

Parenting Connection

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New 'Connections' Video Series Highlights Child Abuse Prevention



CONNECTIONS
A Special Child Abuse Prevention
Month Video Series

April was National Child Abuse Prevention Month. To recognize this important month, FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) introduced *Connections*, a special National Child Abuse Prevention Month series of short videos. The videos were released on each of the five Wednesdays in April. To access the video presentations in the series, visit the FRIENDS website, <http://friendsnrc.org/connections>. Click on the date to see that week's videos.

FRIENDS is an acronym for Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service. CBCAP is a service of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. They are a federally mandated Training and Technical Assistance Provider for CBCAP led agencies.

FRIENDS is a program of the Chapel Hill Training and Outreach Program, Inc. in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Their service is provided through a coordinated effort with four other national organizations and initiatives with the aim of preventing child abuse and neglect and supporting families. The network of partners offers cutting edge services from leaders in the prevention field.

The Connections video series, a collaboration between the Children's Bureau and the National Child Abuse Prevention Partners, features presentations from 11 different organizations, focused around themes to help move the child maltreatment field forward to a greater emphasis on prevention.

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Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner, JooYeun Chang, kicked off the series with a live webinar on April 1, 2015 that discussed the important prevention components of the FY2016 President's Budget request for the Administration for Children and Families, as well as the many prevention resources/programs that the Children's Bureau offers.

Videos in the series include:

April 8, 2015

- *Connect the Dots: Building a Movement for Children and Families* – Prevent Child Abuse America, the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
- *Making Meaningful Connections* – The Child Welfare Information Gateway
- *Developing a National Strategy to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities* – The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities

April 15, 2015

- *Using Adverse Childhood Experiences Research to Prioritize Prevention* – the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
- *Connecting with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and the FRIENDS National Center* – The FRIENDS National Center for CBCAP

April 22, 2015

- *Early Experiences Matter: Preventing Child Maltreatment from the Start* – Zero to Three
- *Introduction to Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework* – The Center for the Study of Social Policy
- *Child Abuse Prevention to Trauma Treatment: Psychology Benefitting All Children and Families* – American Psychological Association

April 29, 2015

- *Healthy Communities, Strong Families, Safe and Healthy Children* – the National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
- *The Benefits of Infant Massage: For Babies, Parents, Communities and Society* - Infant Massage USA
- *Harnessing Mobile App Technology with the Period of PURPLE Crying to Prevent Abusive Head Trauma/Shaken Baby Syndrome* – The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome

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.



An innovative policy cited in *Fact Sheet #4* is the Milwaukee Prison Project. Aimed at temporarily reducing child support orders for incarcerated noncustodial parents, the Milwaukee Prison Project seeks to improve their child support payment upon release. An IRP evaluation of the project concludes that there is evidence of improvements in child support outcomes such as lower arrears at release and one year after release, greater likelihood of child support payments, higher payment amounts, and lower post-incarceration child support orders.

Poverty Fact Sheet #7: Life Beyond Bars: Children with an Incarcerated Parent

Life Beyond Bars: Children with an Incarcerated Parent examines the latest research findings concerning the effects of a parent's incarceration on children.

The U.S. incarceration rate has grown rapidly and consistently in the last three decades, tripling since 1980, with growth slowing only after 2010. The incarceration boom has resulted in, 2.7 million children in the United States having a parent in jail or prison. That is about 1 in every 28 minors. Black children are far more likely than white or Hispanic children to have a parent in prison, particularly if their parent didn't complete high school.

For many children, the impact of parental incarceration can be devastating:

- **Loss of Contact** – The vast majority of incarcerated mothers, and 30-40% of fathers behind bars, lived with their children prior to imprisonment.
- **Financial** – Even when fathers did not live with their child, many provided financial support prior to incarceration.
- **Family Changes** – Family members may be forced to take on different roles to care for the children. Sometimes, children may have to move in with extended family or a foster family.
- **Negative Family Dynamics** – Incarceration may magnify conditions which expose children to parental substance abuse, parental mental illness, conflicts with a parent, and harsh or punitive parenting practices.
- **Emotional Toll** – Children who have a parent behind bars often express negative feelings such as anger, guilt, or confusion about the incarceration. Exposure to correctional facilities when children visit their parents can sometimes cause emotional distress. Many caregivers don't know how to talk to children about their incarcerated parent, leaving the child to deal with a confusing, ambiguous loss without the support they need.

Compared to other children, children with an incarcerated parent are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, and physical health problems. Stresses at home put children at a higher risk to develop behavioral or mental health problems, including increased aggression, depression, and anxiety. They are also more likely to associate with delinquent peers, get into fights, skip school, have trouble concentrating, and to perform poorly in school. Children of incarcerated parents often face stigma at school from both teachers and peers, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation that contribute to their stress.

In this fact sheet, among the policies suggested by researchers to help children of incarcerated parents are:

- **Create Positive Visitation Experiences** – Child psychologists have suggested that incarceration facilities implement child-friendly visitation policies to decrease the stress of the correctional experience on the child. Suggestions include creating a positive, safe, and friendly environment for visits and preparing both parents and children for visits.
- **Defer Child Support Payments** – Usually, incarcerated parents can't pay child support while in prison and so they accrue debt, which they struggle to pay off when they are released. Deferring an incarcerated parent's child support payments until they are released may improve child support outcomes.



- Train Teachers – Training teachers how to support children with incarcerated parents can reduce stigma in the classroom and improve children’s learning outcomes.
- Reform Sentencing Policies – Some researchers have argued that incarcerating low-risk, nonviolent offenders isn’t as cost-effective as other forms of punishment. It may be more cost-effective to shorten mandatory minimum sentences and to reform “truth-in-sentencing” laws that prevent the possibility of parole for nonviolent crimes.

International Study Week on Children of Prisoners Bridges Cultures

The concern for children of incarcerated parents stretches beyond international borders. Three years ago Wells of Hope Ministries held its first International Study Week on Children of Prisoners. Each year since then the Study Week has grown. This year on June 22-27, 2015, the 4th International Study Week on Children of Prisoners will be held in Kampala, Uganda.

Over the past three years the Study Week has grown and caught the interest of academicians, social workers, criminologists, researchers, religious workers and practitioners working with children of prisoners. The goals of the Study Week are to educate participants about the effects of parental imprisonment, consolidate experiences, share new knowledge and skills, and discuss and jointly develop an Action Agenda for Children Whose Parents are in Prison. The Study Week also aims at promoting friendship, solidarity, and one spirit among people working with children whose parents are in prison from all over the world. The participants will appreciate the plight of children of prisoners from a global perspective. They will learn and contribute towards creative and effective solutions that can be undertaken.

The one week with Wells of Hope team will take participants to visit remote villages and isolated people, especially grandmothers, who care for the children of their children in prison. When the participants meet the families in the rural communities helped by Wells of Hope, they will be touched by their stories, motivated by their achievements and inspired to overcome the challenges in their own life and community.

Objectives and anticipated outcomes of the Study Week:

1. To bring together individuals and organizations involved in prisoners children’s work, and those who want to learn, so that they can network and learn from each other
2. To show case the work being done by Wells of Hope to mitigate the plight of children of prisoners and to help the participants to be inspired and learn from it
3. To educate participants about the effects of parental imprisonment and help them to appreciate the plight of children of prisoners and the creative and effective solutions that can be undertaken
4. To raise awareness, lobby and advocate for children affected by the imprisonment of their parents
5. To exchange information with others who are involved in activities similar to those of Wells of Hope
6. To learn from professionals involved in the study and work of children of prisoners
7. To gather more ideas on how we can help the children better themselves
8. To bring the plight of children of prisoners on a global perspective and arrive at effective solutions to address the problem of children of prisoners worldwide
9. To mobilize support and form more partnerships to support the Wells of Hope work
10. To build lasting friendships and networks

For more information on the International Study Week on Children of Prisoners visit <http://studyweek.org> or email info@studyweek.org or ssuubi@wellssofhope.org.

To join CEA go to: www.ceanational.org



Prison Family Bill of Rights

A Coalition of prison family members and representatives of secular and faith based organizations serving prison families from across the United States in attendance at the 2012 National Prisoner's Family Conference drafted the Prison Family Bill of Rights. The Bill was affirmed and adopted by attendees at the 2013 conference, as follows:

The Prison Family has the right to

- be treated with respect and dignity by any and all representatives of the prison system at all times.
- expect and be assured the utmost care is established and maintained to provide a healthy and safe living environment that promotes effective rehabilitation, reintegration and parole planning throughout a loved one's incarceration.
- be treated and integrated as a positive resource in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration preparation and parole planning of an incarcerated loved one.
- receive consistency in the enforcement of rules, regulations and policies affecting a loved one's incarceration.
- receive consistency in the enforcement of rules, regulations and/or policies affecting visitation and/or all forms of communication with an incarcerated loved one.
- be informed in a timely, clear, forthright and respectful manner of any changes in rules, regulations and/or policies affecting visitation and/or communication with an incarcerated loved one.
- be informed within 24 hours and in a compassionate manner regarding the illness; injury and/or death of an incarcerated loved one.
- extended visitation during the hospitalization of an incarcerated loved one.
- be informed within 24 hours of the security status change and/or transfer of an incarcerated loved one to a new facility.
- be provided specific written and evidence-based reasons for a loved one's security status change, clemency denial and/or parole denial.
- have their incarcerated loved one housed within a distance from their permanent address that provides reasonable access for visitation and/or to facilitate serving as a resource in the rehabilitation and reintegration preparation and parole planning of their incarcerated loved one.
- be provided the current specific name or names and direct phone numbers of prison officials to contact for questions about their incarcerated loved one.

The term "Prison Family" is herein defined as including, but not limited to a blood or adopted relation, spouse, domestic partner and/or trusted friend designated by an incarcerated person upon or during a period of confinement as one who will serve as an outside contact on his or her behalf for the relaying of any communication regarding the medical and mental health, security status and location of the incarcerated person and/or for making critical decisions on behalf of the incarcerated person in the event of his or her incapacitation.

For a printable copy of the Prison Family Bill of Rights, e-mail info@prisonersfamilyconference.org.

Need Help?

Do you have any questions or need some advice on starting or improving your parenting classes, parent/child literacy program, or parent support group for offenders?

We have an email list of experienced parenting educators who are eager to help. Just send an email to jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com with your question or request and I will forward it to our email list. Then wait a few days and the helping responses will be sent to you.



Who Gets this Newsletter?

Distribution of the CEA-Wisconsin and Parenting Connection newsletters continues to expand while we are making changes to save paper and postage.

The CEA-Wisconsin Board has decided to email electronic copies of the newsletters to everyone on our distribution list. Paper copies will only be sent to those specially requesting them. If you like to request paper copies email jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com.

We will still make additional paper copies for distribution at the various conference workshops we present, speaking engagements we do for classes and community groups, and resource fairs where we exhibit.

The CEA-Wisconsin Board sees the newsletters, not only as a benefit to CEA members, but also as a means to:

- Promote the value of correctional education with government agencies and the public
- Provide a vehicle for educators to stay informed about developments in correctional education
- Provide an avenue for correctional educators to share ideas with their colleagues
- Recruit new CEA members

Each bi-monthly issue of the CEA-Wisconsin and Parenting Connection newsletters are emailed to over 700 people interested in correctional education and prison parenting programs including:

- DAI teachers, guidance counselors, librarians and education directors
- DJS teachers, guidance counselors, librarians and education directors
- County jail teachers, volunteers and administrators
- WTCS and DPI teachers who work in county jails and detention centers
- WRC and SRSTC teachers, guidance counselors, librarians and education directors
- DOC Central Office staff
- Wisconsin individuals and organizations providing services for incarcerated parents and their children
- National individuals and organizations providing services for incarcerated parents and their children
- Literacy organization staff and volunteers

Both the CEA-Wisconsin and Parenting Connection newsletters are also posted on these websites:

- www.ceawisconsin.org
- www.ceanational.org
- www.fairshake.net

If you know of others who would be interested in receiving the CEA-Wisconsin and Parenting Connection newsletters, send their names and email addresses to: jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com.

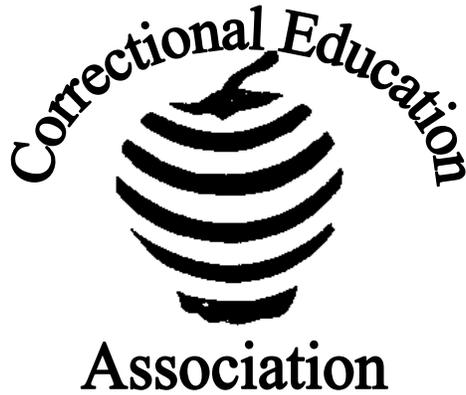
National Stats on Children and Incarcerated Parents

- More than 2.7 million children in the U.S. have an incarcerated parent
- Approximately 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives
- One in 9 African American children (11.4%), 1 in 28 Hispanic children (3.5%), and 1 in 57 white children (1.8%) in the United States have an incarcerated parent
- Nationally, there are more than 120,000 incarcerated mothers and 1.1 million incarcerated fathers who are parents with minor children (ages 0-17)

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts, Pew Center on the States (2010)



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Editor's Message:

On April 15th, Mary Pohlman, teacher at Kettle Moraine Institution; Maria Stevens of Fresh Start Family Services; Jan Walker, retired teacher from Washington State and author of *Parenting from a Distance*; and I appeared on the Fresh Start Today radio show on WNOV in Milwaukee. The show, hosted by Fresh Start Executive Director Jermaine Reed, focuses on issues relating to foster parenting.

The invitation for us to appear on the show demonstrates the variety of living arrangements that the children of prisoners have. When a father is incarcerated, primary care of his children is provided by the mother in 88% of the cases, by grandparents or other relatives 17% of the time, and foster parents or agencies 2% of the time. When a mother is incarcerated, care of her children is provided by the father in 37% of the cases, by grandparents or other relatives 67% of the time, and foster parents or agencies 11% of the time.

When support for the children of incarcerated parents is discussed, we must develop programs and strategies that can be used by caretakers in each of these living environments.

Jerry

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

