

# Parenting Connection

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## Stages of Re-Entry for Children

According to Ann Adalist-Estrin in her work, *Homecoming: Children's Adjustment to Parent's Parole*, when a parent returns home after being released from jail or prison, the children often go through predictable stages in adjusting to the new family dynamics. Being aware of these pending stages may help returning parents and the children's caregivers to ease the children's adjustment to the new living arrangements.

The following descriptions of the stages are adapted from Stages of Homecoming, originally published in *Homecoming: Children's Adjustment to Parents Parole*, by Ann Adalist-Estrin, National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated, [www.fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcnetwork.org).

### Stages of Re-Entry for Children of a Parent Returning from Prison

- **Celebratory/Honeymoon** - Children are initially excited with the presence of their parent in the home or community, and out of the prison. Heightened expectations need to be lowered for all, parent, child, and caregiver. Dangers may be the parent "celebrating" — if drugs were part of the lifestyle, or becoming depressed and suicide as they run into the multiple barriers. All family members need to be watchful for signs of depression. Close supportive services are needed.
- **Velcro** - Children begin to experience the old anxiety about the parent leaving and may become clingy and regressive. Parent needs to be advised and supported in Parenting After Release programs or other supportive services, that this is a stage and will pass, but the parent must be patient and tolerant. Parental separation now will often trigger the past loss of the parent and leaving at this early stage is very hard, especially for the under 8 group of children.
- **Suspicious/Anger** - Children, especially the older ones, may display signs of suspiciousness with the parent, as they may be anticipating a return to the "old ways" of drug use or criminal activity. Their attitude toward the returning parent can be edged with their suspicion and the parent needs to anticipate this and be provided with the tools to be good listeners and recognize this as a reaction to the parental loss and not get angry. It is normal and will come to an end. The only exception is when  
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the parent has been incarcerated numerous times throughout the child's childhood and they may have simply "given up" on their parent changing.

- **Testing the Limits** - Children can begin to release their internalizing and isolation during this stage. Children are our best limit testers, with growth and development stages often transitioning with limit testing. This is especially true when a parent has been away because of incarceration, foster care placement or military deployment. As Ann Adalist-Estrin aptly describes in her stages of re-entry, the child is manifesting their concern and conflict with their behavior, saying "Can I show my feelings, ask the questions that no one would answer or I was afraid to ask while my parent was gone, or should I keep them to myself?"
- **Resolution/Adjustment** - If the re-entry and reunification are moving along well, feelings of the children are beginning to surface, with question-asking by the children and unfolding many of the secrets that were maintained during the parent's incarceration. Roles are developing, hopefully, new ones. Resistance to change may be experienced, but supported by the family, children can risk re-attaching.
- **Re-Testing** - Depending on the length of separation and the age of the children, after things may be progressing relatively well, the parent may experience a recurrence of the Testing the Limits stage. This recurrence is predictable for children who have endured multiple separations and simply a request for reaffirmation that the parent will not be leaving again.

## VCU Launches Journal on Prison Education and Reentry

Coinciding with International Prison Education Day on October 13, 2014, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education launched a new international periodical, the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* (JPER). JPER is an international, peer reviewed, open access periodical that publishes articles relevant to prison education and prisoner reentry.

"This journal is an important expression of international collaboration between a number of nations," said Leila Christenbury, Ed.D., chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning, which co-produces the journal with the University of Bergen, Norway. "And in particular in the United States, with over 7.3 million individuals incarcerated, on probation, or on parole, the needs of this population are pressing. Using the power of education, especially literacy-related projects, reentry can be achieved, and the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* will be an important voice in the field."

The online nature of JPER allows a much broader audience to access the current research on prison education and reentry, even for distant institutions and small communities. The audience for this periodical includes prison educators, scholars, counselors, administrators, policymakers, alternative educators and others interested in prisons, reentry, community and reform. Recognizing the interdependence of researchers and practitioners, JPER will showcase published articles from both groups.

JPER accepts manuscripts from multidisciplinary fields including education, criminology, psychology, arts and humanities, linguistics, law, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, culture studies, public policy, spirituality and religion, and mental/behavioral health. JPER will publish practitioner written work on instructional design; action research; innovations in art, humanities, literacy, civics, vocational, language, technical, health, reentry and continuing education programs; unique experiences and on projects involving families and the community; personal reflections; showcases for class projects; and professional development issues.

Those interested in submitting a paper for the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry* may go to [jper.uib.no](http://jper.uib.no) or contact Ginger Walker at [gwalker@vcu.edu](mailto:gwalker@vcu.edu).



# NIC Publishes a Televisiting Guide

Last month, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) published a new guide on televisiting authored by the Osborne Association, *Video Visiting in Corrections: Benefits, Limitations, and Implementation Considerations*.

The purpose of the NIC guide is to inform the development of video visiting programs within a correctional setting. "Video visiting" is real-time interactive video communication which uses video conferencing technology or virtual software programs, such as Skype. It is an increasingly popular form of communication between separated family members in settings outside of corrections. The rapid expansion of video visiting in jails and prisons over the past few years suggests that video visiting may become very common in corrections in the near future.

"This guide will help inform administrators about the benefits and challenges of using some common video visiting models across a variety of settings. Video visiting can be a positive enhancement to in-person visiting, and has the potential to promote positive outcomes for incarcerated individuals and their families and communities. In certain circumstances, video visiting may benefit corrections by reducing costs, improving safety and security, and allowing for more flexibility in designating visiting hours. The value of video visiting can be maximized when the goals of the facility are balanced with the needs of incarcerated individuals and their families" (p. vii).

## **The guide is comprised of three chapters:**

- Why Consider Video Visiting
- Implementation Considerations
- Evaluating a Video Visiting Program

## **Appendixes cover:**

- Additional Uses for Video Conferencing in Corrections
- Video Visiting with Children
- Identifying a Video Visiting Model
- Implementation Checklist
- Evaluation Tools

The Osborne Association, having over 4 years of experience providing family-supported and child-friendly televisits with children and their incarcerated parents, provides technical assistance regarding the use of innovative video conferencing models to support incarcerated individuals' transformation during incarceration and successful reentry upon release.

Osborne's televisiting program is an innovative partnership with the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision which enables children with a mother at Albion Correctional Facility or a father at Clinton-Annex Correctional Facility to video visit with their incarcerated parent from Osborne's New York City offices. Osborne's child-friendly televisiting rooms are designed to make children of all ages feel comfortable, and are filled with books, games, and toys. Their trained televisiting team offers ongoing support to the child, incarcerated parent, and caregiver before, during, and after televisits. Televisiting is also available for eligible individuals at select jails on Rikers Island and will soon be available at Auburn Correctional Facility.

For more information, please visit Osborne's televisiting webpage at [www.osborneny.org](http://www.osborneny.org) or Joe Chacon, Video Communications Coordinator, at [jchacon@osborneny.org](mailto:jchacon@osborneny.org), 347-498-2576.

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



# Mentoring Works to Counteract Risk Factors

Children of incarcerated parents are likely to face a multitude of risk factors that impact their ability to be successful in school and life. Among these risk factors are:

- Teen parenthood
- Substance abuse
- Criminal behaviors
- Lack of self-esteem
- Poor school performance
- School absenteeism
- Discipline problems at school
- Low educational expectations
- Lack of interaction with positive role models

According to the National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR), research confirms that mentoring works to effectively counteract these risk factors. The 2013 study “The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles,” examined mentoring program relationships, experiences and benefits for higher-risk youth, and among the findings determined:

- The strongest program benefit, and most consistent across risk groups, was a reduction in depressive symptoms — a particularly noteworthy finding given that almost one in four youth reported worrisome levels of these symptoms at baseline.
- Findings also suggested gains in social acceptance, academic attitudes and grades.
- In addition to benefits in specific domains, mentored youth also experienced gains in a greater number of outcomes than youth in the comparison group.

The National Mentoring Partnership is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For nearly 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state of the art tools.

## The Value of Mentoring

At its most basic level, mentoring helps because it guarantees a young person that there is someone who cares about them. A child is not alone in dealing with day-to-day challenges. Mentors provide their mentees with an experienced friend who is there to help in any number of situations.

### Support for education

- Mentors help keep students in school.
- Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and 37% less likely to skip a class (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters).
- Mentors help with homework and can improve their mentees’ academic skills.

### Support with day-to-day living

- Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem.
- Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs and 27% less likely to start drinking (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters).
- About 40% of a teenager's waking hours are spent without companionship or supervision. Mentors provide teens with a valuable place to spend free time.
- Mentors teach young people how to relate well to all kinds of people and help them strengthen communication skills.



## Support in the workplace

- Mentors help young people set career goals and start taking steps to realize them.
- Mentors can use their personal contacts to help young people meet industry professionals, find internships and locate job possibilities.
- Mentors introduce young people to professional resources and organizations they may not know.
- Mentors can help their mentees learn how to seek and keep jobs.

The number of ways mentoring can help a youth are as varied as the people involved in each program. While the lists and statistics can be impressive, personal stories can be even more impressive. Take a look at mentoring success stories to see how mentoring works from different perspectives.

For information on establishing a mentoring program and toolkits and resources for mentors go to the National Mentoring Partnership website, [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).



reprinted from National Mentoring Partnership website

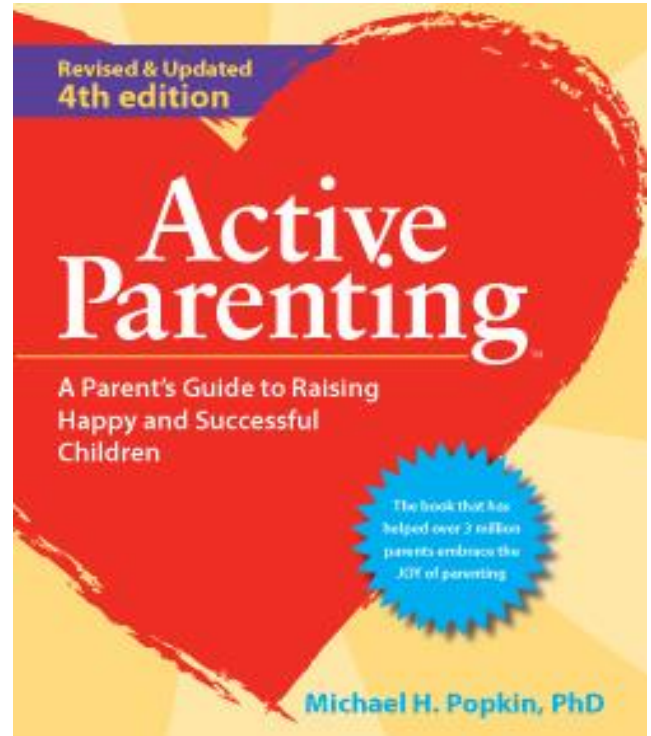


# Active Parenting Launches New Edition

Active Parenting Publishers has recently released a thorough revision of their evidence based flagship program, *Active Parenting 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*.

Active Parenting curricula, written by Michael Popkin, Ph.D., are used in correctional facilities across the United States. Active Parenting programs provide video-based parenting education materials based on Adlerian psychology that emphasize open communication, mutual respect and nonviolent discipline. The program kit contains a step-by-step leader's guide to make it easy to lead without too much prep time. The revised program is now available in English and Spanish. Video samples are available at [www.ActiveParenting.com/AP4](http://www.ActiveParenting.com/AP4).

Active Parenting Publishers is offering a free *Parent's Guide* and *Parent's Workbook* from the new program to parenting instructors working in correctional settings. The books give an overview of the program and may be a useful resource for correctional parenting instructors.



**Readers of this newsletter can obtain a free *Parent's Guide* and *Parent's Workbook*** by contacting Michelle Collins at Active Parenting (800-826-0060 ext. 1) with promotion code SD15CEA, or by clicking on this link: <http://www.activeparenting.com/product/SD15CEA/h>. This offer is limited to one per reader and expires May 31, 2015.

## FPC Danbury's Mommy and Me Tea

On December 2, 2014, the Federal Bureau of Prisons held a Mommy and Me Tea for female offenders at the Federal Prison Camp (FPC) in Danbury, Connecticut. Twelve inmate mothers and 19 children spent several hours bonding in a healthy and positive setting. Northeast Regional Reentry Affairs Administrator Candace Johnson and Female Offender Branch Administrator Alix McLearn participated in the event, and Warden Herman Quay III offered remarks including a quote from Diana, Princess of Wales: "A Mother's arms are more comforting than anyone else's."

The Bureau continues to find new and innovative ways to help foster positive connections with family and particularly between inmates and their children. Prior to participating in the tea, the mothers attended parenting classes and lessons on personal growth and development. The mothers were encouraged to present their children with meaningful handmade gifts at the tea.

The many reentry programs and services provided to inmates in federal prisons can be viewed at <http://www.bop.gov/inmates/custodyandcare/>.

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# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Prisoner's Family Conference



PRISONER'S  
FAMILY  
CONFERENCE

For Those Who Care and Wish to DO More  
May 6-8, 2015  
Night Hotel North Dallas  
Dallas, Texas

2015 marks a new dimension for the Prisoner's Family Conference, as it will officially become an International conference with attendees from at least 5 different countries.

The Conference features dynamic, knowledgeable speakers and provides numerous opportunities to learn best practice approaches, receive current information, share useful tips, exchange creative ideas, network, and receive and provide encouragement and support.

**Families** – The conference “Family Tree” offers prison family members the opportunity to meet and share with other family members experiencing similar concerns. Participants build many lasting friendships for on-going support and encouragement.

**International Experts** – Participate in the largest international conference specifically addressing issues relevant to all prison families. Learn from the private and public, secular and faith based sectors, including criminal justice; social service; academia; ministry and others serving the prisoner and their family and from prison family members themselves, including successfully reintegrated former prisoners.

**One on One Meetings** – You will have ample opportunity to meet and share ideas and information with other attendees from various non-profits, federal, state and local agencies, as well as members of prison families from across the country and even internationally. This allows for discussion of potential collaborations.

**Exhibitors Showcase** – Speakers, attendees and sponsors showcase services and offer resource materials and literature. This event engages a wide variety of organizations serving families of prisoners, family members and experts in the field.

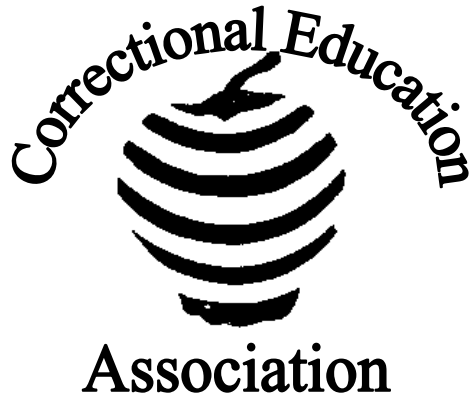
**Social Networking** – Social networking will help you connect with many participants prior to and following the conference if you choose to participate in the Prisoner's Family Conference Facebook page.

**Advocacy Participation** – Those having significant concerns about criminal justice operations at any and all levels have the opportunity to engage in actively advocating for needed change. Uniting in voicing concerns strengthens voices and possibilities for change.

For more information on the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual National Prisoner's Family Conference program and registration go to : [info@prisonersfamilyconference.org](mailto:info@prisonersfamilyconference.org).



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

It's tax time. People are busy gathering their financial records and preparing to complete their tax forms. Now may be a good time to take a look at the deductions you claim. Many who itemize their deductions realize that by donating to charity, they can trim their tax bill next year.

Many non-profit organizations that provide programming and services to incarcerated parents and their families qualify as IRS approved charities — and they can use your help. Because these organizations are often small, targeted to a specific population and have low overhead, your donation will go a long way.

If you have read about a worthwhile Parenting Skills, Family Support, Mentoring, Parent/Child Literacy, or Re-Entry program in this newsletter or the *Prison Parenting Programs* resource directory that you would like to help, check with them to see if they are a registered 5.01(3)(c) non-profit organization. If they are, please consider making a donation.

**Jerry**

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

