



XIARA'S SONG

Resource and Discussion Guide



The XIARA'S SONG Resource and Discussion Guide was developed by
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(Texas) Juvenile Probation Department.

XIARA'S SONG and this Discussion Guide are part of the
Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign.
Learn more about the Reentry Campaign by visiting
www.reentrymediaoutreach.org

**NOTE: THIS VIDEO CONTAINS ADULT LANGUAGE AND CONTENT AND IS
NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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I enjoyed XIARA'S SONG for its frankness and ability to express the feelings of a young child through her own reality. Many times these children are seen but not heard. Reentry and aftercare are just now becoming of utmost importance to the community and need to be further addressed. As a viewer, I am compelled to seek out resources that can be utilized for families facing these extraordinary situations.

-- Roger Hernandez, Bexar County (Texas) Juvenile Probation Department

XIARA'S SONG - Through the Eyes of a Child

"Xiara is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit and the transcendent power of familial love. At the same time, she is a painful reminder of the millions of unintended victims of America's spiraling incarceration rates."

Producer/Director Liz Garbus

Like many girls her age, seven-year-old Xiara likes to make up songs, eat ice cream, and play with her best friend. A real "daddy's girl," she's pretty and independent, and dreams of being a superstar one day. And like ten million other American children, Xiara is the child of a prison inmate.

Xiara idolizes her father Harold – who is serving a ten-year federal prison sentence after a third-strike weapons possession conviction – from afar. But her mother tries desperately to keep her daughter from following him down the brutal and self-destructive path that led to his incarceration. Combining modern-day footage with family home movies, XIARA'S SONG finds the sadness, joy, anger, love, loneliness, and fear in the eyes of a seven-year-old coming to grips with the fact that her father won't be free until she's 17.

While XIARA'S SONG does not romanticize Harold, who has been in and out of jail for her entire life, it does reveal the gentle side of this handsome, charming rapper who finds inspiration in his deep love for his daughter. Harold and Xiara's relationship is played out over monitored phone lines and supervised monthly visits, expressed through the songs they write and sing for one another.

Xiara Trujillo moved from the Bronx to Maryland with her mom, Aracelli Guzman, four years ago. Though she seems happy hanging out and playing with her pal Melissa, Xiara becomes defensive and emotional when talking about her father, Harold Linares. Xiara seems to blame his incarceration on her mother, whom she says "kept calling the police." Xiara, who has always been extremely close to her father, acts out with her mother.



Usually, however, despite putting on a brave front, Xiara's encounters with Harold end with her devastated, wishing she could be with him. Aracelli thinks that her desire to be with Harold is perhaps one reason Xiara gets into more trouble than other girls her age. Xiara admits to stealing when she was younger, so that perhaps she would end up in prison with her father.

The fact that he'll be in jail for such a long time is extremely upsetting to Xiara. Recently, Harold was moved from the DC jail to a federal prison over 300 miles away. Now, Xiara's only contact is the infrequent collect call from her father.

Xiara receives one of these calls while playing with Melissa; her father sings her a rap song he composed called "7/27/96" (her birthday), which communicates the deep and abiding love he has for his daughter. After Xiara and Melissa share their own duet for Harold, time runs out on the call – and Xiara collapses in tears. She is comforted by her grandmother Maria (Aracelli's mother), who assures Xiara that one day, Harold will return, and "It's going to be fine."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS: XIARA'S SONG was directed by Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus and produced by Rory Kennedy, who are award-winning partners and co-founders of Moxie Firecracker Films, an independent documentary production company. Garbus/Kennedy's previous HBO credits include four acclaimed documentary projects focusing on disenfranchised and/or disadvantaged people in the U.S. and abroad: 2004's *A Boy's Life*, 2002's *The Execution of Wanda Jean*, 1999's *American Hollow*, and 2003's five-part series *Pandemic: Facing AIDS*. Garbus also produced *The Farm: Angola, USA*, which won two Emmys®, the Sundance Grand Jury Prize, and was nominated for an Academy Award® in 1998.

CREDITS: Produced and Directed By Liz Garbus; Produced By Rory Kennedy; Edited By Eric Seuel Davies; Photographed By Daniel B. Gold and Don Lenzer. For HBO: Senior Producer: Lisa Heller; Executive Producer: Sheila Nevins
From: <http://www.cinemax.com/reel/xiarasong/index.html>

What Do Children of Prisoners Need?

- To know the parent's incarceration is not their fault.
- To know what is happening to their parent.
- To know if they can have contact with their parent, when and how.
- To know where and with whom they will be living and going to school, what will stay the same, and what will change while their parent is incarcerated.
- To know it is OK to love their parent, and it is OK to be angry sometimes.
- To be encouraged to express their feelings about their parent's incarceration.
- To visit and maintain contact with the incarcerated parent as much as possible, when appropriate.

From "How to explain Jails and Prisons to Children - A Caregiver's Guide," Oregon Department of Corrections.
http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/PUBAFF/docs/oam/explaining_prison_for_print.pdf



USING XIARA'S SONG

This guide contains suggestions for ways to help people think more deeply about the issues raised in XIARA'S SONG. If you do not have time to show the entire 36-minute film, you may choose to concentrate on specific scenes. Prior to showing the video, it is important to prepare the group for the strong language and adult themes.

Things to Consider as You Plan

Who Should Facilitate? – Because the film raises tough issues, it is important to have a facilitator who is experienced and who has (or who can easily develop) a trusting relationship with and among group members.

Goals – Be realistic about what you hope to accomplish. Obtain suggestions from the group on the outcomes they envision. If you wish to engage in action planning or program development, consider convening a series of meetings rather than a single event. Make the information in the guide available to participants to enrich your discussion and decision making.

Involving Stakeholders – Based on the topics/issues you wish to discuss and the goals you seek to attain, make sure that the various stakeholders are present to contribute to the discussion and decision making.

Effective Sharing – Discussion can be difficult if group members are not all comfortable conversing in the same language. Depending upon the languages spoken, you may want to have one or more translators present. Another consideration is whether the facilitator already has a close relationship with the group, or is meeting them for the first time. The less pre-existing trust, the less appropriate it is to use particularly intimate or intense methods of sharing.

Support – XIARA'S SONG deals with intense emotions and experiences. Watching the video may raise deep emotions in many viewers. Know who your local support agencies and/or professionals are and how to contact them in case referrals are appropriate.

Also, pay close attention to how prepared participants are to tackle certain kinds of issues. Take special care not to push individuals too far. If a question or activity seems too personal, skip it. Be aware that people may not be ready to talk about their own situations. They may prefer talking in general about parents who are incarcerated – or about children with incarcerated parents.

Be Prepared to Facilitate – Check the background information and resources in this guide so you have enough factual knowledge to keep people on track. Most importantly, review the film and other materials prior to your event and deal with your own emotions before you walk through the door. You will be much more effective if you are not trying to sort through your own emotions at the same time that you are trying to guide others in dealing with theirs.

Preparing the Group

For people to share openly and honestly, they need to feel comfortable and safe. As a facilitator, you can help set that kind of atmosphere by doing the following:

Do introductions. If group members do not already know one another, take some time for everyone to introduce himself or herself.

Set ground rules for discussion. Involve the group in setting some basic rules that will help them feel safe. Those ground rules will generally cover three areas:

1. Confidentiality – Do people want to ask others not to repeat what they have said outside the group?
2. Language – To ensure respect, everyone should agree that certain kinds of language, e.g., put downs or yelling, are off limits. Also, to ensure clarity, ask people to speak in the first person (“I think...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that...”).
3. Taking Turns – Use techniques to make sure that everyone who wishes to speak can do so, that one person does not dominate, that no one is attacked, that no one is forced to reveal things they do not want to talk about. Be clear about what your role as facilitator is.

Remind people of the value of listening. You might want to ask people to practice formal “active listening,” in which participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then rephrase to see if they have heard correctly. Or you may just want to remind them that engaging in dialogue is different from participating in a debate. In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening to each other actively.

Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience. Because who we are influences how we interpret what we see, everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of the film, and all of them may be accurate. If there are disagreements, ask people to be clear about the evidence they are using to reach their conclusions.

Establish a time-out mechanism. Have a pre-planned strategy for what to do if the intensity level rises. A key word or a non-verbal cue (like putting a hand over your heart to signal that you really empathize with what was just said) can help a lot. Agree on a signal that anyone can use to pause the discussion. Let everyone take a deep breath before moving on to deal with situation.

Statistics

- The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 2.3 children are affected by the 1.1 million parents incarcerated in prisons or jails, up from 500,000 children in 1991.
- Over seven million children have a parent under some form of correctional supervision.
- More than two million people are currently incarcerated in our nation's prisons and jails.
- At midyear 2002, one in every 142 U.S. residents was incarcerated.
- At midyear 2002, one in every 32 U.S. residents was under some form of correctional supervision.
- Approximately 75 percent of incarcerated women are mothers and two-thirds have children under age 18.
- Seventy-two percent of women prisoners with children under age 18 lived with those children before entering prison.
- Six percent of women entering prison are pregnant.
- From 1990 to 2000, the number of mothers in prison grew 87 percent, while fathers increased by 61 percent.



- Fifty-four percent of mothers in state prison said they never had visits from their children.
- Approximately 55 percent of incarcerated men are fathers of children under the age of 18.
- Thirty-two percent of men in prison have two or more children under the age of 18.
- On any given day, approximately one million fathers are behind bars.
- Fifty-seven percent of fathers in state prison report never having visits from their children.
- Racial disparity in children affected by incarceration: African American children, 7.0%; Hispanic children, 2.6%; White children, 0.8%

From: http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/cop_factsheet.htm

Facts About Latino Confinement

In a news release on October 14, 2004, The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Latino civil rights organization in the U.S., indicated that Hispanics are overrepresented in the U.S. criminal justice system, with Hispanic male defendants imprisoned three times as often as White male defendants and detained before trial almost twice as often as non-Hispanics, despite being the least likely of all ethnic groups to have a criminal history. According to NCLR's *Lost Opportunities: The Reality of Latinos in the U.S. Criminal Justice System*, Hispanics represented 13% of the U.S. population in 2000, but accounted for 31% of those incarcerated in the federal criminal justice system. Latinos in the U.S. have one chance in six of being confined in prison during their lifetimes. Other key findings about the disparate treatment of Hispanics include:

Latinos experience discrimination during arrest, prosecution, and sentencing and are more likely to be incarcerated than Whites charged with the same offenses. Problems at the arrest stage include racial profiling and targeting poorer, "high crime" neighborhoods, which have an impact on people of color. Hispanics are disproportionately represented by publicly-appointed legal counsel, who are overworked and underpaid. Of those defendants found guilty in large state courts from 1994 to 1998, 71% represented by public counsel were sentenced to incarceration, as compared to only 54% of defendants with private attorneys. "Mandatory minimums" result in sentences that are too harsh for some nonviolent, low-level offenders, and too often courts do not make documents available in Spanish or provide translators when needed.

Latinos are disproportionately charged with nonviolent, low-level drug offenses. Although federal health statistics show that per capita drug use rates between Whites and minorities are remarkably similar, Hispanics were arrested by the Drug Enforcement Agency in 2001 at a rate nearly three times their proportion in the general population, and they accounted for nearly half (43%) of the individuals convicted of drug offenses in 2000. As incarceration for drug offenses grew – from 16% in 1970 to 55% in 2002 – so did the Hispanic prison population.

Latinos constitute the vast majority of those arrested for immigration violations. Arrests for immigration offenses increased 610% over ten years – from 1,728 in 1990 to 12,266 in 2000. A growing list of more than 50 crimes – including offenses considered misdemeanors under state law, such as shoplifting or fighting at school – can trigger deportation. Yet, according to data from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. citizens are ten times more likely than immigrants to be incarcerated for violent offenses.

Community-based alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent, low-level offenders would better protect public safety, rehabilitate offenders, reduce crime, and save money. The most expensive – and most common – option in the criminal justice system for low-level, nonviolent drug offenders is to incarcerate them at an average annual cost of about \$23,500. The alternatives to incarceration recommended in *Lost Opportunities* include drug court, outpatient drug treatment programs, and non-hospital residential treatment; these reduce recidivism and have annual average costs under \$4,617. A Rand Corporation study found that for every dollar spent on drug and alcohol treatment, a state can save \$7 in reduced crime costs.

(From <http://www.nclr.org/content/news/detail/27516/>)

Typical Feelings of Children of Prisoners

Children of incarcerated parents express a broad range of emotions, including fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, loneliness, and guilt. They are afraid of being abandoned, of never seeing their incarcerated parent again and of being taken away from the caregiver. They worry about the well being of the incarcerated parent. Often children are not told the truth about their parent's whereabouts, which leads to questions that children are afraid to ask, and confusion around what is true and what is not. Children often feel responsible for their parent's behavior, and suffer the guilt of not being "enough" of a motivation for changing parental behavior. Finally, anger usually comes in the wake of other feelings such as disappointment, resentment, frustration, fear, or loss. Unlike other children with issues like death or divorce, who also have many of these feelings, the children of prisoners experience tremendous guilt, shame, and stigma.

Except from "Families and Jails" by Ann Adalist-Estrin and Arlene F. Lee, in publication.

Where Do You Stand?

An important exercise before working with children of prisoners

Think about whether you agree, disagree, or are not sure about each of the following statements:

- Parents should have thought about their children before they committed the crime. They don't really deserve their children.
- Children of prisoners are probably better off without contact with their parents.
- Supporting the relationship between a child and an incarcerated parent is, in effect, condoning the criminal activity of the parent.
- People can be bad citizens and also be good parents.
- By the time a parent goes to prison or jail, it is too late to help them in their relationships with their children.

It's important to know where you stand on these questions, because if we only think in terms of the criminal parent, we lose sight of the child left behind. The child should be our focus, what they need to become healthy and productive should be our goal. In a very real way, we can help both the parent and the child by understanding the effect of parental incarceration on the child. But first, we must stop to look through the eyes of the child, like XIARA'S SONG helps us do. Xiara helps us understand the love between a parent and child, no matter what the circumstances.

(From CWLA's *Mentoring Children of Prisoners* Curriculum)

Discussion Questions

1. What new information did you learn from this documentary? How do you think this new insight might influence how you think about children whose parents are incarcerated? Did anything in the documentary surprise you? If so, what? Why was it surprising?
2. What was your first impression of seven-year-old Xiara as you watched her create and perform a song with her friend Melissa in the opening of the film? At the end of the film, you see Xiara being comforted by her grandmother Maria. How have your impressions about Xiara changed as you watched the film? What did you learn about how a young child strives to deal with having a father who is absent ... and imprisoned?
3. At the end of the film, we hear more of Xiara and Melissa's song:

*"Hi, Daddy.
How you doing?
Are you fine?
I haven't seen you in a long time.
And I miss you.
I love you.
I didn't forget about you.
You're still with me."*

Two lines from the beginning of the film are not in this version:

*"It's great to see you here.
It's great to hear about you."*

What does the song tell you about the feelings of both girls whose fathers are incarcerated? What strategies can you suggest that would help children like Xiara and Melissa stay connected to their fathers?

4. Children tend to have different relationships with each of their parents. How would you describe Xiara's relationship to her mother? What about her father? What concerns you the most about her relationship with her mother, especially since she's the custodial parent? Why? What might be done to strengthen their bond? Why is this important?
5. Stop for a moment and think about Harold from Xiara's perspective; spend time viewing him through the eyes of his daughter. What are the similarities and differences in the way Xiara sees her father and the way all little girls see their fathers?
6. Xiara and Harold clearly share a loving relationship. Was it surprising to you that children of prisoners continue to love their parents? What could be done to strengthen their relationship? What can be done to strengthen the relationship between any child and his/her incarcerated parent?
7. During Xiara's visit in the jail, Harold said, "What I'm here for is not my fault." His excuse was that he was drunk and did not know who he was with, and that they had guns. Xiara already thinks it's her mother's fault that Harold is in jail. How does his explanation make it more difficult for her to understand and deal with his imprisonment?

8. Recall the moment when Harold left his visit with Xiara in the jail. Think about him standing with his back to the camera, adjusting his hat, pausing before entering the secure area with the other inmates. What do you think he was doing and feeling in that moment? Do you wonder if showing emotion in the jail would have any negative consequences for him? Do you think that incarcerated parents must compartmentalize their lives and emotions?
9. Harold says Xiara is angry; Aracelli describes her as “hostile.” Her uncle Johnny (in prison scene) says, “All of a sudden she just starts crying.” What other strong emotions did Xiara express in the film? Do you think other children with incarcerated parents are trying to manage similarly overwhelming emotions? How serious a problem is this? What resources are available in your community to help children of incarcerated parents? If you think not enough help is available, what action steps can your community take to find solutions?

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: A BILL OF RIGHTS

1. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent’s arrest.
2. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. I have the right to be well cared for in my parent’s absence.
5. I have the right to speak with, see, and touch my parent.
6. I have the right to support as I struggle with my parent’s incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed, or labeled because of my parent’s incarceration.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

Free copies of the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights are available by contacting Friends Outside, 2540 Pacific Avenue #8, Stockton CA 95204; 209/938-0727 or by sending an e-mail to gnewby@friendsoutside.org or downloading from www.childrenofprisoners.org

10. Discuss the following: Children of prisoners have a right to speak with, see, and touch their incarcerated parents. For corrections officials, a top priority is maintaining standards of security. For family members, the priority is to maintain a relationship with the prisoner. Recall Xiara sitting at the table in the jail visiting room. She says that she “feels nervous” and feels like “I’m gonna cry.”

What steps can be taken to improve prison rules/conditions to support visitations by children – so that safety is maintained, but children gain needed access to their parents and are not frightened, humiliated, or traumatized by the process?
11. Discuss the following: Children of prisoners have a right not to be judged, blamed, or labeled because of their parent’s incarceration. What can you do as a community member, a volunteer, a friend, a family member, or a professional to help remove the stigma of parental incarceration from children in your community?
12. Discuss the following: Criminal activity and prison can leave families drastically damaged, sometimes beyond repair. In addition, incarceration profoundly affects society as a whole. What problems or issues particularly concern you? What is your

organization, faith community, or neighborhood doing to address these problems? What strategies can you recommend to strengthen families and rebuild communities?

13. Discuss the following comments from the film:
- Harold: “She’s (Xiara) anything any parent would want. I’m hoping that, in due time, I would be the parent she wants, that she needs.”
 - Harold: (to Xiara; scene in prison) “Be strong for Daddy.”
 - Aracelli: “Harold and I were having problems. [Xiara] would talk to him like an adult and tell him not to argue or fight with me...and to stop drinking.”
 - Xiara (when Aracelli asks why she can’t talk about Xiara’s dad): “Because I’m protecting him.”
 - Xiara: “I used to grab [my mother’s] leg and push my daddy. But now I grab my Daddy’s leg and hug him.”
 - Melissa: “It was scary when her mother and her dad were fighting.”
 - Aracelli: “It’s easy to say he’s a Daddy. But it’s not easy to actually be there and take care of a child.”
14. Xiara’s network includes family members and friends. What types of support do they offer to her? What additional support does she need? What resources might be helpful to her?
15. At the end, Xiara’s grandmother Maria tells her: “You’re going to be fine. You’re going to be an adult.” Pending early release, Xiara will almost be an adult – age 17 – when her father returns from prison. What resources and support systems are needed immediately, and over the next ten years to assure that Maria’s prediction, “You’re going to be fine” holds true?
16. What do you think will happen in the next 3 years, 5 years, and 10 years – to Xiara? Aracelli? Harold? Are you optimistic that Xiara will be “be strong” and successful? Why or why not? Do you think Xiara will be able to maintain a relationship with her father? Why or why not?

Things Community Stakeholders Can Do To Help Children with Incarcerated Parents

1. Create a safe space for talking by asking about the parent without judgment
2. Let the child talk if that feels comfortable or not talk if that feels comfortable
3. Let the child know that it is ok for them to love their parent even if that person is in prison
4. Be a support to the child and the family left behind
5. Volunteer at a program that provides transportation, services, or support
6. Start a support group with the help of family members of incarcerated parents
7. Be an advocate - tell others what you have learned, so they too will know how children feel blamed and judged for their parents’ actions

What Happens to Children?

When a parent is arrested . . .

One in five children of incarcerated parents witnessed their parent's arrest. Those who don't witness the arrest may reconstruct it in their minds. Either way, it's traumatizing. There are few policies or protocols in place to ensure that children's needs are met when a parent is arrested. Law enforcement officers rarely pay attention to the needs of the arrestee's children, and arrested parents get little assistance in making temporary arrangements for their children or planning for their children's long-term care.

When a parent is incarcerated. . .

Children's lives are disrupted . . . Incarcerated mothers were often the sole caregivers for their children. When a parent becomes incarcerated, their children's living arrangements become disrupted and uncertain. These children are often separated from their siblings and may experience erratic shifts in caregivers. Even if the child is not living with the parent, they are almost always aware of that parent, involved with the parent in some way, and identify with the parent on some level, which is disrupted by the arrest and incarceration.

Children lose contact with their parents . . . For children, the most devastating aspect of parental incarceration is the lack of contact they have with their parents. Half of children with incarcerated parents never visit their parents in prison. The other half visit infrequently.

Prison visits are difficult . . . One of the major barriers to visitation is geographical proximity. Many prisons are located in more rural areas and are difficult to access by public transportation. For the most part, children are dependent upon their caregivers to transport them to visits -- and many caregivers may be unable or simply reluctant to facilitate visits. Many can't afford the cost of transportation or the time off from work -- and others simply don't believe that prison is an appropriate environment for a child. Finally, grandparent or other relative caregivers may deny visits as a way of expressing anger at the imprisoned parent.

Once children arrive at the prison, they must be processed through prison security, which can be intimidating for adults and frightening for younger children. The rooms in which the visits take place are rarely child-friendly. Most often, they're noisy, crowded, and not at all conducive to having a productive, relationship-building visit. Some prisons do have child-centered visiting programs that allow parents and children to interact in supportive environments, but visits in most prisons still take place in rooms that are not hospitable to children.

Though we know that regular visits are the key to helping children work through trauma – and that regular visits are the best predictor of families reunifying when prisoners are released – few structures are in place to support or encourage visitation. Even keeping in touch by telephone is difficult because prisoners can only make collect calls, which are charged at a higher rate than regular long distance. Most families cannot afford frequent calls.

Children live in poverty . . . Most children of incarcerated parents live in poverty before, during, and after their parent's incarceration, but the period during incarceration can be particularly difficult. When a parent goes to prison, their children may suffer financially because that parent is often the primary support of their children. Their children are sometimes cared for by relatives who are also poor and already overburdened. Many relative caregivers depend upon public assistance to care for the children living with them.

When a parent is released . . .

Families seeking to reunify when a parent has been released face many challenges. Men and women leaving prison are often homeless, poor, and struggling to stay substance-free. Few supportive services are available to help them reestablish their lives so they can begin to parent and provide homes for their children. Even under the best of circumstances, it's difficult for the parent, child, and caregiver to reestablish and redefine relationships.

Throughout the process . . .

Children experience difficult emotions . . . When parents first go to prison, children feel a lot of fear and anxiety. They worry that they've been abandoned or that they'll never see their parent again. They worry that their caregiver will also disappear. They're often not given much information about what's going on, and the uncertainty of the criminal justice process only makes them more afraid. Many children have vivid imaginations and they worry that something terrible will happen to their parent in prison.

Children may also feel sad and alone. They worry that they did something bad to cause their parent to leave – or that they could have prevented the crisis in some way. Children may feel angry at the parent for engaging in bad behavior – or may feel guilty about not being able to help the parent live a healthier life.

The stigma of incarceration is significant. Children will be teased and taunted – and may be avoided as being part of a "bad" family. On the one hand, children will feel ashamed of the imprisoned parent, but on the other hand, they'll feel intense loyalty and want to defend the parent. Again, the stigma makes it difficult for them to seek out help – because they feel embarrassed and worry about being rejected.

Children are at risk . . . Behaviors and reactions will certainly vary, and we must be careful not to label these children or further stigmatize them. But we do know that children who experience a parent's incarceration -- *and all of the behaviors and disruptions associated with the criminal activity* -- are at increased risk for poor academic treatment, truancy, dropping out of school, gang involvement, early pregnancy, drug abuse, and delinquency.

<http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/whathappens.htm>

Examples of Innovative Correctional Programs

Programs and services can help to mitigate the traumas of parental incarceration. Below is a list of a few innovative programs designed to strengthen the parent/child bond:

Visiting Programs

FamilyWorks' Children's Centers at Sing Sing and Woodbourne Correctional Facilities in New York hosted over 6,000 visits last year for incarcerated parents and their children in a cozy and child-oriented setting staffed by trained program participants, under the supervision of FamilyWorks staff. http://www.osborneny.org/youth_family_services.htm

Family Ark Summer Day Camp at the Indiana Women's Prison runs from Monday thru Friday, beginning at 8:00 am until 5:00 pm for two weeks every summer. Children come from across the state and stay with host families around the prison. From 50 to 70 children of incarcerated mothers participate. They enjoy normal 'camp' activities such as arts and crafts, games, pony

rides, which occur on the prison grounds. The highlight last year was that children were given teddy bears with their mothers' voices recorded inside.

<http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/facility/iwp/general.htm>

The Parent and Children Together (P.A.C.T.) program at the South Dakota Women's Prison is an extended visitation program available for inmate mothers and their children. The primary goal of the P.A.C.T. program is to enable the incarcerated mother to have her minor children with her in prison for a weekend visit once each month, in addition to the regular visiting hours.

http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/womens_pact.htm

The Father to Child Program through Hope House allows fathers who are incarcerated at a North Carolina prison to communicate regularly with their children back in Washington. Every two weeks, the children go to Hope House in Washington to see and talk to their fathers using Internet technology. <http://www.hopehousedc.org/programs/father-to-child-program.htm>

Collaborative programs for inmates and children:

The Mother Goose Program is a joint venture of the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, South Dakota State Library, South Dakota Head Start and South Dakota Discovery Center & Aquarium. Female inmates attend classes that focus on helping them introduce and encourage math and science skills in children ages 4-7. Inmates are allowed to keep and send home all of the books and materials used in the class.

http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/mother_infant_program.htm

The MIRACLE Project of the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents offers family development and family support services for mothers and their infants in Los Angeles County Jail. The MIRACLE Project is conducted in partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. MIIRACLE focuses on building the capacity for attachment – trusting, affectionate relationships with others – in participating mothers, and insures that infants born in jail do not experience the multiple disruptions in care that are typical of the first year of life among infants of jailed women <http://www.e-ccip.org/program.html>

Girl Scout Council of Greater St. Louis provides scouting experience for girls whose mothers are incarcerated. Some of the scouting meetings are held in the correctional center with the mothers. <http://www.gscgsl.org/>

PrisonMATCH of NC, a private nonprofit organization, provides a program for mothers at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women. It is an eight week course in parenting skills with monthly three-hour visits during which the mothers cook a meal, play games, read, and spend time with their children. <http://www.prisonmatch.org/program.html>

Educational and support programs for parents:

Wisconsin Department of Corrections provides parent support groups that meet regularly to deal with self-help issues. One correctional institution conducts Fatherworks, a support group that gives inmates an opportunity to explore relationships with their own parents and to develop a healthy relationship with their children. Another facility conducts ParentShare, a parent support group for families with young children. <http://communityconnectionswi.org/>

Oregon Department of Corrections uses the best research-based parenting practices available. The Oregon Social Learning Center and the department jointly developed a comprehensive parenting curriculum for inmates. The 12-week program teaches inmates how to be effective parents, both from prison and upon release.

http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/TRANS/PROGMS/oam_children.shtml

Oregon also has the first Even Start Family Literacy program in a prison in the nation. The program facilitates family bonding and improves parenting skills while addressing the literacy needs of both mother and child. It serves up to 50 inmate mothers and 80 children. In addition to bi-monthly meetings, the children receive home visits from an on-staff family advocate who works with school personnel and other community agencies to ensure their needs are being met while the parent is incarcerated. Inmate mothers are required to attend debriefing sessions following each meeting with their children as well as to be enrolled in or on the waiting list for Parent Education classes. http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/PUBAFF/oam_families.shtml

At the Indiana Women's Prison, in addition to the parenting skills acquired by participating in class, inmates benefit from completing the requirements of Parenting Piece By Piece, by earning an additional six hours of visitation each month with their children in a family oriented visitation area. Inmates develop methods and share techniques they use to remain connected to their children while incarcerated. They are able to distinguish the difference between discipline and punishment, as well as behavior that could be considered abusive or neglectful. Since many inmates do not exercise good impulse control, some find it useful to study ways to create an environment in which their children learn to exercise self-control. In a survey of the women participating in the class, they were able to identify, independently, the skills, qualities, and roles of parents that contribute to the healthy and positive development of children.

<http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/facility/iwp/general.htm>

Colorado produced "Parenting from Prison: A Resource Guide for Parents Incarcerated in Colorado," a guide written for parents in prison who are trying to cope with emotional, financial, and legal issues regarding their children that arise during their incarceration. Sections contained in this manual include: introduction, parenting from prison, making custody arrangements for your children, financial help for the care of your children, dependency and neglect court cases, paternity, and child support. A series of attachments and directories are provided along with a glossary. <http://www.courts.state.co.us/panda/reports/parentingfromprison1.3.pdf>

The University of Maine, the Maine Department of Corrections, and others developed "Prisoners as Parents: Building Parenting Skills on the Inside" a handbook intended to provide a guide to incarcerated parents, prison administrators and staff members, and child development and parent education professionals interested in developing and running parenting education and support programs for incarcerated parents. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/hip.pdf>

Support Services for Families:

Washington Correctional Institute for Women's Family Council, which gives family members a means to weigh in on prison policies and proposals, may not only ease tensions within prisons, but may also help inmates maintain close family ties that can give them a better chance for a successful parole. The goals are to establish effective lines of communication between the institution, inmate families, and significant relationships; promote better understanding about correctional programming that affects family members and significant relationships; and develop a better understanding by the institution of the effect that correctional programming has on

maintaining family and significant relationships.
<http://www.doc.wa.gov/facilities/wccwdescription.htm>

The Family Visiting Program in New York State provides free bus service from New York City and Buffalo to facilities across the state, with stops at some on-route locations whenever possible. http://www.osborneny.org/Family_Resource_Center.htm

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice publishes a “Guide for the Families of Offenders,” which provides the public with a brief description of the correctional system and policies. The guide discusses information about visiting, mail, family assistance, religious needs, health, discipline, inmate grievance procedures, and other topics. It is available upon request from the department; a condensed version is available on the Internet. Each facility has a designated family liaison officer to promote contact between inmates and their families. Families may contact this officer for information and explanations, when needed. The officer can also provide families with information about the offender’s classification, location, and physical health as well as notify inmates about family emergencies.
http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/offender_family_guide/offguide-home.htm

FROM: The CWLA Children of Incarcerated Parents Curriculum, Module 4: Child and Family Supportive Programming.

Resources

Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners

Child Welfare League of America
440 First Street NW, Washington, DC
20001-2085
202.638.2952

E-mail: childrenofprisoners@cwla.org
www.childrenofprisoners.org

Provides information about children of prisoners, technical assistance, training for mentoring programs, schools, communities, agencies, corrections and law enforcement. Publications include:

- *Working with Children and Families Separated by Incarceration*, by Cynthia Beatty Seymour and Lois Wright
- *Reuniting: Money, Family and You; A Guide for Women Leaving Prison*. Contains information regarding reentering the community and family, finding and keeping a job, locating housing, accessing medical and legal benefits, and a resource list. (FREE)
- *The Kissing Hand*, by Audrey Penn, a book for children temporarily separated from loved ones.

Families and Corrections Network

www.fcnetwork.org

An organization for and about families of prisoners. Offers information, training, and technical assistance on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers and mothers, keeping in touch, returning to the community, the impact of the justice system on families, and prison marriage. Contains a library with fact sheets about families and children affected by incarceration. Publications include:

- FCN Report on Mentoring: This issue presents many views and aspects of this tapestry of program responses to a very complex demographic of children and

families. Articles describe several mentoring program models giving the viewpoints of program administrators and "philosophers." The voices of mentored children, as well as mentors and caregivers, are included.

Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents

www.e-ccip.org

Organizational goals are the production of high quality documentation on, and the development of model services for, children of prisoners and their families. Contains numerous resources related to children and families affected by incarceration

Women's Prison Association and Home, Inc.

www.wpaonline.org

Provides programs through which women acquire life skills needed to end involvement in the criminal justice system and to make positive, healthy choices for themselves and their families. Publications include:

- Supporting Women Offenders and their Families
- Partnerships Between Corrections and Child Welfare
- The Foster Care Handbook for Incarcerated Parents: A Manual of Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities
- Introduction to the Child Welfare and Criminal Justice System

Centerforce

www.centerforce.org

Provides services for prisoners, former prisoners, and family members of prisoners; holds an annual conference; and offers consultation and training for government agencies, community-based organizations, and correctional facilities across the country and internationally.

Programs Serving Children and Families of Prisoners

Administration for Children's Services

150 William Street, 4th floor, New York, NY 10038; 212.676.6943

Focuses on children in foster care. Provides facilitated visits with incarcerated mothers and fathers detained on Rikers Island.

Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers

1514 E. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 115, East Point, GA 30344; 404.762.5453

AIM serves incarcerated mothers, their children, and family members. Services include provision of educational materials about dealing with the criminal justice system, transportation to prisons, children's services (e.g., summer camp, after-school tutoring), and caregiver-child support groups.

Bedford Hills Correctional Facility

(children's programs)

247 Harris Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507; 914.241.3100, Ext. 384

Nursery Program – Designed for mothers who deliver their babies while incarcerated, this program enables mothers and their infants to live together for periods up to one year or 18 months. Programming includes prenatal care and postpartum classes on such topics as nutrition, immunization, infant development, and parenting; and substance abuse treatment. (See Reentry Campaign documentary PRISON LULLABIES by filmmakers Odile Isralson and Lina Matta [<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/pl.htm>]).

Children's Center - Provides a children's center that includes a playroom, nursery, and infant daycare for inmates' children. Also provides parenting classes, children's advocacy, tutoring, and visiting programs.

Centers for Youth and Families

5905 Forest Place, Suite 200, Little Rock, Arkansas 72207; 501.660.6886

The Family Matters program serves a target population of children from birth to 18 years

of age whose mothers are incarcerated, specifically those with the most urgent, extensive needs. A comprehensive, multi-systemic strategy serves all three groups: health and mental health services, domestic violence services, and reentry for incarcerated mothers returning to the community. These services are provided by the center and a collaboration of community agencies.

CLAIM

220 South State Street, Suite 830, Chicago, IL 60604-2160; 312.332.5537

CLAIM offers classes, support groups, and printed material addressing legal issues regarding parental rights, child custody, legal guardianship, kinship care, and visitation.

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars

4806 Seton Place, Baltimore, MD 21215; 410.358.9711

Incarcerated mothers and their daughters participate together in traditional Girl Scout activities; transportation is provided to the prisons where Girl Scout meetings are held. The program is designed to enhance visits between mothers and daughters, reduce the stress of separation, improve daughters' self-esteem, and reduce reunification problems.

Hopper Home

110 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10003; 212.674.1163

Clients in this New York-based program begin with a period of residence at Hopper Home and then transition into living in the community. While in the program, they receive intensive supervision, case management services, and skill-building training. One of the program goals is to keep children of women offenders out of foster care or to reduce children's length of stay in foster care.

Incarcerated Mothers Program

1968 Second Avenue, New York, NY
10029; 212.410.4200, Ext. 111

Provides educational, recreational, and supportive group activities for children of incarcerated mothers.

Indiana Women's Prison

401 N. Randolph Street, Indianapolis, IN
46201; 317.639.2671

Provides therapeutic parenting education and support groups, children's center, summer camp, parent/teen day, holiday parties, responsible mother/healthy baby program, family care plan, parenting class, and outreach/case management program.

The Osborne Association

36-31 38th Street, Long Island City, NY
11101; 718.707.2600

Provides youth and family services: parenting education, counseling, children's centers, and other services for incarcerated fathers and their children, support and toll-free information hotline for New York State prison families, and services for incarcerated mothers and children at Albion Prison. Publications:

- *Parenting From Inside/Out: The Voices of Mothers in Prison*
A book detailing the experiences of 11 mothers at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility who wrote this book to help other incarcerated mothers believe in the possibility of playing a significant role in their children's lives, even from prison.
- *How Can I Help?* A three-volume series of booklets
Information ranges from recognizing and dealing with the emotional trauma caused by parental imprisonment to negotiating the strict rules of mail, phone calls, and visiting hours at correctional facilities.
Vol. I: Working with Children of Incarcerated Parents
Vol. II: Sustaining & Enhancing Family Ties

Vol. III: Resources for Supporting the
Children of Incarcerated Parents

S.K.I.P., Inc. Community Resource Services (Save Kids of Incarcerated Parents)

669 Bush Drive, Hope Hull, AL 36043;
334.284.8103

Provides parent education, self-help support group, information, referrals, mentoring, group activities and gifts for children, religious ministry, public education, and advocacy.

St. Rose Youth and Family Center

3801 N. 88th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53222;
414.466.9450 Ext. 137

Provides family reunification services for prisoners and their children. Services include facilitated visits and foster parent training.

Summit House

122 N. Elm Street, Suite 910, Greensboro,
NC 27401; 336.691.9888

Residential and day reporting services for mothers and their children. The goal is to provide therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation. Clients address issues such as parenting, substance abuse, life trauma, relationship skills, child and maternal health, education, employment, financial management, and other life skills.

Washington Corrections Center for Women

9601 Bujacich Road NW, Gig Harbor, WA
98335; 253.858.4200

Provides a child advocacy council, family council, prison nursery/residential parenting program, Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, Early Head Start program, Back-to-School Carnival, Baby Read program, parent/teacher telephone conferences, mother/child gift exchange.

Directories

Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders, edited by James W. Mustin, 1998. Provides an extensive state-by-state listing of programs and organizations focused on children and families of offenders. Available from the National Institute of Corrections, www.nicic.org, 800.877.1461.

Parents in Prison: Addressing the Needs of Families, James Boudouris, Ph.D., 1996. Provides information from a national survey of prison-based programs for incarcerated mothers and includes personal contacts in prison-based and community-based programs located in prisons across the country. American Correctional Association, 800.222.5646.

Books

All Kinds of Families, Norma Simon, October 1987, Albert Whitman & Co., ages 4-8.

Breaking Out, Barthe Decléments, August 1993, Demco Media; Seventh grader must adjust to his father's imprisonment. For older children.

Coping When a Parent Is in Jail, John J. La Valle, June 1995, Rosen Publishing Group.

Into the Great Forest: A Story for Children Away from Parents for the First Time, Irene Wineman Marcus and Paul Marcus, PhD, New York: Magination Press, 1992.

The Kissing Hand, Audrey Penn. A book for children temporarily separated from their loved ones. Child Welfare League of America, 1993, 800.407.6723, www.cwla.org.

Let's Talk About When Your Parent Is in Jail, Maureen Wittbold. Powerkids Press, 1998.

Queenie Peavy, Robert Burch. The biggest troublemaker in school, Queenie learns a lesson when her father is incarcerated. Viking Press, ages 8-12.

A Visit to the Big House, Oliver Butterworth. Two children visit their father in prison. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993, ages 7-10.

Zachary's New Home: A Story for Foster and Adopted Children, Geraldine M. Blomquist, MSW, Paul B. Blomquist, New York: Magination Press, 1990, ages 3-8.

Workbooks

All About Change, Kathy Kagy-Taylor and Donna Dansker, 1991, The Aring Institute of Beech Acres, 6881 Beechmont Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45230, 513.231.6630, for children in grades K-4.

Because ... Somebody Loves Me, a workbook for children coping with painful transitions, helps them express feelings and come to terms with reality in a positive comforting way. Child Welfare League of America, 1996, 800.407.6273, www.cwla.org.

Help for Kids! Understanding Your Feelings About Having a Parent in Prison or Jail (for ages 6 and older), Carole Gesme, MA, CCDP, with consultation from Michele Kopfmann. To purchase: Carole Gesme, 4036 Kerry Court, Minnetonka, MN 55345, 612.938.9163 (phone), 612.935.2038 (fax).

If You Have a Parent in Jail then this Book is for You, Craig, Kevin, Josselyn, Alan, Brittney, with Bonnie Ayer and Amy Bigelow, School counselors at Flynn School, 1996, Burlington, VT, 05401.

McGruff and Scruff's Stories and Activities for Children of Promise

This activity book contains stories about some of the problems and situations children of incarcerated parents face. Children will learn conflict resolution skills to deal with tough issues such as peer pressure, bullying, and alcohol and other drugs. They will gain insight into how to maintain or establish contact with their incarcerated parents and how to deal with prison visits. They will be able to identify and better understand their feelings and to look for help when they need it. The stories are reinforced by activities children can do with their families or mentors. www.mcgruffstore.org/mcandscstand.html

Two in Every 100: A Special Workbook for Children with a Parent in Prison, published by Reconciliation Ministries, Inc., PO Box 90827, Nashville, TN 37209, 615.292.6371.

Videos

A Sentence of Their Own, Edgar Barends, Director. Chronicles one family's annual pilgrimage to a New Hampshire State Prison, revealing the damaging impact incarceration has on families.

<http://www.asentenceoftheirown.com/Home.html>

Champagne and The Talking Eggs, .Michael Sporn, Director. The true story of a young teenage girl whose mother is jailed for murder. Living in a Catholic children's home that is run by nuns, Champagne provides poignant commentary about her mother, her own situation, and her outlook for the future.

www.amazon.com

The Children Left Behind A 12-minute video produced by the Osborne Association for the "Children Left Behind Conference," June 4, 1994. <http://www.osborneny.org>

Children of Prisoners/Children of Promise, This 3-hour videoconference broadcast was intended to identify the problems and greatest needs of incarcerated parents and caretakers with regard to their children, identify the problems and issues that children of prisoners or former prisoners face that put them at risk, identify and describe evidence-based and promising approaches to support these children and build on their strengths, and describe the benefits of the criminal justice system becoming more family-friendly.

<http://www.nicic.org>, free

Home Boys: My Daddy's in Jail, filmed 8 years after "Homeboys: Life and Death in the Hood," features the same young men – all but one now in jail. It gives equal time to the prisoners and their children. 26 minutes www.reentryproductions.com/

Prison Lullabies, Brown Hats Production. An extraordinary tale of four women making life-altering choices and seizing the glimmer of possibility the prison nursery program is holding out for them and for the future of their children. www.reentrymediaoutreach.org

Visiting Day - VHS/DVD 39.95 READING RAINBOW Episode 146

A young girl and her grandmother make the long bus trip every month to visit the girl's father in prison. In this episode LeVar Burton introduces a family separated by a prison sentence. Viewers join the family for visiting day and find out what life is like for kids when a parent is incarcerated and what it's like for a parent who can't be at home with his family.

http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow/dvd_product_template.asp?catalog%5Fname=GPN&category%5Fname=Reading+Rainbow&product%5Fid=126%2E146D&product%5Fqty=1

When the Bough Breaks explores the emotional impact on children whose mothers are imprisoned for non-violent crimes, particularly drug-related prostitution and theft.
<http://www.itvs.org/whentheboughbreaks/index.html>

White Oleander – Astrid is a 15 year old child of an incarcerated mother. She is learning to cope with a succession of foster homes, a series of traumas, and her mother's jealousy. Her skill as an artist is her refuge. (Warner Brothers.2003) Rated PG13

Information for Mentoring Programs:

Many themes in the lives of children and families of prisoners are unique to the experience of having an incarcerated parent – and there are many variations on those themes. There are also aspects of the lives of children of prisoners that do *not* set them apart from other children and families. Mentoring programs for children of prisoners are also varied in mission and design, meeting different needs for different children, families, and communities. For more information about mentoring children of prisoners www.childrenofprisoners.org

The Child Welfare League of America, Inc. through its Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners, has developed a mentor training curriculum, co-authored by Ann Adalist-Estrin and Arlene F. Lee. (More information is available on CWLA's Web site at www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/cop_currentactivities.htm.) The curriculum is available with six master trainers to show mentoring programs how to train mentors to work successfully with children of prisoners. The first part of the curriculum educates volunteers about mentoring, the children of prisoners, their families, the importance of the parent-child bond, and racial and ethnic issues. The second part, designed ideally for use after mentoring begins, discusses building relationships and doing activities with kids; encouraging practical ways to connect with the incarcerated parent, where appropriate; and the role of faith in children's lives. The goal of the training is to ensure that successful mentoring relationships lead to positive outcomes for children affected by parental incarceration.

XIARA'S SONG is one of the programs showcased in the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign. All productions incorporate the theme of **reentry into family and community by individuals who were formerly incarcerated**. These and other programs are elements of the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative (MCMOI), an outreach project supported by The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). Launched in February 2001, MCMOI links media broadcasters to local stakeholders as a means to promote the Foundation's mission to help build strong and connected neighborhoods for children and families. Visit the Reentry Web site at: www.reentrymediaoutreach.org.



MCMOI campaigns are managed by Outreach Extensions, a national consulting firm that specializes in comprehensive, high profile educational and community outreach campaigns for media projects. For more information and community-use materials for these exciting programs, please visit the MCMOI Web site at www.mcmoi.org/.

For more information on the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign, please contact:



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