

# Service Team for Children of Inmates in Miami-Dade County

## Needs Assessment and Operational Plan Summary



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Planning Effort Funded by  
The Children's Trust of Miami-Dade



Justice & Security Strategies, Inc and team partners were funded by The Children's Trust to plan the Service Partnership. The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.

# Needs Assessment and Operation Plan Summary: Children of Incarcerated Parents in Miami-Dade County

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March 2007

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that 721,500 state and Federal prisoners were parents to 1,498,800 children under the age of 18. Those numbers represented an increase of about 500,000 children over figures provided less than one decade earlier, in 1991 (Mumola 2000). According to Bernstein (2005), by 2004, nearly 2.4 million children had parents who were incarcerated in jails and state or Federal prisons.

We estimate that more than 15,000 Miami-Dade County children are counted among them. Like many other children, children of incarcerated parents enter social service systems for reasons of poverty, learning deficits, or misbehavior. But unlike other children, their core problem – the practical and emotional cost of having a parent in prison – is rarely addressed there. We now know that such a child is seven times more likely than his or her peers to be incarcerated, as well.

Parental incarceration has consequences for children; consequences that too often go unacknowledged. Every time a parent is sentenced to prison, children begin serving time. Their punishment is to be wrapped in feelings of shame and worthlessness, to wonder if a similar fate is in store for them, to live with the anger, hurt, worry, and grief of losing and blaming a loved one, to lose touch with the simple pleasures of learning and growing, and to suffer emotional withdrawal, social isolation, loneliness, and grieving. Older family members are also affected, as they shoulder new financial and caretaking responsibilities – or in some cases, abandon them.

We know that familial violence is carried forward, parent-to-child, for perpetrators and for victims. We know that without corrective intervention, welfare dependence often spans generations. Criminal behavior and incarceration are also intergenerational occurrences, with serious consequences. Statistics from Miami-Dade County alone are stunning: More than 15,000 children have parents in jails and state prisons. More than half of the county's 20,400 adults now on probation or parole likely are parents, and a six percent annual increase in incarcerated adults is predicted.

How can this be turned around? We present a program model developed through a planning grant from the Children's Trust. With that grant, the team:

- Collected new knowledge and data on the status of Miami-Dade County's children of inmates.
- Examined the literature in order to better understand the characteristics and probable needs of such children and their caregivers.
- Reached out to the county's youth, caregivers, and incarcerated parents to begin the dialogue about the impacts of incarceration and to hear their needs.
- Engaged in discussions with stakeholders from local social service and community organizations and the criminal justice system, raising our collective awareness of the dilemmas and needs of children of inmates and beginning to form a network of service providers.
- Reviewed studies of model service programs and "best practices," as a resource pool of ideas and guidance.

As a result of this work, we now know more about the difficult challenges faced by children of inmates in Miami-Dade, including the lack of awareness and shortage of services tailored to their needs. This needs assessment discusses our findings and outlines a plan for providing services for the children whose life experience includes the incarceration of a significant family member.

Overall we hope to develop and implement a Service Partnership dedicated to helping children of incarcerated parents through direct services, and by supporting the caregivers, service providers, grassroots organizations, community members, and other stakeholders who want to care for them. The Partnership will facilitate the introduction of quality, evidence-based practices, programs, and services into the Miami-Dade service network, driven by and responsive to the needs of such children. With the assets of its current partners and strategic expansion to include other appropriate organizations, delivery of the Partnership's wide array of services will be coordinated with an intake and assessment process, individualized case plans, facilitated referrals, and co-location of services.

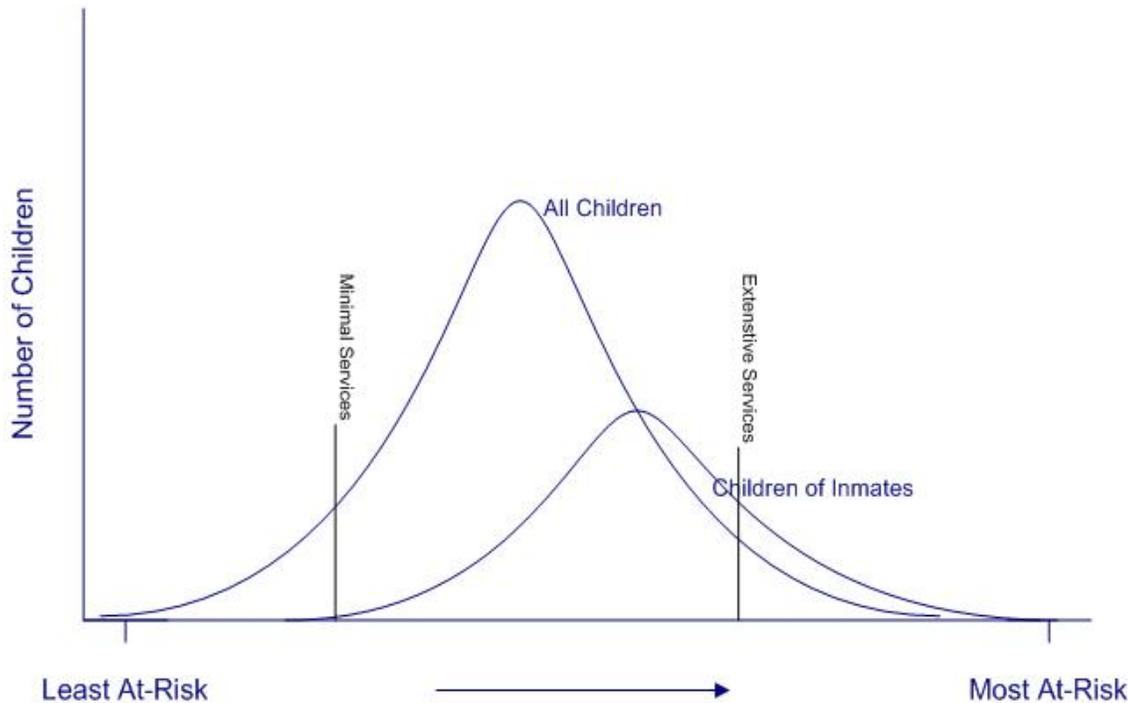
## **Statement of the Problem**

Children of incarcerated parents are a subset of American children at risk. They are overlooked both in the criminal justice system and in social service circles, even as their numbers spike upward along with the numbers of adults who are being imprisoned.

We assert that children of inmates are more at risk than many others. Research has shown that children of incarcerated parents are at higher risk for delinquency and other antisocial behaviors. Within the subset, it is likely that risk varies among children of inmates.

When examining the population of all U.S. children, one expects to see a bell curve distribution of levels of risk. Put differently, some children are less at-risk (the left side of the curve) and some are more at-risk (the right side of the curve), with the majority, in the center, being in between. When the bell curve for children of inmates is superimposed over the bell curve for all children, we see the entire distribution curve shift to the right, from start to end, toward the “higher-risk zone.” We assume that for the subset of children of inmates, there is also a normal distribution (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Normal Distribution of At-Risk Children and Normal Distribution of At-Risk Children of Inmates**



However, the challenge lies less in acknowledging their needs than in simply overcoming the barriers to locating and identifying these children. Once they are found, we need to connect them with reliable sources of help, to prove the effectiveness of interventions designed to minimize harm, to equip them to manage their difficult circumstances, and to prepare them to claim a better future.

**What We Know and Don’t Know: The Number of American Children with Incarcerated Parents**

As mentioned above, the Justice Department has estimated that in 1999, 721,500 parents of about 1.5 million minor children were incarcerated. Stated another way, of the nation’s 72 million minor children, 2.1 percent had a parent in state or Federal prison (Mumola 2000). Some additional facts on the issue:

- Imprisoned parents were predominantly male (93 percent) and held in state prisons (89 percent).
- State and Federal prisons held an estimated 667,900 fathers and 53,600 mothers.
- Among state and Federal prisoners with children under 18, Blacks comprised the largest racial/ethnic group.
- In state prisons, 49 percent of parents were Black, 29 percent were White, and 19 percent were Hispanic. In Federal prisons, 44 percent were Black, 30 percent were Hispanic, and 22 percent were White.
- Of parents in state prison, 23 percent said that they were currently married, 28 percent were divorced or separated, and 48 percent claimed never to have been married.
- More than 70 percent of parents in state prison reported not having a high school diploma.

Of state prison inmates, fewer than half who were parents reported having lived with their minor children prior to incarceration; mothers were more likely to have done so than fathers. About 64 percent of mothers in state prison and 84 percent in Federal prison said that they had lived with their minor children, versus 44 percent and 55 percent of fathers, respectively. Asked who now cared for their children, more than 80 percent reported that their children were living with the other parent. About 20 percent said that grandparents and other relatives were caring for the children, and about 2 percent reportedly had one or more children living in a foster home, agency, or institution.

Most parents in state (80 percent) and Federal prisons (93 percent) reported having had some contact with their children since incarceration by telephone, mail, or personal visits. State inmates said they had exchanged letters (69 percent), talked on the phone (58 percent), or received a personal visit (43 percent). Mothers were more likely than fathers to report monthly contact with their children (78 percent of mothers, 62 percent of fathers).

The 1999 report represents the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Justice on the status of incarcerated parents and their children in state and Federal prisons. No one to our knowledge has determined how many incarcerated parents are in county or local jails, and thus we cannot estimate how many children are affected by this type of imprisonment. Mumola has communicated on the issue with Bernstein (2005) by email, estimating that as of 2004, some 2.4 million children had a parent in jail, state, or Federal prison.

## **Incarcerated Parents of Miami-Dade Children**

We estimate that in Miami-Dade County, 15,300 children have parents incarcerated in local jails and state prisons. We base these estimates on data provided by the Florida Department of Corrections (FLDOC) and extrapolations from the national data. FLDOC estimated that 8,200 of the state's inmates were from Miami-Dade County: 7,888 (96 percent) males and 312 (4 percent) females. National estimates indicated that 44 percent of male inmates and 64 percent of female inmates were parents.

We estimate that about 3,500 of the males and 200 of the females from Miami-Dade County who are now in state prisons are likely to have children. To estimate the number of children, we multiply the number of males and females by the average number of children for each (2.04 and 2.40, respectively), based on national estimates. Doing the math, we find that  $2.04 \times 3,500 = 7,128$  and  $2.40 \times 200 = 480$ ; the resulting numbers suggest that about 7,608 of the county's resident children are likely to have parents incarcerated in the Florida's state prisons.

Within the jail system, Miami-Dade correctional facilities house approximately 7,000 inmates who are awaiting trial or serving sentences of 364 days or less. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest jail system in the United States. Unfortunately, a breakdown of inmates by gender is not available, and no official data exists on the number of Miami-Dade County jail inmates with children. For our purposes, we assumed that the statistics probably mirror those of the state prison population. We conservatively estimate that 55 percent of jail inmates have children, with an average of 2.0 children per parent. Using these estimates, we believe that 3,850 parents with more than 7,700 children are detained or incarcerated in the county jail.

Because little public information is available about the characteristics of the jail population, one of the objectives of the Service Partnership is to obtain reliable, valid data from Miami-Dade Correctional Facilities.

## **Information from the Florida Department of Corrections**

**Age.** Of nearly 8,000 male inmates from Miami-Dade County who are committed to state prisons, almost 7,000 are between the ages of 19 and 50; 3,500 are between the ages of 19 and 35. Twenty-six inmates are 18 years old or younger. Of 312 female inmates from Miami-Dade County, 277 are between the ages of 19 and 50, and 235 are between the ages of 19 and 35; one is less than 18 years old.

**Personal and family characteristics.** Information is not readily available about the personal and family characteristics of inmates in Florida. Nationally, studies have shown that male offenders typically come from single-parent homes and have a family member who has been incarcerated. About one in seven was raised by other relatives, and 17 percent spent some time in a foster care setting (Gabel & Johnston 1995). According to the same source, "the typical female offender comes from a broken or single-parent home

in which other family members have been incarcerated. About one in five women offenders have spent time in a foster home or institution as a child, and one in three has attempted suicide.”

**Education.** The most recent data on education levels of Florida inmates are from the FY 2004-05 Annual Report of the Florida Department of Corrections: 69.5 percent of newly admitted inmates and 62.7 percent of current inmates scored at less than a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade literacy level.

**Offenses.** Most prison inmates have been convicted of a violent primary offense such as murder, sexual assault, robbery or arson. According to the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Florida Department of Corrections, drug crimes accounted for the greatest number of new admissions (30 percent) followed closely by violent crimes including murder, sexual assault, robbery, arson, and others (29.8 percent).

Looking more closely at male offenders who were likely to be parents of Miami-Dade children, we examined the conviction charges of 6,900 male offenders committed from Miami-Dade between the ages of 19 and 50. (Note that offenders are often convicted of multiple charges when considering the following data.) Almost 2,500 of these offenders were incarcerated with a drug offense conviction. More than 3,400 had a robbery charge conviction and more than 3,300 had assault charge convictions. Almost 1,700 had convictions for a murder charge; 1,375 had been convicted of a weapons charge. Among women with the same characteristics, 116 were incarcerated with drug offense convictions, 112 with assault charge convictions, and 86 with robbery charge convictions. Fifty-eight were convicted of murder; 17 were serving life sentences. Nineteen were convicted of weapons charges.

**Sentencing.** The 2004-05 Annual Report of the Florida Department of Corrections states that more than two thirds (67.2 percent) of offenders admitted to prison during FY 2004-05 were sentenced to three years or less. However, the average sentence length of current inmates is 14.6 years; the median sentence length is seven years. For inmates with a primary offense of murder or manslaughter, the average sentence length was 35.6 years; the average age at offense was 27.6 years. (Sentences of life, death, and more than 50 years were each counted as 50 years for these calculations.) The average sentence length for other primary offense groups was 21.5 years for sexual offenses, 19.5 years for robbery, and 12.0 years for burglary.

**Recidivism.** The Florida Department of Corrections states that the official recidivism rate is 18 percent. However, many offenders (44 percent) admitted to the Florida prison system in FY 2004-05 had been in the system before; that number has risen slightly over this past year. Nearly 21 percent had been in a Florida prison once before, 10 percent had been in twice before, and almost eight percent had been in four or more times.

**Parent-Child Contact.** We have yet to obtain systematic information about parent-child contacts. We know that five Florida Department of Corrections facilities are located in

Miami-Dade County, and they house more than 5,000 prisoners. We are currently analyzing the location of the majority of prisoners committed from Miami-Dade; many are housed out-of-county, in facilities located throughout the state.

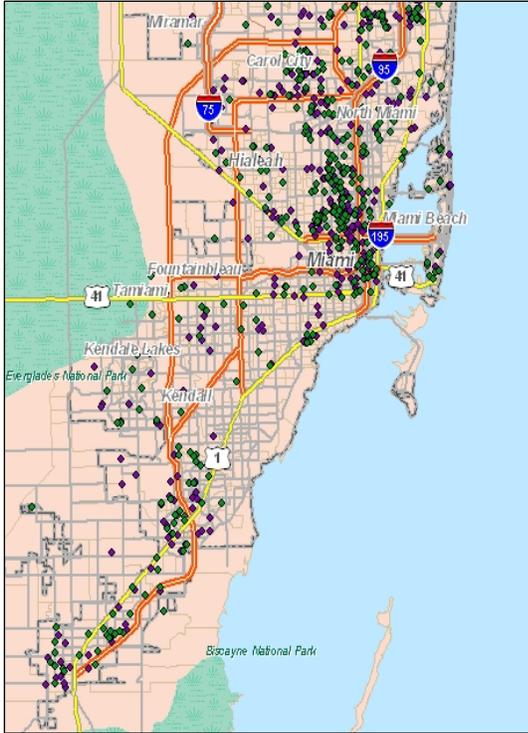


Figure 2

We have broad, aggregate information about inmates in FLDOC facilities, but we are far from being able to identify inmate parents and their children. A systematic method for identifying these individuals does not currently exist within the criminal justice or social service systems.

**Re-entry Locations.** Approximately 2,300 inmates were scheduled for release into Miami-Dade County during 2006. To develop a proxy dataset for determining households that are likely to include children of inmates, we are analyzing the self-reported addresses of those inmates. For example, between September and December 2005, 879 offenders were released into Miami-Dade County, into the areas shown on the map in Figure 2.

A second map, figure 2, offers insight into the economic conditions faced by re-entering offenders and their families. Plotting release addresses with poverty data from the Census Bureau, we can easily see that many offenders are returning to their communities with limited resources for support.

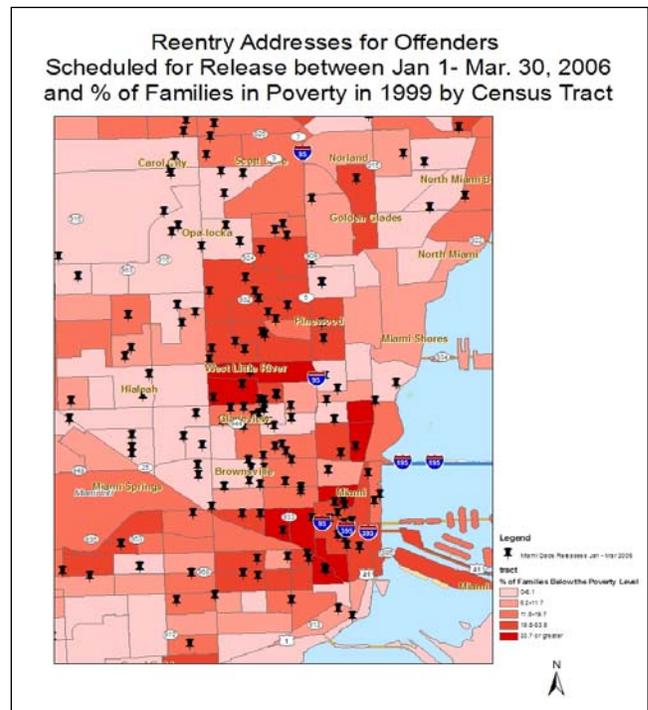


Figure 3

## **Perspectives from the Literature: Impact of Parental Incarceration on Families and Children**

Over the past dozen years, a number of studies have examined the impact of parental incarceration on families and children. Most notable are Gabel and Johnston (1995), Eddy and Reid (2002), Parke and Clarke-Stewart (2002), Petersilia (2003), Braman (2004), Bernstein (2005), Travis (2005), and Farrington and Welsh (2007).

For our purposes, the most useful of these studies is Parke and Clarke-Stewart (2002). It provides a framework for understanding the impact of incarceration on children. The policy needs that it outlines mirror those from our own findings based on interviews and focus groups in Miami-Dade County. In our needs assessment, we rely primarily on Parke and Clarke-Stewart, adding insights from the other studies where relevant.

We adopt from Parke and Clarke-Stewart the notion that “incarceration is not a single or discrete event, but a dynamic process that unfolds over time” (p. 3). By looking at the impact of incarceration on children as a process, we are better able to understand how and when incarceration affects them. The three stages in the process of incarceration from children’s perspectives include (1) arrest and immediate separation, (2) incarceration and parental unavailability, and (3) the effects of reunion after incarceration.

**Stage 1 - Arrest and immediate separation.** Gabel and Johnston (1995) describe the trauma of arrest that affects children of any age. They relate that one in five children is present during the time of arrest and witnesses the parent being taken away by authorities. More than half of the children who witness this event are under seven years of age and are left in the sole care of their mother. Parke and Clarke-Stewart (2002) refer to Jose-Kampfner’s study in which 30 children witnessed their mothers’ arrests and suffered nightmares and flashbacks to the arrest incident.

There is controversy among experts about how much information to provide to children after a parent’s arrest. Some argue that explanations should be minimized to protect the child, while others argue that nondisclosure is harmful and exacerbates distress when the child is lied to or left to wonder about his/her parent’s whereabouts. This is often referred to as a “conspiracy of silence” or “forced silence” that can raise even greater anxiety in the child.

**Stage 2 - Incarceration and parental unavailability.** This is the most complex stage of the incarceration process. It includes issues related to the developmental level of the child (infancy through young adulthood), the effects on the incarcerated parent and family unit, and whether or not programs within the criminal justice and social service systems meet the families’ needs.

Travis (2005) states that:

[t]heir children must come to terms with the reality of an absent parent, the stigma of parental imprisonment, and an altered support system... In addition, in those communities where incarceration rates are high, the experience of having a mother or father in prison is now quite commonplace, with untold consequences for foster care systems, multigenerational households, social service delivery, community norms, childhood development, and parenting patterns.

Race and ethnicity must also be considered at this stage. Disparities exist in that about seven percent of African American and three percent of Hispanic children have parents in prison, compared with one percent of Caucasian children. Most of the children left behind are young. Sixty percent are under age 10, the average age being eight years (Travis, 2005: 130).

According to Travis, most prisoners are parents whose loss has significance for one or more children. The child's experience of separation from a mother may differ from the experience of separation from a father. Children may also be affected differently depending on whether or not the parent lived with them prior to incarceration, although non-custodial parents are still very often significant in the child's life. Regardless of gender or family structure, most imprisoned parents did, in some way, contribute to the emotional, social, and financial support of their children; 71 percent of incarcerated parents reported having had full- or part-time employment prior to arrest (p. 125).

Anthropologist Donald Braman's book, *Doing Time on the Outside: Incarceration and Family Life in Urban America* (2004), examines the impacts of incarceration on children and other non-offending family members. He follows several families in Washington D.C. over a period of 4 years, exploring what happens to individuals and their ties and support networks as a result of imprisonment.

Braman's family case studies underscore the broken links among extended family and friends that result from incarceration and, like Travis, he reports on the particular impacts on children. He points out that for children and adults alike, shame and the stigma of imprisonment isolate non-offending family members from friends and co-workers who otherwise would be sources of social, emotional, and even material support. He suggests that in looking for answers, we ask not merely how to punish or deter offenders, but "how to encourage and strengthen the bonds that make families possible, give life to community, and ultimately determine the character of our community as a whole." Snapshots, as he calls them, of offenders' families give insight into the kinds of interventions that might be useful, although Braman's focus remains on broad policies and their impacts.

The impact of incarceration varies depending upon the age and developmental level of the child (Parke & Clarke-Stewart 2002). A small number of women are actually

pregnant during incarceration; few prisons will allow mothers to keep infants with them during their stay. In most cases, mothers of newborns are permitted only a few days of contact before returning to prison. As a result, the bonding and attachment between mother and baby is interrupted very early, often resulting in a child with behavioral and emotional problems later in life. For young children ages 2-6, the disruption of incarceration could lead to other adverse outcomes – poor peer relationships, diminished cognitive abilities, or emotional and psychological problems (Parke & Clarke-Stewart 2002).

School-age children experience school-related problems including poor grades or temporary instances of aggression (Sack et al. 1976). Stanton also found school problems – 70 percent of 166 children of incarcerated mothers showed poor academic performance and some (five percent) exhibited classroom behavior problems. Teasing and ostracism also may occur (Jose-Kampfner 1991), and as children reach adolescence, suspension and dropout rates rise.

For the child to adjust during the period of incarceration, alternative caregiving arrangements and opportunities to maintain the parent-child relationship must be considered.

Gender of the incarcerated parent is an important determinant in alternate care arrangement. For incarcerated fathers, the mother becomes the caregiver. When mothers are incarcerated, grandmothers often assume responsibility for child care (Mumola 2000). Despite familial caregiving, there may be difficulties in these relationships. Grandparents may face emotional, physical, and financial challenges in raising grandchildren. There might also be a strain between the grandparent and child's parent due to complex emotions such as resentment, anger, and guilt.

The second adjustment is that of maintaining a relationship between the incarcerated parent and the child. In some cases, neither party cares to maintain contact. In other cases, regular contact is difficult to maintain because of policies or obstacles inherent in visitation, telephone usage, and rules. Families with limited resources have difficulty traveling long distances to prisons and paying for collect calls from the parent in prison. The prison environment itself is anxiety-provoking for children; their time with the parent is spent in child-unfriendly visiting rooms, where they endure a lack of privacy and observe the harsh treatment of older visitors by correctional staff.

Nonetheless, children who visit their parents more often and under better visiting conditions exhibit fewer adjustment problems (Petersilia 2003). Visiting can calm children's fear about their parents' welfare, as well as their concerns about the parents' feelings toward them.

**Stage 3 - Effects of reunion after incarceration.** Reentry into society has become a major issue in corrections over the past 10 years. Travis (2005) sheds light on the magnitude of the problem, as unprecedented numbers of men and women have been

incarcerated under the sentencing reforms of the past 30 years; and, having completed their sentences, now are reentering the lives of their families and communities. They are often reentering unsupervised, without guidance in overcoming old or new obstacles to making the transition a successful one.

Travis notes difficulties associated with reintegrating the formerly incarcerated parent into his or her family, unsupported. He describes the kinds of community actions needed to mitigate damage, should justice systems address family impacts during conviction, incarceration, and reentry, and should communities embrace the concept of care for these children:

If communities embraced a mandate to support the families of incarcerated community members, a broad consortium of community agencies would be called upon to meet the mandate. Schools would need to offer counseling to children at critical stages in the criminal justice process. Foster care agencies would have to ascertain whether a parent in prison would serve as a suitable parent upon release before moving for the termination of parental rights. Youth-serving organizations would need to help young people with family members in the justice system work through feelings of shame, anger, confusion and denial. Government would have to fund a network of nonprofit agencies ... to provide the supportive environment where children could talk to their parents over video links or Internet connections. In addition, at the point of reentry, organizations ... would need to be deployed to support the family networks that struggle to absorb the reality of a family member's return (p. 148).

Organizing this effort, Travis goes on to say, would take community-wide coalitions, strong support from local governments, and partnerships with state correction agencies that shared the coalitions' goal:

...to recognize the important role that families can play in successful reintegration, to minimize the harm experienced by the children of incarcerated parents, and to promote strong and healthy families for each prisoner (p. 149).

## **Other Impacts on Children of Parental Incarceration**

Criminological research has shown that having an antisocial parent or parents (those who lie, steal, disobey, and engage in violence) is one of the strongest predictors of violence or serious delinquency in adolescence and youth adulthood. Lipsey and Derzon (1998) found that youth with the most antisocial parent(s) were three to six times more likely to exhibit violent or serious delinquency than youth with the least antisocial parents. The authors estimated that from 15 to 20 percent of youth with the most antisocial parents would become delinquent, and from 47 to 62 percent of all who became delinquent

would have at least one antisocial parent. In contrast, from 94 to 96 percent of those without an antisocial parent would not become delinquent, and from 77 to 78 percent of those who did not become delinquent would not have an antisocial parent. These percentages indicated that parental criminality is an important risk factor for adolescent antisocial behavior.

*Saving Children from a Life of Crime* (Farrington & Welsh 2007) examines decades of rigorous studies about the early risk factors for offending. Citing classic longitudinal surveys by Joan McCord (1977) and Lee Robins (1978), it found that criminal parents tended to have delinquent and antisocial children. To explain why, the authors described “six possible explanations (not mutually exclusive) for why offending tended to be concentrated in certain families and transmitted from one generation to the next” (Farrington et al. 2001):

1. Transmission of offending is part of a larger cycle of deprivation and antisocial behavior.
2. Assortative mating -- female offenders tend to cohabit with or marry male offenders.
3. Direct and mutual influences of family members on each other, although there is no evidence that parents directly encourage their children to commit crimes or teach them criminal techniques.
4. Environmental mechanisms: Arrested fathers tend to impregnate young women, to live in bad neighborhoods, and to use poor child-rearing methods, such as harsh or erratic discipline.
5. Genetic mechanisms, the important question being how genetic potential interacts with environment to produce offending behavior.
6. Official (police and court) bias against known criminal families.

Beyond exploring risk factors for embarking on a life of crime, including having criminal parents, Farrington and Welsh go on to examine what works best to prevent offending at the individual, family, and community levels.

Much of our focus above has been on the direct effects of incarceration on children, but a large subset of these children have been exposed to pre-incarceration parental and environmental risk factors, as well – addictions, financial and familial instability, caregiver stress, failing schools, and resource-poor communities, as examples. These risk factors must also be considered in assessing their needs (Johnson 2006; Adalist-Estrin 2006).

Although children with incarcerated parents are not often singled out for specific interventions, they are nonetheless likely to be present in significant numbers in social service systems. They are in schools, clinics, and youth agencies, whether we recognize them or not. Nearly half of the seven million children with parents under some kind of correctional supervision are nearing adolescence (Travis, Cincotta, & Solomon 2003). Adalist-Estrin notes that we can expect these youth and their families to be present in nearly all of the nation's programs and services for youth at some time in the next decade; their circumstances and lives will be both similar and diverse (2006). She points out:

Their needs are both obvious and hidden. Their experiences are likely to include loss, prejudice, and trauma. Their ranks will include scholars and truants; the reclusive, the reckless, and the resourceful. There will be those who successfully navigate the stormy waters of their lives, those who struggle, and those who are drowning in a sea of chaos and despair.

Responding to their needs, she says, will challenge us, but many youth-serving agencies can and will identify and respond to those needs. "Children of incarcerated parents are indeed children of promise. They need communities that will promise to support them as they journey into adulthood" (2006).

### **Perspectives from Miami-Dade County: Interviews and Focus Groups**

In addition to statistics, the team engaged in a number of interviews within the Miami-Dade community to gain perspective on the impact of incarcerated parents on their children. We conducted interviews within the community of incarcerated parents and youth and caregivers. Conducting the interviews was complicated. Youth were reluctant to participate at any level, and youth and caregivers resisted participating in focus groups as they considered their issues were a private matter. We were successful in interviewing two incarcerated individuals, a male and a female, two caregivers, and three youth. In the paragraphs that follow, we describe the highlights from these meetings and interviews.

**Incarcerated father.** We conducted an interview with a 38-year old Caucasian male offender who was three years into an eight-year sentence for drug possession and selling offenses. He is the father of two children, a girl, age 11, and a boy, age nine. The inmate's parents have responsibility for the children. The whereabouts of his ex-wife, the children's mother, are unknown to him; he surmised that since she was involved with drugs, she may have left the Miami area to pursue drugs and possibly prostitution.

The offender stated that his parents are wonderful people whom he has hurt in many ways. He stated that he wants to make up to them for the sacrifices they are making in taking care of his children while he is incarcerated. When asked about his children's feelings about his being in prison, he said that he has talked with

them about this, and that they feel abandoned, first by their mother, then by him. He related that even so, the children feel safe and protected by his parents. When the children visit, he said that they cry when they leave and that hurts him deeply. The offender's parents conveyed that they hope he has learned a lesson from this whole "sordid incident" and that when he is released, he will come home and make a home for his children.

**Incarcerated mother.** We also interviewed a female African American female offender (VL) who was eight months into a two-year sentence for assault and drug related charges. She is the mother of a two-year old daughter. As a child, she was physically and sexually abused. The offender was also the daughter of an incarcerated parent; her father was in and out of prison while she was growing up. While pregnant, VL was arrested and placed in a drug treatment program. The baby was born while she was there. She graduated from the program and was "scared to death to face the real world." Once out of the program, she tried to find child care and a job. Facing these challenges, she relapsed, engaging in more drug use.

She reached out to her sponsor, explaining that she relapsed. Her sponsor directed her to return to treatment and call the Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF told her to place the baby in child care within a week and rejoin treatment, but at that time, they offered no referrals or assistance with finding a place that would not charge her and that could take her child on such short notice. When she was unable to comply, after the week elapsed, DCF took custody of her child. She "gave up" and relapsed in a "major way. She was subsequently arrested in April for an assault that occurred when she was "high." VL was sentenced to two years plus probation and anger management counseling.

During the eight months that she was in jail, VL did not know where her daughter was located, and she received no visits from the DCF-appointed caretaker. The State moved to terminate parental rights. She participated in a series of family court hearings, and eventually the judge ruled that the State did not have enough evidence to terminate parental rights. The judge assisted VL in obtaining a transfer to AGAPE Family Ministry Center for the remainder of her sentence.

VL saw her daughter again for first time in January 2007. At first, her daughter did not recognize her. While they played, however, the child began interacting in familiar ways and called VL "mommy." VL has been granted the right to see her daughter every week for two hours, but the state-appointed caretaker can bring the child every other week because of work conflicts. VL seems sad, but accepting of this. She indicated that her daughter was receiving excellent care and appeared happy. Initially, DCF was concerned that the child had a speech problem, but officials have determined that she is only very shy.

VL is now interviewing for a job to begin a work-release program and is “working hard” to complete her treatment plan with the AGAPE staff. She is focused on “getting my stuff together.” She is hoping that her judge and the child’s guardian *ad litem* are successful in having her child transferred to the AGAPE Center for supervised mother-child therapy. Such an arrangement would allow them more time together. VL has approximately six months remaining in her sentence at AGAPE; then she will have a placement at a transitional facility. She is very thankful for the second chance that has been granted. Most importantly, she is optimistic that the skills (e.g., coping techniques, boundary setting) she is learning at AGAPE will enable her “to make it on the outside” once she completes her sentence.

VL reiterated the difficulties faced “on the outside” with no support system. She indicated that she and many other women would welcome child-oriented assistance. Based on her prior experience, she felt that this assistance could be critical as she attempts to reintegrate with society.

**Youth Interviews.** We were interested in better understanding the impact of parental incarceration on children at various developmental stages. We worked with social workers to arrange an interview with a parent who, while incarcerated, had lost custody of her infant daughter, and interviews with both the incarcerated parent and the caregiver of a three-year-old boy. In addition, social workers spoke with an eight-year-old girl, a 10-year-old boy, and an 11-year-old girl, who exhibited developmental characteristics consistent with similarly aged children described in the various resources cited in the literature review. (We attempted to talk with teen-aged youth, but they all declined, offering a variety of reasons.)

The mother of the infant described her child during the period of her incarceration as “sad and empty-acting.” A major developmental task for infants is to form attachments and develop trust. Parent-child separation inhibits that development, and this appeared to have occurred in this case.

The mother of the three-year-old boy said that her son’s emotional distress was experienced as sleep disturbances, panic attacks, and night terrors. The developmental tasks for early childhood include acquiring a sense of autonomy and growing in independence and initiative. Parent-child separation and/or trauma at this age can intensify and prolong separation anxiety, impair emotional development, and cause acute traumatic stress reactions and survivor guilt. This child appeared to suffer from some, if not all, of these reactions.

The eight-year-old girl had lost her father to long-term incarceration. She suffered from extreme loneliness and signs of dissociation (feelings of being “all alone”). She described herself as feeling “different and separated from everybody.” She begged the case worker to come see her every day because she needed “another girl to talk to.” The 10-year-old boy expressed feelings of extreme anger; he had

been transferred into Varying Exceptionality classes at a different school because of belligerence toward teachers and peers; his GPA plummeted and he lost interest in his other activities. Normal development at this age includes growing independence from adult caregivers and increasing peer attachments, and the ability to reason. The effects of parent-child separation can include developmental regression, poor self-concept, acute traumatic stress reactions, and impaired ability to overcome future traumas.

The 11-year-old girl who was interviewed showed signs of chronic depression, starting about the time when her father was incarcerated. She said that she is “sad most days and never feels happy anymore.” She is deeply disturbed that when her paternal grandmother died, her father was unable to attend the funeral. Her grades have fallen, and she says that she “can’t focus on school work.” She began fighting at school and associates with antisocial peers. She said that she knows that she needs a support group or counseling, but that is “still not the same as having my dad home”.

A developmental characteristic of early adolescence is the organization of behavior in pursuit of goals. Children begin showing the ability to work productively with others and to control the expression of their emotions. Suffering from the loss of a parent to incarceration, a child of this age may act out by rejecting behavioral limits and exhibiting trauma reactive behaviors.

The children featured in our focus group interviews exhibited psychosocial developmental delays similar to those postulated by developmental models. Ours are anecdotal findings, but the children’s sadness and feelings of loss are evident. They are living examples of what Dr. Arthur Zelman (1980) was describing when he said, “Parentally bereaved children tend to view themselves as exceptional from others. They feel ashamed of their loss and may avoid bereavement-related issues.”

**Mother-caregiver of a child with an incarcerated father.** We interviewed a mother whose child’s father has been in and out of prison for a number of crimes, including sexual assault. The mother, a police officer, discussed how she as a single parent had raised her child from a toddler to a successful teenager. She made the decision to limit the amount of contact her daughter has with the father. However, she encouraged a close relationship between the child and her paternal grandmother. The grandmother involved the child in church choir; this activity, in part, served as a catalyst for the child’s love of the arts. Everyone surrounding the child nourished this interest, especially her mother. The child was accepted into the New World School of the Arts and thrived. She will soon enter college on a partial scholarship as a result of her achievements as a musician.

Recently, the father and daughter have begun communicating by letter. This has created significant worries for the mother, even though her daughter is

approaching adulthood as a stable, successful teenager. From this interview, we learned that even though many barriers have been overcome for and by this child, the impacts of incarceration never end. The worries of the caregiver never cease. The relationships and communication between the child, the caregiver, and the incarcerated parent remain fragile, complex, and in need of support and scrutiny.

From these brief vignettes, it is clear to see the pain, trauma, and complexity of situations faced by children of inmates, their caregivers, and their incarcerated parents. Families manage, but the gaps in both understanding and services available to these families are significant.

## **Existing Services**

We engaged grassroots community groups, social service organizations, and criminal justice agency officials in discussions of their current levels of knowledge about the obstacles faced by children of incarcerated parents, the services now available, and the potential for doing more. Specifically, we conducted focus groups with more than 30 grassroots community, faith-based, and social services agency representatives;<sup>1</sup> and we interviewed representatives from the Department of Children and Families, area law enforcement agencies, Miami-Dade jail officials, the juvenile justice system, and probation and parole. We also participated in a meeting with a representative from the Governor's Task Force on Ex-Offenders.<sup>2</sup>

We engaged community groups by holding stakeholder meetings in the northern, mid-county, and southern areas of Miami-Dade. Stakeholder meetings were opened with a brief introduction to the issues of children of inmates. We followed up with standardized questions about needs, services, and perceived gaps in services, focusing the conversation on the needs of children. We also conducted a stakeholder meeting with more than 10 ministers and faith-based representatives who volunteer at area prisons.

Our interviews were conducted using standardized instruments. We focused on existing policies, services, and perceptions about agencies' responses to families and children involved with offenders at various points in the criminal justice system. We also interviewed a service provider and researcher who had been involved in a similar project in California for 15 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants included representatives from organizations such as Miami's River of Life, the Daycare Association of South Florida, Regis House, PLANT, the Alliance for Human Service, Miami-Dade School Student Services, Miami Dade Juvenile Justice Center Schools, Jewish Community Services, Overtown Youth Center, Cuban American National Committee, and many more.

<sup>2</sup> We attempted to interview representatives from the Florida Department of Corrections, but we have been unsuccessful in getting them to respond. We have asked the Casey Foundation staff for assistance with overcoming this apparent barrier.

From our meetings with grassroots community, faith-based and social service agency representatives, we learned the following:

1. It does not appear that programs exist in Miami-Dade County specifically to respond to the needs of children of incarcerated parents. All of the stakeholders who attended our meetings reacted with genuine surprise to the large numbers of children affected by this problem. Reflecting on issues, participants noted that they were anecdotally aware of children and/or parents in their programs who were involved in the criminal justice system, but had never considered the issue systematically.
2. Providers do not currently have tracking systems in place that could be used to identify children with an incarcerated parent.
3. Nearly all participants indicated interest in learning more. They were also interested in “best practices” for supporting those children.

Interviews with agency officials produced similar results. We interviewed the director of the Family Safety Office, responsible for administering a program for dependent children and their families. The Family Safety Office attempts to prevent separation of children from their families; reunifies families who have had children placed in foster homes or institutions; permanently places children who cannot be reunited with their families or when reunification would not be in the best interest of the child; protects dependent children or children alleged to be dependent, including providing emergency and long-term alternate living arrangements; and helps older children who continue to be in foster care as adolescents transition to self-sufficiency. The Office receives more than 300,000 calls for service annually on its hotline, resulting in more than 179,000 investigations. Current procedures do not identify or respond in a specific way to calls related to children of incarcerated parents.

## **Local Law Enforcement**

From our literature review, we learned that child trauma at the point of a parental arrest is particularly terrifying and disorienting for children when the child is present during the arrest, and hurtful in other ways even when he or she is not present. Interviews with local law enforcement officials explained how police and probation and parole manage arrests of parents. We learned that police receive limited training on managing children at an arrest scene. They have been given minimal procedures to follow to ensure the safety of any child present. For the youngest children, law enforcement officers try to arrange for care by a “blood” relative, or they contact DCF. Officers may leave teenagers with a willing neighbor.

In the case of young children, officers typically remain at the scene with the arrested parent until a relative or an agency representative arrives. Officers report this can take anywhere from 30 minutes to four hours. We were unable to obtain data on

approximately how frequently this occurs. The officers reported the following as common problems:

- *Hunger.* The child becomes hungry and tired of waiting; officers may buy food with personal funds, because the reimbursement form is complicated.
- *Bathroom breaks, particularly when the officer is the opposite gender.* Someone must accompany the child to assure that he or she comes to no harm and does not create additional problems.
- *Patience.* Young children ask many questions trying to make sense of the unusual, possibly frightening and confusing, situation.
- *Time management.* DCF representatives sometimes are delayed, extending the wait for both the child and the officer. When the wait continues beyond the end of the officer's shift, it can be difficult to find another officer to assume custody of the child.

Probation and parole representatives reported similar process problems when parents' probation is revoked. Sometimes parents on probation or parole appear with their children for monthly check-ins. Probation officers are concerned about the exposure of children to the interview process and about the safety of children in an environment with all kinds of offenders present. The agency is taking steps to make clear that children are not to accompany their parents to the office (although that creates other problems regarding baby sitting or childcare); management reports that they have had some success in limiting the number of children who come to the office.

During an interview, a juvenile justice judge questioned the effects on children of visiting correctional facilities and family re-unification. He noted that such facilities can be scary and overwhelming for adults, and even more so for children. He expressed the concern that children should not become desensitized to the negative "vibes" of a jail or prison, an issue that has not been widely discussed, but is a legitimate concern. The experience of a volunteer who visits correctional facilities, related during an interview, reinforces the need to be aware of children's perceptions of such facilities. He described once seeing a child, approximately seven years old, jumping over the door frame on her way out of the place, exclaiming, "I'm free! I'm free." At the very least, whether she was playing or expressing genuine relief, this child understood that the inmate she was leaving behind was not allowed to cross that same threshold. How visitation to a correctional facility is experienced by children might be an important area for further research.

The juvenile justice judge also offered insight on the issue of family reunification. He noted that the return of offenders, particularly mothers, destabilizes the family. He expressed concern that while it is important to build bonds and attachments to parents, it is equally important to protect children from ongoing negative influences.

Observing a jail re-entry program graduation, we experienced first-hand the consequences of an oppressive visitation policy. Gaining entry into the jail took us nearly

20 minutes, and our admission had been expedited. Once inside, we saw that family support was lacking for the “graduates.” Only two family members appeared to acknowledge the accomplishments of more than 80 offenders who had completed the program.

During interviews with Miami-Dade Department of Corrections staff, we learned that the Department does not track whether offenders are parents. Officials were willing to make this change, and agreed to incorporate this objective into their overall re-entry effort.

Our interviews with officials of social service organizations gave us new insights into how their organizations and criminal justice agencies interact to assist children of incarcerated parents and caregivers on a case-by-case basis. It became clear that they do not have a systematic program of responses to their needs. We learned how organizations perceive their roles in addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents. None identified itself as having the primary responsibility for this group of young clients.

## **Best Practices**

Developing and providing interventions for children of offenders and their families is challenging, but the intergenerational nature and increasing rates of crime and incarceration in the United States require that society pursue the highest standards of professional practice in providing services for this population (Gabel & Johnston 1995: 231-232).

- How can communities best help children whose parents are imprisoned or jailed?
- What community-level efforts are now or could be helping such children and their caregivers to safely navigate their circumstances?
- How many of these efforts are not only well-intentioned, but grounded in evidence-based research? How many are rigorously, professionally implemented?
- Which have proven that they can work?

These and similar questions are difficult to answer, because serious, rigorous evaluations of programs related to children of incarcerated parents have not yet occurred. To date, we know very little about what truly works, except anecdotally. This is work that must be done. Meanwhile, we turned to the next best thing - what works best to prevent offending in general? Farrington and Welsh examine major studies and conduct a meta-analysis in their book *Saving Children from a Life of Crime* (Farrington and Welsh 2007). They discuss individual prevention, family prevention, and peer, school, and community prevention methods.

Preschool intellectual enrichment, child-skills training, parent management training, and home-visiting programs are among the most effective early prevention programs. Reviews of peer, school, and community prevention programs found that only a handful of school intervention modalities are effective. These programs include school and

discipline management, classroom or instructional management, reorganization of grades or classes, and attempts to increase self-control using cognitive behavioral instruction methods. More evaluative research is needed to determine the value of peer-based programs and after-school and community-based programs. Mentoring programs, for example, seem to hold promise; but it is not yet clear how these programs specifically affect children with incarcerated parents.

The most complete single review of model programs and best practices undertaken specific to our target population is *Children of Incarcerated Parents* (1995). For each need, Johnston recommends intervention goals, client selection criteria, methods and activities, and staffing; she also lists expected outcomes, and identifies model programs. We describe these programs below.

**Point of arrest.** Too many children become acutely aware that their existence is precarious in the moment and in the immediate aftermath of a parent's arrest; they are often present and often ignored in the chaos of an apprehension (Bernstein 2005). The need for protocols and services to avoid the sudden trauma of arrest and to restore some sense of security and emotional and physical support for children is evident. However, as recently as the mid-1990s, few communities had focused on mitigating the immediate or the long-term effects of this life-altering event (Johnston 1995).

“The right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest” is the first of eight rights of children of incarcerated parents, first articulated by Gretchen Newby (Timmons 2006). Nell Bernstein suggests that a step in this direction would be to develop protocols and train police to understand and address children's confusion and fears. When the child is not present at the time of the parent's arrest, Bernstein suggests a simple action, leaving behind information on where the parent is being held, visiting hours and procedures, and local resources for locating care and support. For more comprehensive responses, she describes the Child Development-Community Policing Program, a 15-year collaboration between the New Haven Department of Police and the Yale Child Study Center (Bernstein 2005).  
(<http://www.nceev.org/initiatives/cdcp/index.html>)

Other communities have developed crisis nurseries to prevent exposure of infants and very young children to acute trauma, such as that caused by parental arrest. The Bay Area Crisis Nursery (<http://www.bacn.jkmas.com/start.html>), for example, operates 24/7, with policies that encourage parental use and support. Similar nurseries are located in other California cities as well as the states of Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri and Washington. To date, nothing comparable seems to be available to shelter older children and adolescents.

**Family assistance.** Children experience a deep sense of loss following a parent or step-parent's incarceration – loss of emotional and financial support, among other things. This is true even when the incarcerated parent did not live with the child full-time (Travis 2005). Children of incarcerated parents, like all children, need opportunities to continue

and even strengthen the parental bond when appropriate, and the resilience to endure separation. But keeping in touch is difficult and expensive, and services that strengthen these family ties are scarce.

New York's correction facility nursery is one example of a model program that gives incarcerated mothers an opportunity to form normal attachments with their infants and young children (Gabel & Girard 1995). The Prison MATCH program also is dedicated to moderating separation-related problems. Qualified prisoners have regularly scheduled time with their children in a supervised setting, reading, playing games, talking, and sometimes cooking a meal (Weilerstein 1995). The MATCH program has spread to other states; North Carolina has a Web-site offering further information (<http://www.prisonmatch.org>).

Carol Fennelly, Director of Hope House in Washington, D.C., started a program to improve and sustain the relationships between incarcerated fathers and their children. When the federal government closed the Washington, D.C. Lorton Correctional Complex and moved some prisoners as far away as California, Ms. Fennelly allowed prisoners to see and talk with their children on the Internet, using computers at the prison and at Hope House. She worked with vendors who were experienced with providing secure communications for the Defense Department to design a secure video-conferencing system for prisoners who completed parenting classes.

In considering what children need, we might ask: What are this child's and family's resources and strengths? What kind of assistance will help the family to keep the child safe and secure? What services are needed to continue and strengthen the relationship and responsibility of incarcerated parents to their children? And when absolutely necessary, what care is available and appropriate for children without adequate family ties?

Programs that protect, inspire, and foster resilience in children, encouraging confidence and competence, can help them cope (Adalist-Estrin, 2006). Girl Scouts Behind Bars, for example, focuses on developing resilience. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the program improves the relationship between girls and their incarcerated mothers and modestly improves girls' self-esteem (Grant, 2006). Longitudinal research on this particular program is underway, but for the most part, the kind of research that would point program planners in particular directions is missing.

**Extra-familial assistance.** Mentoring programs are gaining support, giving children with incarcerated parents extra-familial support. Efforts such as Children of Promise–Mentors of Hope and Amachi are acknowledged to give children and caregivers meaningful support and respite, and to engage community volunteers in one-on-one supportive relationships (Timmons, 2006).

**Re-entering family and community: “best practices.”** More than 630,000 prisoners are expected to rejoin communities and their families every year, and the rate of recidivism is high in the early months of re-entry. It is worthwhile to understand the impact of re-entry

on families and communities, and why so many ex-offenders are soon back in prison, even though most initially expect never to return to prison again (e.g., Braman, 2004, & Travis, 2005).

Whether re-entry into their families is successful depends on several factors: the quality of the parent-child relationship prior to incarceration, the amount of contact and support during incarceration, the parent's involvement in rehabilitation programs while in prison, and the accuracy of expectations and effectiveness of strategies for reentry (Newby, 2006).

Visitation programs such as the ones cited above not only are important antidotes for parent-child separation, but they build a foundation for post-release success. One risk mitigated by therapeutic visitation (counselor-mediated family visits) programs is Post-release domestic violence, available in some states specifically as a prevention strategy.<sup>3</sup> The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents (CCIP) began an Early Therapeutic Intervention Project in 1990. The program ended in 1992 (Johnston, 1995), and has since been replaced with the Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP). This program serves children in elementary schools and daycare with individual and/or group counseling and behavioral skills training; parent and caregiver services, training and support groups; and teacher services including a course on child development, attachment and childhood trauma.

Other CCIP programs that support children during and after a parent's incarceration include the following:

- The Attachments Project, building capacity for attachment in children who have had several disruptions in care (child development assessment, childcare planning, attachment-building activities).
- The MotherRight and FatherRight Projects, fostering healthy relationships and an understanding of sexuality and reproduction among female and male offenders (psycho-educational parent and family life education, trauma recovery and empowerment support groups, therapeutic services, stress reduction training, mentoring for young mothers and fathers).
- The MIRACLE Project, ensuring that infants born in the Los Angeles County Jail do not experience the disruptions in care typical in the first year among infants of jailed women (prenatal, childbirth, postpartum and breastfeeding education; parent education and skills training; child, family life, and drug education; self-

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<sup>3</sup> Johnston cites ImPACT, which did not show up in a brief search for currently available programs. A similar program is L.I.F.E., a partnership of Missouri Corrections and the University of Missouri Extension program, Living Interactive Family Education (<http://muextension.missouri.edu/fcrp/lifeevaluation/bibliography.htm>).

help activities and individualized therapeutic services, and mothers' support groups.)

Data are available on the numbers of children and families that have received assistance; further research would help measure the benefits and cost-effectiveness of these and similar programs.

## **Summary**

When we seek “best practices,” we hope to find programs and interventions that have been proven to deliver the desired results over time, and that can be successfully replicated or adapted in different settings. We found several attempts to identify and respond to the needs of children of incarcerated parents, and anecdotal indications of successes. But we found few real “best practices” based on rigorous evaluation. Many more focused interventions and quality studies are needed. We see this as an opportunity and a responsibility to design a system of care that will allow us to track, measure, and evaluate how prevention and intervention programs work for this population. Done properly, we can help build a body of knowledge about what programs will make a significant difference to these children and what programs can be successfully replicated.

## **A Model to Assist Children of Incarcerated Parents**

### **Vision**

The Service Partnership for Children of Inmates intends to assure that children with an incarcerated parent or caregiver will have opportunities to be cared for and supported in their development by responsible adults, helping professionals, and others in their communities. Such opportunities are essential, at each developmental stage, for these children to have a safe passage to adulthood. In so doing, we expect to help interrupt generation-to-generation antisocial behaviors, delinquency, and incarceration.

### **Start-up Goals and Anticipated Outcomes**

Implementing this vision will require establishing a broad array of strategies ranging from advocacy to case management to individualized services. It will require many different partners joining together to identify, encourage, and refer families across a coordinated network of services. It will require individualized prevention and invention services to meet the needs of children who may be at very different points in their development and adjustment to their circumstances. It will require advocacy to educate and involve the community in inviting these children and families out of their assumed shame and into dignity, and into active participation overcoming the statistical odds of intergenerational incarceration.

During the first year, we establish the following operational goals:

- To systematically identify the children of inmates and link them with appropriate, coordinated helping organizations and services.
- To strengthen the bonds between children and their caregivers
- To mitigate childhood trauma caused by arrests
- Where appropriate, to increase the likelihood of successful reunification with incarcerated parents
- To raise community awareness about the consequences for the child when a parent or caregiver is incarcerated

During year one, we anticipate identifying and offering services to more than 750 children, or 5% of the estimated number of children of inmates residing in Miami-Dade County. Anticipating the challenges faced by caregivers of these children, we anticipate enrolling 430 children in services that will make a start toward addressing their needs.

We intend to achieve the following outcomes that are directly linked to our short-term goals and long-range vision

- Recognition by jails, prisons, schools, and the Department of Children and Families that children of inmates are a distinct at-risk group.
- Identification of inmates with children by the courts, jails, or prisons on one of the forms used in the sentencing process
- Establishment of five care coordination centers
- Referrals to existing service providers who have appropriate skills and training
- Identification of areas where services do not exist and where we will create new services.
- An improved self-image, better social skills, and resilience for children of incarcerated parents.
- Awareness by the community and policymakers of children of inmates and their needs.

## Partners

Eight Miami-Dade County organizations are working together to propose this Service Partnership. The partners and their roles are as follows:

- Justice & Security Strategies, Inc. –*Management Team Leader*
- Abriendo Puertas –care coordination center partner, mid-county
- Agape Family Ministries –care coordination center partner, southern and Miami-Dade Department of Corrections Liaison
- Christian Family Worship Center –care coordination center partner, southern
- Elijah Network – prevention lead partner
- Family and Children Faith Coalition –mini care coordination centers, county-wide
- Netstring – information technology partner
- Trinity Peacemakers Family Services Center – care coordination center,- northern

## **Management Plan**

To implement the Service Partnership, we are forming an output-oriented team. We require that organizations and individuals who chose to join us must be committed to accomplishing our vision and they must be willing to do it as a contributing member of the team. We use teaming agreements to formalize these commitments. The team's intention is to arrive at decisions by consensus whenever possible; all decisions, whether or not consensus has been achieved, are formally approved by majority vote.

Our system of care for children with incarcerated parents involves culturally competent organizations, programs, and services that are sensitive to the cultural and ethnic differences of our clients, and that represent the cultural and ethnic diversity of the community. We apply the principles of equal access and non-discrimination, and meet Federal and local standards for cultural competence, nondiscrimination, and use of public funds by faith-based, community-based, and private organizations.

Internal communications methods rely on monthly meetings, one-on-one meetings with the Management Team Leader, subcommittees and a web-based virtual office. External communications will consist of stakeholder meetings, extensive printed materials such as brochures, contact cards and posters, an interactive resource website and a up-to-date information on the 211 database.

The proposal includes budget policies, description of the standard subcontract and a detailed budget for each partner. Our budget is \$999,874 with 60% for identification/case management services, 30% for advocacy and outreach efforts and 10% for management operations. Distribution of funding will be based upon delivery required outputs; the management team leader will coordinate reimbursements monthly.

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