curriculum Series* have demonstrated powerful, positive results leading to three separate CLFC Program listings on NREPP.

The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* was developed to help individuals who are experiencing or are at risk for family dissonance resulting from the individual's physical and/or emotional separation (e.g., incarceration, substance abuse, military service). The program has been shown to increase nine different relationship skills (communication, interpersonal, intrapersonal, conflict resolution, emotional awareness, emotional expression, relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment and relationship management), increase spirituality, reduce intention to binge drink or use drugs, and reduce prison recidivism by 60% according to a recent article published in *Criminal Justice Policy Review* (McKiernan, Shamblen, Collins, Strader & Kokoski, 2012).

The *CLFC Fatherhood Program* was first implemented and evaluated with men reentering the Louisville community from prisons in the Kentucky Department of Corrections. The Louisville Metro Department of Corrections has recently embarked on a pilot-test implementation of the *CLFC Fatherhood Program*. According to Director Mark Bolton, "the COPES *CLFC Fatherhood Program* has been extremely well-received by both inmates and corrections staff. Everyone is excited about the potential for a department-wide roll out in the future."

COPES, Director Bolton and the Mayor's Office are examining a variety of ways to implement the COPES Curriculum Series in order to achieve positive results and experience the projected savings in lives and dollars in Metro Louisville.

## **About COPES, Inc.:**

COPES, Inc. began as a tentative and pioneering program in Louisville in the 1980s, but has evolved into a nationally recognized and innovative substance abuse prevention and family strengthening non-profit organization. COPES was incorporated in 1981 and, by 1985, was receiving a steady flow of requests to develop programs for special populations. COPES programs are now in use in all 50 states and several other countries.

Ted Strader has served as Executive Director of COPES, Inc. since the agency was incorporated. He has extensive professional training in chemical dependency treatment, prevention and family relations. Strader



also is the lead author/program developer for the entire *CLFC Curriculum Series*. His programs have also received the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention/National Prevention Network's Exemplary Program Award four times (1995, 1999, 2000 and 2010).

Find out more about COPES and the entire *CLFC Curriculum Series* at [www.copes.org](http://www.copes.org).

by: Susan Sweeney-Crum  
President, COPES Inc.



## **Fulfilling the Promise Conference February 25-26, 2014 Chula Vista Resort Wisconsin Dells, WI**

The Fulfilling the Promise Conference sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension is for parent educators, home visitors, early childhood staff and anyone who works with families with young children.

The Fulfilling the Promise Conference will offer:

- ★ 7 full-day institutes
- ★ 6 half-day institutes
- ★ Networking activities
- ★ Paul Schmitz from Public Allies, keynote speaker
- ★ 30 workshops featuring 10 different topic tracks

A brochure will be available in early December for this inspiring and richly ative conference at [www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/conference](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/conference).

## **Tell Us About Your Program**

One of the goals of the Parenting Special Interest Group is to provide a vehicle for communication among educators who are teaching or developing parenting programs in correctional facilities. You are invited to share your ideas by contributing an article for a future issue of this newsletter.

Here are some suggestions for articles:

- Share a creative lesson plan that you use in your Parenting Class
- Compile a list of books and videos you use in your Parenting Class
- Describe how your parent/child book project works
- Share advice on establishing a Fathers or Mothers Fair
- Describe a training workshop that you found useful
- Describe how you involve community organizations in your program
- Describe how you have made your institution more family-friendly

Email your articles to [JerryBednarowski@new.rr.com](mailto:JerryBednarowski@new.rr.com)

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



# Teaching the Three R's: Respect, Responsible, and Resourcefulness

I recently attended a conference on helping students with mental illness. As the speaker presented his material, I realized that this was very appropriate for our parenting programs. Paul Gasser MS/LMFT, the presenter, stated that we have a more psychologically damaged group of students than ever before. He addressed teaching the Three R's: Respect, Responsible, and Resourcefulness.

Anxiety is the most common mood disorder in public schools. Parents and their children have not developed a parent/child hierarchy. Strong willed children have not developed intrinsic motivation and thinking. We learned that parents need to "love me enough to say no." An effective intervention for behavior problems needs to: set firm limits, hand problems back to the child who should solve problems for him/herself, and start intrinsic motivation (assign chores). When dysfunctional behavior is exhibited parents should ask, "What were you thinking?"

The first step is to set firm limits and return the problem back to the child. Lead with empathy. Say, "Ahhhh ... how sad" or "Bummer." Then send an empowerment message. Ask, "What are you going to do." Ask if they would like to hear what other kids have done to solve a similar problem. After each suggestion ask the question, "How would that work for you?" At the end you send a good luck message. "Oh, good luck," or "I hope it works out." When small children have toys scattered around the house that you want cleaned up, a good strategy is to tell the child to, "Only pick up the toys that you want to keep. The toys that are not picked up go to toy prison (the closet)." Toys are paroled about December 25 of that year. If your kids are arguing in the car, they are put out of the vehicle ½ mile from home and allowed to walk home. Children who don't get up in time for school are allowed to practice at 6:00 AM on Saturday morning.

Create a past history with your child. Give them tasks that are developmentally appropriate. Do not "flip-out" if the child fails. With lots of empathy allow the consequence to occur. Give the task again to give practice. It takes 20-50 repetitions to succeed and get the concept.

by: Mary Pohlman,  
Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (WI)

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Prisoner's Family Conference For Those Who Care and Wish to DO More

Community Solutions of El Paso is holding its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Prisoner's Family Conference, *For Those Who Care and Wish to DO More*, on February 19-21, 2014 in Dallas/Ft. Worth. This conference provides critical connections and information to improve the quality of life for the entire prison family and offers ample networking opportunities with those from across the country serving prisoners and their families.

The conference also provide powerful resources for strengthening the prison family and improving its relationship with the criminal justice system by bringing together those from across the country with a sincere desire to improve the quality of life of those touched by the incarceration of a loved one.

The Prisoner's Family Conference offers those with genuine concerns for prisoners and their families an opportunity to unite, to educate the uninformed; to build best practices programs; to improve relations with the criminal justice system and to advocate on behalf of the prison family.

For more information and registration materials go to: [www.prisonersfamilyconference.org](http://www.prisonersfamilyconference.org). Community Solutions of El Paso's website is [www.solutionsforel Paso.org](http://www.solutionsforel Paso.org).



# Summit Aims to Improve Practice and Policy-Making

Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind, the National Resource Center for Children and Families of the Incarcerated of Rutgers University and the Open Society Fellowship of the National Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated partnered to hold the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit Conference on Children and Families of the Incarcerated on November 16, 2013 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Included in the Summit's Program is:

- Keynote Speaker Ann Adalist-Estrin, Director of the National Resource Center for Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University, Camden, NJ
- Carol Burton, Executive Director, Centerforce, San Francisco, CA presenting materials from Little Children: Big Challenges — Incarceration, the new Sesame Street initiative
- Project WHAT! Youth from the San Francisco Youth Organization of Community Works
- Aileen Keays and James Conway of the Central Connecticut State University overseeing the Connecticut State-Based Children of the Incarcerated Initiative
- The White House Champions of Change will be honored and speaking of their work
- Sujatha Baglia of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency Restorative Justice Programming
- Dee Ann Newell of Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind
- A panel of caregivers, children of the incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated parents
- Sesame Street's new Muppet Alex who has an incarcerated father

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency conducted a research-based evaluation of one of the previous summits that indicated, through follow-up, the participants actually improved their practice and policy-making from the learning at this summit.

## Book Presents Unvarnished Truth

Millions of Americans are traumatized by the mass incarceration in this country. *The Unvarnished Truth about the Prison Family Journey* is an exceptional resource for prison families, as well as those serving them in the fields of criminal justice, education, ministry and mental health care.

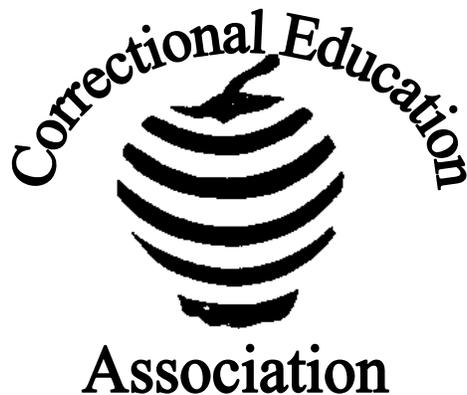
The authors, Carolyn Esparza and Phillip Don Yow Sr., have over fifty years combined personal and professional experience with the criminal justice system. They weave graphic personal, legal and emotional perspectives into a rare and boldly honest look at the realities faced by prison families. They offer encouragement and hope for successfully navigating the journey. Esparza and Yow present information from very different spheres: readers will learn both the legal steps and the emotional steps involved in becoming a member of a sad, huge group — incarcerated Americans.

The helpful first chapter explains what to do/not do from the moment a loved one is arrested. Then the chapters turn to emotion: Who is to blame? What can you do with the trauma and grief that accompany each step of the process? A recurring theme throughout is that inmates remain humans, and they remain citizens. We need to help those in prison, and also those returning to society. A special chapter on the children of prisoners brings up additional issues that many of us have not confronted.

This book is loaded with information, including the *Children of Prisoners Bill of Rights* and the federal law on filing grievances. First-hand stories of prison violence and relationships fills out the book, which concludes with useful forms that most of us would never find ourselves: power of attorney, release of information, etc. Whether you are directly affected or are one who serves those who are, this book provides unparalleled insight for navigating the traumatic journey most effectively and surviving with the least amount of trauma.



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### **Editor's Message:**

In this newsletter are several articles on workgroups and conference focusing on the question: "How does parental incarceration affect children?" Parental incarceration can affect many aspects of a child's life, including emotional and behavioral well-being, family stability and financial circumstances. But as Julie Poehlmann and J. Mark Eddy conclude in their book, *Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Handbook of Researchers and Practitioners*, "One major challenge confronting researchers is disentangling the effects of parental incarceration from the effects of other factors that could have existed long before incarceration."

Some studies are currently underway that are attempting to disentangle the factors surrounding the effects of parental incarceration. Preliminary data from these studies is challenging long-held beliefs regarding the degree to which inmate parents are concerned about their children's lives and the caretakers' efforts to provide quality living environment to meet the educational and developmental needs of the children.

Whereas most literature focusing on incarcerated parents and their children has documented risks and emphasized negative developmental outcomes in the children, these new studies are examining resilience processes the may help the families' successful adaptation in the face of significant adversity.

Correctional educators have always focused on helping their students develop skills necessary be positive community and family members. As factors impacting the resilience in children of incarcerated parents are identified, it will be the duty of correctional educators to continue to incorporate this information into their programs to help incarcerated parents and their families beat the odds and transcend negative events.

**Jerry**

