

Including Children in the Domestic Violence Conversation

Identifying, Serving, and Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents

**North Carolina Coalition
Against Domestic Violence**
May 2016



Background

- Who are we
- How we ended up here today
- Approach
 - child safety = #1
 - community
 - corrections
 - what's in the child's best interest?



What We've Learned*

- **Data**
- **Awareness**
- **Impacts**
- **Services**
 - “here” doesn't necessarily mean “there”
 - “The Services” for “Those Children”

** and continue to learn!*

Sesame Street

Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration



© 2013 Sesame Workshop - Photo by Gil Vaknin

Have you heard about the new Sesame Street in Communities initiative for children of incarcerated parents?

To learn more, go to their website: sesamestreet.org/incarceration or contact us at ourchildrensplace@gmail.com or (919) 904-4286.

So Why Do We Need This Conversation in North Carolina?

- Don't often talk about folks going to prison
 - Overlook children/families left behind
 - Parenting from prison
 - Re-entry
 - Possible impacts on children and families
 - Messages
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Why This Conversation?

- National (Pew, 2010)
 - US - 2.7 million children with a parent in prison/jail
 - 1 in 28 children
 - North Carolina - 26,985 (3.9%)
 - A.E. Casey report
 - Let's talk about data!
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What Does This Mean For The Children?

- Financial/resource instability, material hardship
 - Instability in family relationships/restructure
 - School: behavior, performance, attendance
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What Does This Mean For The Children?

- Shame, stigma, “conspiracy of silence”
 - Fear, anxiety (separation anxiety), worry
 - Feelings:
 - loss/grief
 - anger
 - abandonment
 - sadness
 - guilt
 - uncertainty/confusion
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What Does This Mean For The Children?

- Trauma
 - ACEs
 - Cycle of incarceration?
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Factors To Consider

- Child's age, stage of development
- Family's emotional atmosphere (pre/post)
- How remaining parent/caregiver is dealing
- What else is going on

Factors To Consider

- How disruptive of everyday life the arrest/incarceration is
- Quality of child-parent relationship pre-incarceration; mother v. father
- Nature of crime, length of sentence
- Outside support systems available to family

Parent-Child Relationships

- define/ develop/ maintain/ support
 - visitation
 - letter writing
 - use of technology
 - potential impact on **recidivism**
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Barriers

- lack of awareness
 - children don't know the truth
 - lack of transportation
 - cost of phone calls and travel
 - relationship with caregivers
 - prison visitation space and/or schedule
 - parent doesn't want the child to visit
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What Else We've Learned

- Caregiver support
 - Transportation
 - Parent in federal system/another state
 - Parent also facing deportation
 - Jail visitation
 - Parent in juvenile detention
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So What Can You Do?

- Continue the conversation in your organization (let us know if we can help!)
 - Know what's available, not available, no longer available, should be available
 - Language
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So What Can You Do?

- Pass along the Bill of Rights
 - Identify who else should be part of the conversation
 - Identify children with incarcerated parents and offer resources and support
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So What Can You Do?

- Acknowledge own feelings
 - Learn more; all the answers?
 - Ask questions
 - Staff awareness
 - Resources in library/ on bookshelves
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So What Can You Do?

- Include parents in activities . . . be creative!
 - Be willing to listen to a child
 - what does the child know
 - other tough issues
 - Other services?
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Resources *

- Sesame Street (sign-up sheet)
- The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated,
<http://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>
- Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind,
<http://www.arkansasvoices.org/>
- The Osborne Association's New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents,
<http://www.osborneny.org/>

** please share if you know others!*

Resources *

- Service Network for Children of Inmates (FL), <http://www.childrenofinmates.org/>
- San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, <http://www.sfcipp.org/>
- The Center for Community Transitions, <http://www.centerforcommunitytransitions.org/>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation, <http://www.aecf.org/>

** please share if you know others!*

Resources *

- Straight Talk Support Group, www.straighttalksupportgroup.org
- Center for Child and Family Health, www.ccfhnc.org
- Bill of Rights – handout, DVD

** please share if you know others!*

Questions? Thoughts?

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