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!
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
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!
What Does This Mean For The Children?

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

- Trauma
- ACEs
- Cycle of incarceration?
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
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
What Else We’ve Learned

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

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

* 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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