



Action Agenda for Children of Prisoners in Pima County, Arizona

Draft Recommendations
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Pima Prevention Partnership

Juvenile Services Coordinating Council
Children of Prisoners Planning Project
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National Institute of Corrections

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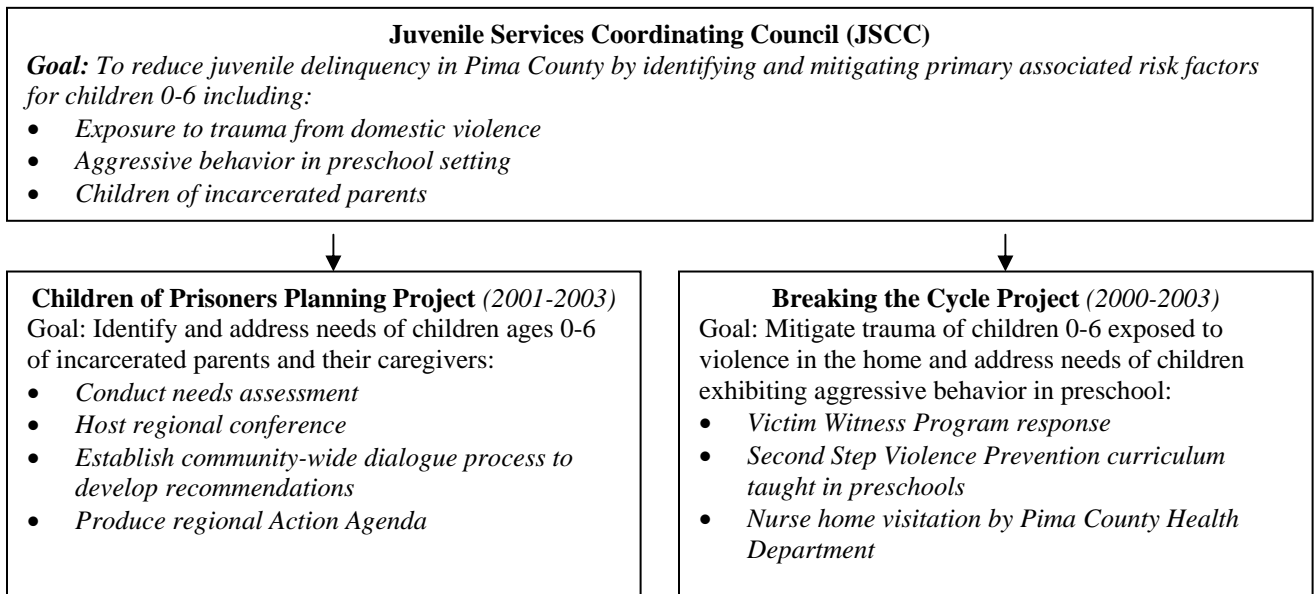
Background

In June, 2002 the Juvenile Services Coordinating Council (JSCC) *Working Group on Children of Prisoners* convened a collaborative community planning process to define an *Action Agenda for Children of Prisoners in Pima County* based on recommendations from the June 5 conference. To efficiently achieve this goal, three Dialogue Groups were established to focus on the critical stages of parental incarceration:

- I. Immediate Crisis Response
- II. Care Coordination
- III. Family Continuity

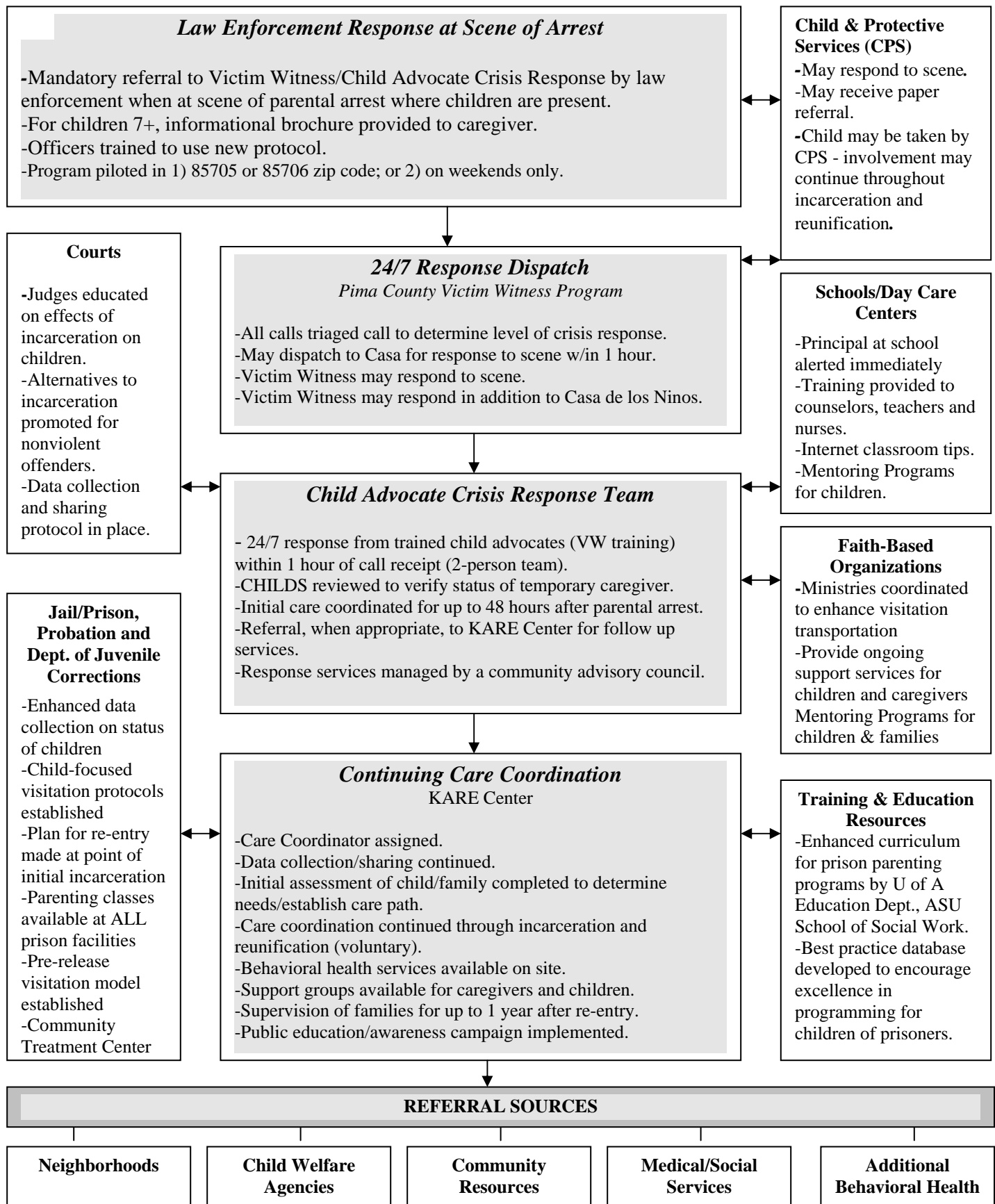
Over the past six months, professionals from various parts of the community conducted a series of meetings to 1) identify critical needs of children affected by parental arrest and incarceration; 2) examine existing systems and resources in the community; and 3) conceive of bold new programs and services. In addition, a series of focus groups were conducted with inmates, ex-inmates and caregivers who provided additional information and ideas about barriers and gaps within the current system and recommendations for improvement.

To provide a broader context for the project, the following describes how the issue of children of prisoners relates to the long-term vision of the Juvenile Services Coordinating Council in establishing effective delinquency prevention approaches for children 0-6 in Pima County.



The flow chart on the following page illustrates the vision set forth by the Children of Prisoners Dialogue Groups and focus group attendees for meeting the needs of children at each stage of the parental arrest and incarceration process. This is followed by a more detailed exposition of the ideas as they were articulated by each group.

Proposed Pima County Support System for Children of Prisoners



Recommendations of the Immediate Crisis Response Dialogue Group

1. Crisis Response Protocol for Law Enforcement

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Moderate</i>

- Create and implement a law enforcement protocol throughout Pima County in which the Pima County Victim Witness Program is contacted for crisis response in every case where children 0-6 are present at the scene of a parental arrest.
- Pilot new response protocol in 85705 or 85706 zip code or countywide on weekends only.
- Provide ongoing training/support for law enforcement officers in the new protocol.
- Evaluate use and effectiveness of protocol at regular intervals.
- Create a project oversight or advisory committee to guide process.
- Create informational brochure or packet for law enforcement officers to hand out for caregivers of children ages 7 and older.

2. Crisis Response Team at Scene of Parental Arrest

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Program Enhancement</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>High</i>

- Establish the Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Program as the central crisis response number of law enforcement in all cases where children are present at the scene of a parental arrest.
- Train Victim Witness volunteers to dispatch calls concerning children 0-6 to a 24/7 Child Advocate Crisis Response Team managed through Casa de los Ninos.
- Develop protocol for a two-member Child Advocate Crisis Response Team from Casa de los Ninos to respond to scene of parental arrest within one hour of dispatch to attend to immediate needs of children in the home.
- Establish protocol whereby the *CHILDS* system is checked to determine, when necessary, the suitability status of the caregiver assigned to the child/children by the arrested parent.
- Coordinate support services for child for up to 48 hours after parental arrest including referral to appropriate community resources and the KARE Center for long-term coordination.
- Provide cross training of all professionals and volunteers in both the Victim Witness and Casa de los Ninos training programs.
- Enhance data collection procedures by law enforcement, the courts and the Pima County Jail to identify the presence, location and needs of children of arrested parents.
- Develop guidelines and procedures to share data among appropriate agencies to better coordinate support for children.

Recommendations of the Care Coordination Dialogue Group

1. School Support for Children of Prisoners and Their Caregivers

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Moderate</i>

- Engage schools as partners in support for children/families during the time of parental arrest, detention and incarceration with the goals of 1) providing coordinated support; and 2) avoiding stigmatization for children.
- Develop and implement protocol at the scene of arrest to contact schools as resources for children after immediate trauma has occurred.
- Establish system whereby the principal of the school or director of the day care center is contacted within 12 hours when a parental arrest involves children in the home to ensure they receive immediate attention and support.
- Provide ongoing training and education for school officials, counselors and teachers, and pre-school and daycare center, charter schools & private school staff in understanding children's psychological and emotional needs surrounding the trauma of arrest and subsequent parental separation.
- Create Internet-based training and "tips" for teachers on a Children of Prisoners website with links to new theories and practices, as well as referrals and community resources.

2. Centralized Care Coordination for Children of Prisoners

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Program Enhancement and New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>High</i>

- Centralize support services for children of prisoners in a one-stop location to assess the child's short and long term needs (medical, behavioral, social, economic).
- Assign a Child Advocate Care Coordinator to child at parental arrest (with permission of caregiver) with continued case management available from detention through reunification.
- Eliminate barriers to accessing behavioral health services in the community.
- Ensure that representatives from various child welfare and community support agencies are available in one location to assist in determining the child's physical, dental, cognitive, emotional and developmental needs and providing on-site behavioral health services.
- Provide in-home visitation by the Child Advocate Care Coordinator to client families when necessary and with permission of family.
- Use the K.A.R.E Center to function as a one-stop center for children and families of incarcerated parents with centralized record keeping.

3. **Alternative Sentencing Options**

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>High</i>

- Educate judges and courts professionals about the effects of incarceration on young children.
- Promote sentencing alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders.

4. **Support for Caregivers and Children of Prisoners**

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Program Enhancement</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Low</i>

- Provide support for caregivers and children throughout arrest, incarceration and reunification through support groups and access to information and resources.
- Expand support groups available through the KARE Center to include child groups for ages 5 and older.
- Increase promotion of existing support groups and support services for caregivers through KARE and other agencies by developing public service announcements; securing media coverage; creating and distributing informational brochures; and developing and promoting a Children of Prisoners resource website.
- Maintain involvement with reunified families for up to one year after re-entry including supportive services for the children based on their needs.
- Enhance vocational training, parenting and other programs for inmates preparing for re-entry to ensure maximum family stability creates stability for child.

5. **Enhanced Visitation Procedures**

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Program Enhancement</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Moderate/High</i>

- Implement an age-appropriate model for visitation by children 0-6 for adoption by correctional facilities in and around Pima County.
- Provide “child-friendly” visitation areas for children/parents to interact in a supervised setting.
- Enhance the information provided about visitation procedures so that families and caregivers can avoid dress code violations and other problems leading to a negative visitation experience for children.
- Provide additional support for caregivers in handling the stress often related to visitation, i.e., separation issues experienced by the child; behavioral problems.

6 Centralized Database on Children of Prisoners

Type of Activity Required:

Program Enhancement

Perceived Impact:

Very High

Degree of Difficulty to Implement:

Low

- Create a centralized database that tracks children of arrestees through multiple systems.
- Develop protocols to ensure confidentiality within data collection systems.
- Expand juvenile court clearinghouse to capture additional information on the status and location of children of juveniles in the correctional system.
- Enhance law enforcement data collection to include information about children in the home at the time of parental arrest.
- Enhance Pima County Jail classification questionnaire to include questions about age and location and caregiver of each inmate's children, including questions such as "name 3 people who will always know how your children are doing?"
- Coordinate database collection and sharing protocols between agencies involved in crisis response and care coordination for children and families.

7 Neighborhood Support Systems

Type of Activity Required:

Program Enhancement

Perceived Impact:

Very High

Degree of Difficulty to Implement:

Low

- Incorporate neighborhood organizations and citizens as resources in providing care for children and families throughout parental detention and incarceration.
- Use a *Neighborhood Watch* format to create voluntary team of neighborhood residents (*PRO-Neighborhood; C.E. Rose Family Center; faith-based organizations*) to assist families in the area through the detention and incarceration period.
- Work with active neighborhoods to determine what information they need and provide training and resources to support it.

8 Public Education and Awareness

Type of Activity Required:

Program Enhancement

Perceived Impact:

Very High

Degree of Difficulty to Implement:

Low

- Convey the message to the public that parental arrest is a traumatic event for children and must be addressed as such by caregivers and all persons involved in the child's daily life.
- Develop curriculum and train professionals across systems in understanding needs of children/caregivers involved with incarcerated parents.
- Implement a public service campaign around needs of children in Pima County whose parents are arrested/incarcerated and focus on preventing juvenile delinquency by addressing this issue.
- Create and distribute various informational brochures highlighting available resources; navigating the legal system and other issues facing children of prisoners and their caregivers.

Recommendations of the Family Continuity Dialogue Group

1. Care Coordinator Child Advocate

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>High</i>

- Establish a Care Coordinator Child Advocate for all children of prisoners 0-6 who can be assigned at the time of sentencing to every child 0-6 and continues during incarceration and through the reunification process to act as advocate for child upon parental re-entry into the family/community.
- Link to probation to know where children are living and to complete home evaluations.
- Use the KARE Family Center to house this position with the support of an advisory group.
- Focus the support services at the point of parental reunification and re-entry on AHCCCS enrollment and behavioral health benefits to continue health and stability of incarcerated parent upon release.

2. Parenting Classes

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Public Policy Decision</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Unknown</i>

- Institute a statewide policy making parenting classes available at all correctional facilities and contract facilities including private prison facilities and community treatment centers.
- Work with Governor's Office to institute policy at state level.
- Coalesce and coordinate existing prisoner education providers to maximize their resources and make parenting classes available in all facilities without increasing the cost to the system (*Pima County Parenting Coalition; U of A; PCC*).

Develop standard curriculum for use in all facilities to provide uniformity and quality standards and post-release follow up.

3. Pre-Release Visitation Program

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>New Program</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Very High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>High</i>

- Create and implement a pre-release visitation program model that better facilitates family visitation and leads to the successful reintegration of incarcerated parents into the family structure.
- Provide written materials on visitation rules and dress code in several languages with materials using images rather than the written language;
- Create a centralized clothing bank at correctional facilities to help families/children to avoid dress code violations (refer to California/Breen model);
- Encourage faith-based organizations to act as proxy for caregivers in transporting children to visit parents in prison.
- Use the existing structure of the community treatment centers (halfway houses) to implement new programming that slowly reintegrates family members (parenting classes/lab activities; special events) and allows supervised and supported reunification experiences that build confidence and increase bonding.
- Maximize resources of Dialogue Group members (U of A School of Social Work; U of A Education; In Tow; etc.) to implement this programming without dedicating additional resources to effort.
- Implement availability of pre/post family counseling to move toward reunification.
- Implement family mentorship programming as part of the reunification process.

4. Transportation Services

<i>Type of Activity Required:</i>	<i>Program Enhancement</i>
<i>Perceived Impact:</i>	<i>Moderate/High</i>
<i>Degree of Difficulty to Implement:</i>	<i>Low</i>

- Coordinate transportation services to support family visitation at all correctional facilities within the State of Arizona.
- Improve linkages of existing transportation providers including the Salvation Army; Tucson Urban League; St. Mark's; Casey Family Programs; the KARE Family Center and Mt. Calvary Baptist Church to maximize passengers on each trip; streamline transport processes and improve cost efficiencies.
- Increase number of transports through better coordination/economies of scale among providers.
- Increase awareness of transportation services (times/dates/rules of visitation) among families of incarcerated persons.

5. Professional Training Across Systems

Type of Activity Required:

New Program

Perceived Impact:

Very High

Degree of Difficulty to Implement:

Low

- Create and implement a comprehensive, tiered training curriculum for professionals involved in law enforcement and children welfare/education to better understand and meet the needs of children and families of incarcerated parents.
- Level I: informational brochures on services available, FAQ's, etc.
- Level II: an active Internet website with key links to information; a bulletin board for question/answer information; and an online curriculum.
- Level III: a continuing education model providing CEU credits for professionals who attend workshops or complete an online curriculum/course.
- Maximize resources of Dialogue Group members (U of A School of Social Work; U of A Education; In Tow; KARE Family Center; Casey Family Programs, etc.) to design and implement this training package without dedicating additional resources to effort.

6. Ongoing Community Response

Type of Activity Required:

New Program

Perceived Impact:

High

Degree of Difficulty to Implement:

Low

- Create a mechanism for ongoing community response to the issues of parental incarceration that showcases best practices being implemented locally and encourages replication by others in the community.
- Work within correctional facility newsletters; professional organizations and other means of outreach to promote people and programs that are working successfully around this issue.
- Create a vehicle for annual "Children of Prisoners" program evaluation in law enforcement, corrections; child welfare and education that identifies best practices in the field and promotes replication.

Focus Group Findings

Four focus groups were held with 1) parents who are or have been incarcerated; and 2) caregivers of children of prisoners. The following are highlights of the concerns and recommendations shared by participants.

Inmates and Ex-Inmates

- Visitation is not kid-friendly
- Caregivers often choose not to bring the children for visitation
- In cases where the number of phone calls were limited, they were not enough
- Transportation costs for visitations were a barrier
- Their children “do not know them”
- Their children have behavioral problems, but there is little help to address these
- Agencies (such as transitional houses and rehabilitation facilities) do not support their involvement with their children
- It is difficult to implement newly learned parenting skills at home with real-life stresses
- It is difficult to save money (for their own rent) while paying transitional house fees
- Families need financial assistance while a parent is incarcerated
- If children are over 18, services are not available
- Their children get involved in criminal system while they are incarcerated

Caregivers

- Visitation is very traumatic for the children
- Behavioral problems are sometimes precipitated by visitations
- The logistics and rules of visitation are problematic
- Children have behavioral health issues and need services to address them
- There is inconsistent knowledge of services that are available for caregivers
- It is easier to access services (such as financial assistance) through CPS than DES directly
- Caregivers need mental health services/support
- Caregivers want more child development information related to trauma and instability
- The living situation of the child is usually temporary but should be more permanent
- Judges need to address the needs of the children at the sentencing of the parent

Juvenile Services Coordinating Council

Chair: **Emily Jenkins**, Government Relations, TMC HealthCare
Co-Chair: **Fran McNeely**, Special Projects, Pima County Attorney's Office
Kent Campbell, Director, Arizona Area Health Education Center
Hon. Hector E. Campoy, Presiding Judge, Pima County Juvenile Court
Neal Cash, CEO, Community Partnership of Southern Arizona
Fred Chaffee, Executive Director, Arizona Children's Association
Clarence Dupnik, Sheriff of Pima County
David Gaspar, Director, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections
Lisa Glow, Chief Counsel, Office for Women, Office of the Attorney General
Jack Jewett, Member, Tucson 30
Sue Krahe, Our Town Family Center

Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney
Linda J. Lopez, La Frontera
Robert M. Lehner, Assistant Chief, Tucson Police Department
Jan Leshner, Member, Tucson 30
Wade McLean, Superintendent, Marana Unified School District
Richard Miranda, Chief, Tucson Police Department
John J. Pedicone, Superintendent, Flowing Wells School District
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Beth Walkup, Business Consultant
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JSCC Children of Prisoners Working Group

Crisis Response Dialogue Group

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Our Town Family Center, Sue Krahe
Pima County Attorney's Office, Kathy Mayer
Pima County Attorney's Office, Victim Witness Program, Kathy Heitzmann, Terry Tiller and Viki Sharp

Pima County Health Department, Belia Johnson, Stan Levine, and Kathy Malkin
Pima County Sheriff's Department, Kathleen Brennan and Richard Fimbres
Southern Arizona Mental Health Corporation, Carol Little and Laura Waterman
Tucson Police Department, Family Crimes Section, Kevin Lane and Bret Klein
Adult Probation Department of the Superior Court in Pima County, Ron Dominguez and Harrison Blackwell
Arizona's Child Abuse Infocenter, Jane Schorzman
Marana Health Service, Behavioral Health, Michelle Ellis

Care Coordination Dialogue Group

Susan Abagnale, Director, Casey Family Programs, Chair

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Our Town Family Center, Sue Krahe
The Parent Connection, Kim Metz
Parents Anonymous, Erica Wagner
The Blake Foundation, Cassandra Fraley

Our Town Family Center, Sue Krahe and Jan Stickland
Tucson Unified School District, Robert Wortman and Beverly Herman
The Blake Foundation, Cassandra Fraley
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Family Continuity Dialogue Group

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American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), OUTMATES, Nancy Scholtz, and Caroline Isaacs
University of Arizona, Dr. Chris Segrin and Chris O'Neal
Pima Community College, Bernie Bennett

United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona, Ron Duncan
In-Tow, Inc., Carolyn Oliver and Carmen Martin
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