



# Parental Incarceration: Crisis for Children

Preliminary Needs Assessment  
Pima County, Arizona  
June 2002

Pima Prevention Partnership

Juvenile Services Coordinating Council  
Children of Prisoners Planning Project

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice,  
National Institute of Corrections

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## **Teresa's Story**

Teresa was born addicted to methadone and spent the first month of her life experiencing withdrawal in a local neonatal intensive care unit. Her mother was a methadone and heroin user during and after pregnancy. Her first two years of life were marked by intermittent neglect.

At two years of age, Teresa's mother was arrested, once again not able to attend to Teresa's emotional and physical needs. While police cars descended on the house - sirens, bright lights, and a lot of big people – Teresa watched from a corner of the living room. As her mother was taken away in handcuffs, Teresa's aunt was called and asked to take care of the child.

When the aunt arrived, Teresa was silent and withdrawn. No one told the aunt about special needs that Teresa might have as a result of pre-natal drug exposure, neglect, and separation from her mother. And she didn't ask.

It was unclear what would happen next. Would Teresa be with her for a day, a month, or longer? With little money to cover her own expenses, she found different people to watch the child while she worked.

At age six, her mother is still incarcerated and Teresa often cries uncontrollably at night and can't be consoled. She becomes hysterical if left alone in a room. At other times, she is sullen and shies away from physical affection.

*Source: Case history provided by the Working Group on Children of Prisoners (Teresa is a pseudonym)*

**Parental Incarceration: Crisis for Children**  
*Preliminary Needs Assessment*  
*June 2002*

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## I. Executive Summary

***Parental Incarceration: Crisis for Children*** is a report of preliminary findings of a needs assessment conducted by the Pima Prevention Partnership over the past six months on behalf of the Juvenile Services Coordinating Council's Working Group on Children of Prisoners. It presents an overview of the data and issues surrounding children, families and caregivers in Pima County affected by parental incarceration.

Historic changes in family systems, substance abuse rates, criminal sentencing policies and related increases in the number of incarcerated parents have exerted a profound negative impact on the well being of children. The prison population in the U.S. has more than doubled in the past ten years. In particular, the incarceration of women has grown rapidly as states and the federal government have instituted tough new mandatory sentencing policies as part of the "War on Drugs". In Arizona, the female inmate population is growing at a rate of 11.7% per year, close to twice the Arizona average for men. Research has demonstrated that women are more likely than men to be arrested for non-violent crime with 74% of women in state prisons are admitted for nonviolent offenses. Yet incarceration has replaced probation as the prime sentencing option for many women offenders.

The vast majority of women inmates were single parents when they were arrested. This presents a special challenge for the child welfare system. Children of mothers in prison are more than five times more likely to enter the foster care system than children whose male parents are in prison.

The problem is growing all over the U.S. There are close to 2 million children of incarcerated parents nationwide. We estimate there are 7,328 children in Pima County today with an incarcerated parent. More than 80% of those children are living with family network caregivers who may not be aware of available support. A range of valuable services exist throughout the community, but caregivers may not know they exist or how to access them.

The problems of children whose parents are in prison, unless addressed, may produce intergenerational patterns of crime and violence. According to the national Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, children of prisoners are 2-3 times more likely to become incarcerated themselves. Seventy-six percent of girls and 58% of boys currently serving a sentence in the Arizona Department Juvenile Corrections have a sibling or parent who is now or has been incarcerated within the past 10 years.

The good news is that experts state that the effects of trauma on young children from arrest and parental incarceration *can* be mitigated if recognized and addressed early and comprehensively. A thorough review of current service systems and law enforcement processes in Pima County reveals significant opportunity for child welfare, schools, faith-based organizations, mental health service providers and law enforcement agencies to work together on behalf of the children of prisoners in our community.

## II. Overview of Project

### *Background*

The Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JSCC) was formed in 1998 to collaborate on developing strategies for preventing juvenile delinquency in Pima County. The JSCC coordinated a study conducted by the Pima Prevention Partnership and developed an action plan for juvenile delinquency prevention which was published in March 2000. This report, *Delinquency Prevention and Early Intervention for Pima County Children Ages 0-6*, identified the most vulnerable children in our community and those at highest risk to become delinquent.

Children of incarcerated parents and five other groups were targeted as highly vulnerable. The other groups included children in dependency cases; preschool violent children; children of families with substance abuse problems; children of families experiencing domestic violence; and children of families with older siblings who are chronic truants.

In September 2001, an 18-month, \$99,905 planning grant to benefit children of prisoners was awarded to the Pima Prevention Partnership on behalf of the JSCC from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections – one of only four awards given nationwide. Over the past eight months, a comprehensive needs assessment has been conducted involving more than 60 agencies and organizations working with incarcerated adults and/or their children and caregivers.

The focus has been to identify 1) how many children in Pima County have an incarcerated parent; 2) demographic facts about the children; 3) with whom they are living; 4) available programs and services; and 5) additional resources to address their needs. Efforts have included extensive data collection; personal interviews with key agency personnel; stress-mapping; and ongoing briefings and dialogue through the JSCC Working Group on Children of Prisoners.

The following specific tasks have been completed or are currently underway by project staff at the Pima Prevention Partnership and volunteers from the JSCC Working Group:

- ◆ Enlarged the JSCC's Working Group on Children of Prisoners to represent as many agencies as possible involved with this population
- ◆ Convened monthly meetings of the Working Group to design the assessment process; identified key issues; shared data, and enlisted support for project activities
- ◆ Conducted 60, 45-minute personal interviews with personnel from law enforcement, courts, child welfare agencies, correctional facilities, mental health service providers, social service agencies, faith-based organizations to complete the needs assessment
- ◆ Collected data from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and correctional facilities including available programs and services, visitation policies regarding children and families, and other facts relating to this population
- ◆ Consulted with Dr. Denise Johnston, director of the national Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents to obtain technical assistance regarding best practices in identifying children, designing appropriate prevention and intervention strategies
- ◆ Observed Parent Education Program at Federal Correctional Facility, Tucson

- ◆ Reviewed best practices and national model programs
- ◆ Conducted extensive literature review of most recent research on the effects of parental arrest, detention, incarceration and re-entry, including the most recent report from Arizona State Attorney General's office
- ◆ Participated in a national meeting in Washington D.C. with other grantees to discuss best practices and collaborative opportunities
- ◆ Developing comprehensive flow charts to illustrate child status at 1) time of arrest; 2) detainment; 3) incarceration; 4) re-unification; and 5) probation.

### **Why Ages 0-6**

The link between prenatal and early childhood experience and serious pre-school problem behaviors and a high risk of juvenile delinquency is becoming clear. Several decades-long studies have established links between observed behavior and physiology or neurology, social events, changes in child development, and even change in various medical markers. Antisocial behavior has a chain of causation that can be influenced by prenatal conditions, postnatal experiences, early childhood circumstances and school-age events.

Since early childhood development is influenced by the quality of parent-child interactions, lack of adequate care giving may adversely affect stage-specific achievements that lay the foundation for personal competencies. Such achievements include emotional regulation during the first year, attachment during the second and third year, communication and formation of cooperative relationships during the pre-school years, and self-control, motivation, and academic competence during the school years.

The period of time from birth to age 6 is critical in early brain development, cognitive skill development and early socialization. The following list outlines some of the potentially negative factors identified in the research relating to the impact of trauma of parental separation and incarceration at different stages of infancy and early childhood.

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Infant (0-2):     | <i>Child has physiological response to stress; cognitive motor skill delay; inability to soothe; over-stimulation to environment; possible early brain injury (if physically exposed); high heart rate; overdeveloped flight or flight response to sudden situations.</i>  |
| Toddler (2-4):    | <i>Child feels separation but doesn't understand; may show early aggressive behavior; cognitive error in imitation of social behavior; inability to join; inappropriate responses to pain.</i>   |
| School Age (4-6): | <i>Child is aware of reasons for parental separation; feelings of abandonment; blames self; may show increased aggressive or antisocial behavior; inappropriate response to sudden situations; inference of negative intent from neutral events; poor age-appropriate achievement of social, academic or developmental milestones.</i> |

We understand that attachment to a primary caregiver fosters the development of emotional security and social conscience. Thus, we have concluded that to prevent delinquency we must address factors in the family and community which impact the child and his or her early development.

### **III. Preliminary Findings: Facts and Conditions**

As a result of local, state and national research, local surveys and interviews, we have identified the following facts and conditions affecting children of incarcerated parents in Pima County, Arizona.

**Of the 207,561 children age 0-18 living in Pima County today, almost 3.5% (7,328) have an incarcerated parent**, and a small percentage have both parents in the correctional system. Slightly more than half of the children of incarcerated parents, approximately 3,700 are ages 0-6.

*Parental incarceration as a “Mega Risk Factor.”* Over 10 million children in the U.S. “have parents who were imprisoned at some point in their children’s lives.” The problems of children of incarcerated parents, if not addressed can produce intergenerational patterns of crime and violence. Parental incarceration is a mega-risk factor, as it is often the culmination of many other risk factors such as exposure to substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, or child neglect. This is compounded by high rates of recidivism, so there will likely be multiple disruptions to the child’s life.

Foster parents and caregivers have reported that children of incarcerated parents experience severe problems in school and show signs of serious mental health and behavioral problems during the period of parental incarceration. These children have often been subject to a broad range of adverse experiences including extreme poverty, exposure to violence, pre-natal drug exposure, and violent deaths of family members. Added to these extreme stress factors may be the forced removal of the parent from the household. The Center for Incarcerated Parents found that these children were even more vulnerable to the impact of separation from parents, leading to severe traumatic stress.

Disruption in caregiving can mean disruption in the traditional role of the parent in helping children deal with difficult life situations. The stable, nurturing home environments that are key in building resiliency among young children are often absent. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates the critical importance of establishing a “strong and enduring attachment bond to at least one care giver during infancy”.

*The effects of policies and laws on children and families of prisoners.* A confluence of laws and policies have contributed to a significant increase in prison populations over the past decade. Federal Statutes enacted since 1980 have greatly influenced state policies by placing conditions on the receipt of federal funds. First, in 1980, The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act codified a policy of family preservation and reunification. With the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), however, federal policy shifted away from family preservation and reunification. The law still required that children not be removed unnecessarily

from their homes, but ASFA set forth a list of circumstances in which states need *not* work toward reunification. More significantly, ASFA placed strict time frames on reunification efforts and encouraged states to terminate parental rights in most cases where reunification efforts are not successful within the specified time frames.

Another federal statute, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) similarly limits reunification efforts and requires states to allow for the termination of parental rights where a parent has been convicted of certain crimes against children. Essentially, these federal statutes require states to pass implementing legislation as a condition of eligibility for federal funding of foster care and adoption assistance and the state child protective services system.

Because of the growing rate of incarceration and the trend to impose longer sentences, increasing numbers of parents find it difficult to maintain close ties with their children. Yet a majority of prisoners are parents of minor children, and a large percentage of incarcerated parents had custody of their children before going to prison. Over 85% of incarcerated mothers intend to resume care of their children after release.

According to Department of Justice statistics, 9.6% of state-incarcerated mothers have minor children in foster care, as the vast majority of incarcerated mothers are single parents and unable to make provisions for someone else to take over the children’s care. Thus, maternal incarceration may place even greater burden on children if the children lose their primary caretaker (temporarily or permanently). The children of incarcerated fathers typically continue to be cared for by their mother, but the children of incarcerated mothers are rarely cared for by their father.

According to our findings, more than 80% of children of incarcerated parents in Pima County are living with the other parent, a family caregiver or family friend (*Arizona Department of Corrections Inmate Survey 2000*). Relatively few of the children of incarcerated parents, fewer than 20%, are involved with Child & Protective Services in Pima County (*Pima County Child Protective Services, 2002*) Thus, the majority of children are not known by the child welfare system, and families are less likely to be utilizing social services designed for their benefit.

The following facts describe the scope of the problem in Arizona and provide us with additional details are the scope of the problem.

*How Many Children Are There?*

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| ◆ <b>Estimated Number of Pima County Children of Incarcerated Parents</b>  | <b>7,328*</b> |
| <i>Children with Parents in AZ State Prison, Tucson (as of 4/02)</i>   | 4,803         |
| <i>Children with Parents in Pima County Jail (as of 4/02)</i>  | 2,525         |
| <i>*based on jail/prison population per national multiplier: on average<br/>80% of female inmates have 2.4 children; 60% of male inmates have 2 children<br/>(These numbers do not reflect the number of men who have fathered children but paternity<br/>has not been established.)</i> |               |
| <b>Estimated Number of Children of Parents Currently on Probation<br/>in Pima County (as of 4/02)</b>  | <b>6,600</b>  |

### ***Who Are They?***

- ◆ Approximately 55% of the Pima County children of prisoners are ages 0-6; 45% are 7-18 years of age.  
Source: Arizona State Corrections, Pima County CPS and Pima County Jail, 2001-2002.
- ◆ Gender appears to be distributed almost equally: 49% of the Pima County children of prisoners are boys; 51% are girls.  
Source: Arizona State Corrections, Pima County CPS and Pima County Jail, 2001-2002
- ◆ Based on a snapshot review over one month period, 145 of 1,039 current social service cases (14%) managed by Child Protective Services in Pima County involve incarcerated parents.

### ***Where Are The Children?***

- ◆ We estimate that at least 5,700 of Pima County's children of prisoners currently reside with the other parent or a relative *without* placement through a social service agency.
- ◆ Based on a snapshot review over a one month period, the 145 ongoing social service cases where children have incarcerated parents involve 227 children. Of those, 78% (176 children) are in out-of-home care (foster care, relative placement).
- ◆ In its first two months of operation, between 12/01 and 2/02, there were 26 families (47 children) working with the K.A.R.E. Family Center, a Pima County kinship program which serves families and caregivers, including for families and caregivers of children of prisoners. These providers included 16 grand mothers, 1 great-grandmother; 3 sets of birth grandparents; 5 aunts, and 1 cousin.

### ***Arizona State Prison***

- ◆ There are 10 State Prisons located in Arizona. Of these, three (3) are located in Pima County: 1) Arizona State Prison Complex Tucson; 2) Southern Arizona Correctional Release Center (SACRC); and 3) Marana Community Correctional Treatment Facility
- ◆ The 2001 Total Prison Population in Arizona: 27,263
  - Male Population* 25,242 (92.5%)
  - Female Population* 2,021 ( 7.5%)
- ◆ Average Annual Increase in AZ Prison Population: 6.8%
- ◆ Average Age of Prisoner 34 Years of Age
- ◆ Average Length of Sentence 80 months (6.6 years)
  - Perryville (Women)* 25 months
  - AZ Prison Tucson (Men)* 38 months
  - SACRC (Women)* 6-9 months
  - Marana Community Correctional Treatment Facility* 6-8 months
- ◆ Arizona Prison Recidivism Rate: 56%

**Total Number of Children of Arizona Prisoners in 2001 14,938**

| <u># of Dependents Reported</u> | <u>Male Prisoners</u> | <u>Female Prisoners</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1 dependent                     | 4,749 (35%)           | 324 (25%)               | 5,073        |
| 2 dependents                    | 3,962 (29%)           | 352 (27%)               | 4,314        |
| More than 2                     | 4,929 (36%)           | 622 (48%)               | 5,551        |
|                                 | 13,640                | 1,298                   |              |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Total AZ Prison Population in Pima County 2002          | 3,918  |
| <i>AZ State Prison Complex</i>                          | 3,300 men,<br>125 male minors<br>adjudicated as adults |
| <i>SACRC</i>  | 168 women  |
| <i>Marana Community Correctional Treatment Facility</i> | 450 men  |

◆ **# of Children of AZ Prisoners in Pima County 2001: 4,803**

*Source: Arizona Department of Corrections, 2001 and 2002. calculated using national multiplier: 80% of women have 2.4 children; 60% of men have 2 children*

**Pima County Jail**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Average Daily Population in Pima County Jail 2001  | 1,504     |
| Average Annual Increase in PC Jail Population  | 7.8%      |
| Projected Population in 2005   | 2,034     |
| Average Length of Stay   | 1-2 weeks |
| Rate of Recidivism   | 64%       |
| 172 female detainees at the Pima County Jail surveyed by the PPP in June, 2001 had a total of 367 children with 38% under age 6; 25% ages 7-12; 13% ages 13-18 and 5% age 19 or older. |           |

**Estimated Total Number of Dependents of PC Jail Detainees 2001 2,525**

**Juvenile Detention - Pima County**

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Total # of juveniles (8-17 years) referred for Juvenile Court 2001 | 9,689       |
| <i>Male Population</i>   | 7,751 (80%) |
| <i>Female Population:</i>  | 1,398 (20%) |
| Average Daily Population in Pima County Juvenile Detention Center  | 180         |
| <i>(Maximum capacity will be 360 once staffing is completed)</i>   |             |
| Average length of stay in Pima County Juvenile Detention Center    | 15 days     |

*Source: Pima County Juvenile Detention Center, 2001-2002.*

### **Pima County Adult Probation**

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Total Number of Adults on Probation in Pima County 2002:           | 5,000+           |
| <i>Male Population</i>   | 4,000 (80%)      |
| <i>Female Population</i>   | 1,000 (20%)      |
| <i>Juveniles Adjudicated as Adults</i>                             | 12-16 on average |
| Average Length of Time on Probation:                               | 3 Years          |
| Estimated number of children of adults on probation in Pima County | 6,600            |

*Source: Pima County Adult Probation, 2001-2002*

### **Pima County Juvenile Probation**

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Total Juvenile Population on Probation in 2001 | 1,212        |
| Average Length of Time on Probation            | 24-36 months |

*Source: Pima County Juvenile Probation, 2001-2002.*

### ***What We Know About Women in Prison in Arizona***

**Average annual increase in Arizona female prisoner population      11.6%**

- 77% of female inmates are non-violent offenders
- In 2000, 57% were first time offenders and almost all women prisoners are classified as low risk.
- 40% of women were incarcerated on drug and alcohol offenses (possession, drug dealing, DUI)
- 75% of state female prisoners are mothers and have children under age 18
- 65% of mothers in state prison reported living with their children prior to going to prison.
- 54% of mothers in state prison have never been visited by their children
- 6% of women entering state prison are pregnant
- 23% of mothers in state prison reported symptoms of mental illness.
- Nearly 20% of mothers in state prison had been homeless in the year prior to incarceration
- 33% of female prisoners are serving time for drug-related offenses
- 65% of women in prison have reported using drugs regularly
- 20% of female prisoners lived in a foster home or group care facility while growing up
- The typical female offender comes from a single-parent home in which other family members have been incarcerated
- Six of 10 women in prison have been physically or sexually abused – many before age 18.

### ***What We Know About Men in Prison in Arizona***

**Average annual increase in male prison population**

**7.5%**

14% of men in state prison were raised by relatives and 17% spent time in out-of-home care

More than 33% had an immediate family member incarcerated

55% of men in state prison are fathers of children under age 18

32% have two or more under 18

44% of men in state prison reported living with their children prior to incarceration

90% said that at least one of their children now lived with their mother

54% of men in state prison have never been visited by their children

*Sources: Arizona Department of Corrections; National Council on Crime and Delinquency's NCCD Focus, November 2001; U.S. Department of Justice, August 2000; Child Welfare League of America, 2000.*

#### **IV. Key Issues Currently Affecting Children of Prisoners in Pima County**

Key issues identified in the grant application have proved salient, and have been the basis for the data collection and personal interviews conducted with agency personnel.

##### **ISSUE: Parental Arrest and Incarceration Causes Undiagnosed Trauma in Children**

###### **What We Have Learned:**

The limited research indicates that parental incarceration has significant negative consequences for children, including emotional and behavioral (fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, loss and guilt); problems relating to lack of contact; physical care and custody; child abuse and neglect; family stress associated with community and family reintegration, which may also increase the risk of abuse or neglect.

Intergenerational criminality and incarceration is evidenced in the 2001 statistics from the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections stating that 76% of girls and 56% of boys in prison had a parent or sibling in the correctional system in the past 10 years.

Children of incarcerated parents are two-three times more likely to be incarcerated than their peers. They are also five times more likely to enter the foster care system than other children.

##### **ISSUE: Child Trauma from Parental Incarceration is Not Considered a Crisis in Our Community**

###### **What We Have Learned:**

There is currently no designated policy or law that provides specific guidelines for crisis intervention and referral with children at the time of parental arrest. Law enforcement records are not routinely required to include data about children – names, ages, and placement. Until the *Breaking the Cycle* project was established one year ago, there was no routine crisis response that addressed the needs of children exposed to violence or parental arrest. As a result of *Breaking the Cycle*, the Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Witness is contacted by law enforcement to provide immediate crisis intervention and referral to Pima County public health nursing services. The intervention provided is child focused and therapeutic.

##### **ISSUE: Very Little Data is Currently Collected**

###### **What We Have Learned:**

A modest amount of basic data regarding children of prisoners is collected as part of the routine law enforcement process. Classification questionnaires, pre-trial interviews, pre-sentencing reports and probation reports collect data about children of prisoners as a means of completing a profile on the adult. The information is not specifically gathered to focus attention or resources on the child. Professionals interviewed agreed that the information may be gathered in the report, but is not currently analyzed, used on behalf of children or shared among agencies and institutions.

## **ISSUE: Arrest and Incarceration Process Is Not Child-Focused**

### **What We Have Learned:**

The mission of law enforcement is to promote public safety. Emphasis at the scene of arrest is to “clear the scene” as efficiently and safely as possible. Under most conditions, it is not practical for law enforcement officers to be involved in child welfare issues that are not directly and immediately related to the safety of children. The focus of professionals in pre-trial services and at the correctional facilities is on the person arrested. Any information gained about children or family members is secondary to their central purpose.

## **ISSUE: Children of Incarcerated Parents are Not a Recognized Group Targeted for Programming by a State Agency or Department**

### **What We Have Learned:**

Research verifies that children of prisoners have not been targeted for specific programming or funding by local or state agencies. Services for children and their caregivers continue to be provided on a case -by -case basis. Importantly, Dr. Denise Johnston and other national experts strongly warn against labeling or targeting services specifically for individual children of incarcerated parents. Prevention and intervention programs should adopt a community development approach in which broad-reaching programs are focused in high-risk areas, as well as in child-centered settings such as day care centers, schools and after-school programs.

## **ISSUE: Children Do Not Automatically Receive Follow-Up Support Services**

### **What We Have Learned:**

The vast majority of children (more than 80%) separated from their parent by arrest, detention or incarceration are not in any service system. Once a child is settled with a family or friend caregiver, services are rarely sought to assess or address the impact of trauma, such as behavioral or emotional issues. There is no continuum of care or services for the child. Little or no information is provided to caregivers or service agencies or school counselors about problems or issues that the child may be experiencing as a result of parental incarceration. The recently established K.A.R.E. Family Center provides free services, regardless of income, to all families in Tucson who have adopted, have a guardianship or are a relative raising other family member’s children.

## V. What Happens to Children from Parental Arrest to Re-entry

The following information was collected from personal interviews conducted with over 60 professionals from child welfare agencies, law enforcement and correctional institutions, behavioral health services, faith-based organizations, and other service providers.

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|--|
| <p><b>A. Parental Arrest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The nature of law enforcement is offender-focused</li><li>▪ Law enforcement’s primary responsibility is public safety – “clearing the scene”</li><li>▪ There is no standard protocol to address the presence of children at the time of arrest.</li><li>▪ Law enforcement might recognize the presence of a child. Action <u>may</u> include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Report details about children’s names and ages in police report</i></li><li><i>Assessment of emotional condition</i></li><li><i>Call for crisis intervention services</i></li><li><i>Referral to social services</i></li></ul></li><li>▪ Law enforcement officers are not routinely trained how to identify critical needs of children at the time of arrest beyond physical safety</li><li>▪ More than 80% of the cases, the child goes into the care of the non-custodial parent, a relative or a friend upon arrest of parent</li><li>▪ When this is the case, the child does not enter into any “system” and is not followed up by any outside service</li><li>▪ If it is determined that CPS needs to be involved at the time of arrest, the time until the officer(s) can leave the scene is extended</li><li>▪ In cases where the child is not present, parents may be reluctant to disclose information about their children and their whereabouts</li><li>▪ There is no standard source of information of available resources and potentially useful services at the time of arrest</li></ul>      |
| <p><b>B. Detention and Sentencing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Detention can be up to one year</li><li>▪ The average length of detainment is 1-2 weeks with a 64% rate of repeat detainment.</li><li>▪ Information about children is obtained at pre-trial services during the initial classification of arrestee</li><li>▪ If arrestee is detained, classification determines visitation schedule</li><li>▪ Visitation in jail is always non-contact</li><li>▪ Judges may not know issues critical to child development</li><li>▪ Children must be accompanied by the custodial guardian only to visit their parent in jail</li><li>▪ This may be a volatile and disruptive time for the child because permanent placement has often not been established</li><li>▪ The child may go through several different caregivers during this period</li><li>▪ When children are not being followed by a care system, there is no standard mental health assessment</li><li>▪ There is no standard source of information of resources and potentially useful services</li><li>▪ Caregivers are not routinely given information that could be useful to them such as: emergency food assistance, laws regarding custody and guardianship, rights and responsibilities of caregivers, healthcare, and other services</li><li>▪ Caregivers are not given information about the signs of trauma and possible effects on the child(ren)</li><li>▪ The many services that are available are not packaged or promoted as being services for this population</li></ul> |

### **C. Parental Incarceration**

- The incarcerated parent is likely to be geographically far away making it difficult for regular visitations to take place
- Fifty-four percent of men and women in prison are not visited by their families
- Visitations may be limited by the prison
- The recidivism rate in Arizona is 56%
- Inmates who have ongoing contact with their family have a lower rate of recidivism
- Data regarding dependants are not routinely collected
- Parental incarceration can be a time of opportunity for the inmates and the family, since the inmates is sober and more motivated to improve his/her life.
- There are many programs offered in prison aimed at bringing inmates and their families together
- Some prisons offer parenting classes as are incentives for good behavior and are available only to prisoners who qualify
- Security officers at prisons are largely willing to facilitate processes that help the children of the incarcerated person
- Incarceration is the time where children are in a more permanent living situation
- Families and caregivers may opt to not visit the incarcerated parent
- There is not routine identification and referral of children who might be effected by parental separation for available programs
- There are no known programs or support groups specifically for children whose parents are incarcerated or their caregivers
- Schools are not routinely made aware of parents or siblings who are incarcerated
- Social services and resources are available if the caregiver initiates services
- The many services that are available are not packaged or promoted as being services for this population.
- There is little public awareness of the needs of children whose parents are incarcerated
- There is disagreement within the field regarding whether targeted social groups provide a negative stigma for the child

### **D. Reunification**

- Custody, guardianship and placement are often in question during reunification.
- Inconsistent care-giving may result in increased stress and more behavioral consequences for the child.
- There are several comprehensive support programs for the prisoners returning to the community.
- Reunification services are marketed very well to the inmates but less so to the caregivers.

## **VII. Promising Approaches and Good Ideas**

When the project grant was written in the Spring, 2001, we thought we would be able to identify best practices from a menu of tested programs around the country. We found, however, that there are very few established best practices for children of incarcerated parents nationwide and next to no programs focusing specifically on children 0-6.

The August 3, 2001 report on Children of Incarcerated Parents published by the Office of Attorney General Janet Napolitano’s Child and Family Protection Division provided a framework of existing research and recommendations that have been implemented nationally. Valuable information was also obtained from national experts, other grantees, and resource links identified at a March, 2002 meeting in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The project’s Steering Committee decided that the JSCC’s Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents - 55 local professionals from organizations representing every facet of this issue - constituted the best source of promising approaches and good ideas to best serve our particular cultural and demographic population.

The following information is a compilation of best ideas from those three central sources. A few of these ideas are in place to some small degree.

| <b>Type Of Strategy</b>                  | <b>Promising Approach/Good Idea</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Early Identification and Referral</b> | <p>Immediate crisis intervention for children at time of parental arrest, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, like the <i>Breaking the Cycle</i> Project.</p> <p>Immediate support and education for caregiver, information about available services (guardianship, financial support, food, car seats, etc.) and the effects of trauma on children.</p> <p>Law enforcement and victim services personnel have the most up-to-date knowledge about best practices in crisis intervention for children 0-6.</p> <p>Pre-trial services is a good place to compile information on inmates’ children’s, ages, and locations and care arrangements.</p> <p>A handbook of resources available to caregivers at the time of arrest or detainment. Include information provided about what to expect from the system and how it can impact children.</p> <p>Provide an advocate for child throughout the process (arrest, visitation, sentencing, incarceration, reentry).</p> <p>Institutionalize data collection about children at various stages of impact including arrest, pretrial services, jail, prison, probation.</p> |
| <b>Assessment</b>                        | <p>Prenatal and Infancy Nurse Home Visitation Program through Public Health Nursing</p> <p>Create a Center for Multi-disciplinary Assessment (per Dr. Bruce Perry at Baylor University).</p>   |

| <b>Type Of Strategy</b>                         | <b>Promising Approach/Good Idea</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Laws</b>                                     | <p>Apply adoption law deadlines flexibly to ensure best interests of the child are being met.</p> <p>Create community-based treatment centers as a long-term treatment (1-2 years) alternative to incarceration for non-violent drug offenders.</p> <p>Mother-Child Correctional Programs house women prisoners and children together, operated under supervision of correctional authorities providing services during first five years of the child’s life.</p> <p>Laws that allow incarcerated parents to be able to maintain their ties to their children and support reunification services for incarcerated parents</p>   |
| <b>Accessible Support Services for Families</b> | <p>Provide extensive services including home visits, advocacy and referral, support groups, communication with inmates (example: <i>Project SEEK: Services to Enable and Empower Kids</i>).</p> <p>Encourage faith-based programs for children of incarcerated parents.</p> <p>Use “consumer consultants” who are ex-inmates paid a small stipend to provide a meaningful role in advising and supporting caregivers/families.</p> <p>Implement specific programs to target children of prisoners providing services that address multiple risk and protective factors.</p> <p>Utilize <i>Multi-Systemic Therapy</i> to work with caregivers/children intensively in home.</p> <p>Implement family impact counseling which coordinates the nucleus of people in the child’s life to provide therapeutic intervention.</p> |
| <b>Training</b>                                 | <p>Training programs for school and child welfare professionals in understanding and identifying the physical effects of trauma on early brain development; behavior issues in the context of parental incarceration; and ways to build relationships with caregivers.</p>  |
| <b>Multi-System Collaborations</b>              | <p>Share data regarding children between criminal justice and child welfare systems.</p> <p>Cross train staff from child welfare, law enforcement, family advocacy groups and schools and engage in joint program planning.</p>   |
| <b>Recreation Activities and Opportunities</b>  | <p>Create activities specifically for children of prisoners including educational enrichment, recreation therapy, and community service learning and character education.</p>   |

| <b>Type Of Strategy</b> | <b>Promising Approach/Good Idea</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Policies</b>         | <p>Enhance institution’s <i>Classification Questionnaires</i> to obtain information about kids and caregivers.</p> <p>Encourage physical contact between parent and child with jail visitation, as appropriate.</p> <p>Create clear, family-accommodating policies around jail/prison visitation that are focused on the best interest of the children.</p> <p>Make it possible, where appropriate, for parent to be involved in decision-making for their child (e.g., school meetings, behavioral health assessment by teleconference).</p> <p>Implement routine family advocacy in the court system.</p> <p>Place a full-time case manager in correctional institutions to address the needs of children and families to avoid further burdening overworked staff. Worker coordinates visits and services.</p> <p>Mandatory parenting and life skills programs in prison for inmates who are parents.</p> <p>Family therapy in conjunction with visits.</p> <p>Applying the Adoption and Safe Families Act’s time deadlines flexibly.</p> <p>Legal advocacy resources for caregivers.</p> <p>Screening to determine fitness of kinship caregivers.</p> |
| <b>Parent Education</b> | <p><i>MotherRead</i> type literacy programs provide tape recordings of parents reading books for children to hear.</p> <p><i>Girl Scouts Beyond Bars</i> (GSBB) where girls and mothers work together on projects and activities.</p> <p><i>Parenting from Prison</i> educational curriculum.</p> <p>Programs for inmates that allow children to take part in family activities outside regular visiting hours.</p>   |

| <b>Type Of Strategy</b>                      | <b>Promising Approach/Good Idea</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Public Awareness and Public Education</b> | <p>Widely publicize support service availability in community.</p> <p>Produce directory of services for families of incarcerated adults and affected children.</p> <p>Educate the general public about needs of children of incarcerated parents and sensitize them to the issue.</p>  |
| <b>School and Preschool Curriculum</b>       | <p>Implement a prevention curriculum like Second Step which fosters empathy, anger management and self-control for very young children and their families.</p> <p>Full-day kindergarten.</p>   |
| <b>Faith-Based Support</b>                   | <p>Volunteer mentors are recruited by congregations and matched with children of current or former prisoners.</p> <p>Increased support for parental visitation by children.</p> <p>Increased role of faith-based organizations in identifying and serving children of incarcerated parents and caregivers.</p> <p>Prison ministry to inmates and families.</p> |
| <b>Support Groups</b>                        | <p>Establish designated support groups for caregivers and children of incarcerated parents.</p>  |

## **VII. Next Steps for the Children of Prisoners Planning Project**

Thus far, over sixty law enforcement systems and social service agencies have provided information to the project. We have compiled extensive data to incorporate in our ongoing planning. It is important to note that the availability of these services does not mean that they are being effectively utilized. Identification and referral is a vitally important strategy to ensure that 1) parental incarceration is seen as a crisis for children; 2) caregivers are well informed of potential needs and available services. For example, crisis intervention services exist, but if children aren't perceived as being in crisis, they aren't called. Emergency services are available, but caregivers may not know how to access them.

To complete our assessment, we have begun to schedule focus groups and interviews with caregivers, inmates, and children affected by parental incarceration.

Next steps in the needs assessment will include continuing research regarding:

- Opinions and ideas of inmates, former inmates, children of incarcerated parents and caregivers
- Providers of reentry and reunification programs and support
- Cross training opportunities among law enforcement and service providers
- Policies that relate to service provision, data sharing, and sentencing options
- Assessment of training needs at child welfare agencies, schools, and youth serving programs

Over the next eight months, the Working Group on Children of Prisoners will convene a collaborative community planning process to define an *Action Agenda for Children of Prisoners in Pima County*.

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## **IX. Rewriting Teresa's Story**

This report begins and ends with Teresa's story. In our community today, there are more than 7,000 children with an incarcerated parent. More than 80% of these children are not involved in the child welfare system. They are experiencing the crisis of parental separation with varying degrees of impact.

Factors relating to family and societal support can rewrite this story for Teresa and others similarly affected.

These are some things that could make a difference:

- Prenatal and post-natal support for addicted pregnant women
- Immediate crisis intervention for children 0-6 at the time of arrest by skilled professionals to mitigate effects of trauma
- Follow up with caregiver by a designated care coordinator assigned to support the child and family in accessing services and information
- Coordination of a multi-disciplinary assessment of the child to determine physical, dental, cognitive, emotional and developmental needs
- As appropriate, communication with incarcerated parent encouraged by caregiver and prison authorities
- Training for pre-school and daycare staff to identify special needs of children affected by parental incarceration and the provision of ongoing support programs

The JSCC asks, given the multiple difficulties experienced by children of incarcerated parents, how can we best foster a nurturing, stable environment in the early years of a child's life, with positive stimulation, attention and a sense of continuity with attachment figures? Ultimately we believe that sense of trust and security will create healthier people and better citizens, a worthy outcome and one to which we are committed.

### **Juvenile Services Coordinating Council (JSCC)**

The Juvenile Services Coordinating Council (JSCC) is a broad-based collaborative institutional partnership which includes law enforcement, mental health services, the courts, and substance abuse prevention and child welfare services in addressing the issue of delinquent youth and their families. It was formed to address the most vulnerable population of children and those most likely to overstress the human service and law enforcement system in the future.

The Juvenile Services Coordinating Council is made up of 24 individuals from organizations throughout Pima County. The JSCC evolved from a meeting convened by Tucson Medical Center in 1998 to address needs of children in the juvenile justice system. From this meeting, the JSCC was formed and the members decided to collaborate in developing strategies for preventing juvenile delinquency. TMC obtained grants from the Flinn Foundation and St. Luke's Charitable Health Trust to fund a study and develop an action plan for juvenile delinquency prevention which was conducted by the Pima Prevention Partnership. In 2000 the JSCC obtained funding for its first community initiative, called Breaking the Cycle, a collaborative project that is being administered through Pima County. To develop the Children of Prisoners Project, the JSCC obtained financial support from the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA), Tucson 30, the Pima County Sheriff's Office, and the Gannett Foundation. Donated staff from TMC HealthCare and the Pima County Attorney's Office provide leadership for JSCC activities, with staff support from Pima Prevention Partnership.

### **Pima Prevention Partnership (PPP)**

The Pima Prevention Partnership (PPP) is a community-based, nonprofit organization that provides research, program and grant development assistance for JSCC initiatives. Projects include the county-wide assessment and report on delinquency prevention, which was published in March 2000 and the 3-year *Breaking the Cycle* Project in partnership with the Pima County Health Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, Pima County Sheriff's Department, Tucson Police Department, and Child and Family Resources.

In its ten-year history as Pima County's leading substance abuse and delinquency prevention coalition, the Partnership has provided policy leadership, program development, youth prevention services, grant writing, planning and evaluation services to promote community development. In 1999, PPP was recognized as the Outstanding Coalition in the U.S. from CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) for its work in delinquency prevention and inclusion of all ethnic and disability cultures in its prevention efforts in Pima County.

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