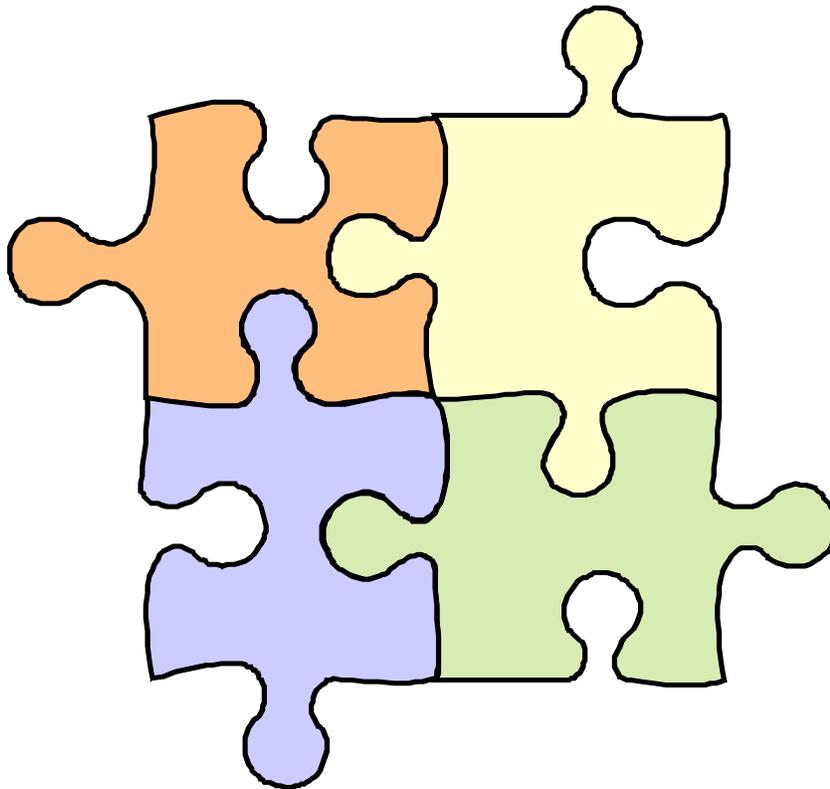


Final Report of the Oversight Committee

# Children of Incarcerated Parents

To the Governor and  
The Legislature of Washington



June 30, 2006

You're still around  
I see you but you are not actually there  
I touch your face in my dreams but it's not real  
I listen to your voice as I read your letters  
But it's only my voice  
I can hear you telling your silly jokes  
But it's just me telling them just to hear them  
Say that you're a funny person  
I always hear you talking about your childhood  
Stories but it's just me telling everyone you're still around.

Becky, 17 years old

*Excerpted from the booklet "I Touch Your Face In My Dreams"  
published by Western Prison Project in December 2005.*

*Prepared on behalf of the Oversight Committee by*

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## IV. Executive Summary

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The Oversight Committee began deliberation on September 8-9, 2005. Dividing into subcommittees on Pre-Incarceration, Incarceration, Re-entry, and On-going Services, the Oversight Committee gathered information through a review of the literature and programs around the country, informal surveys, interviews and focus groups with service providers, offenders, children of offenders, caregivers, and DOC staff. The Department of Corrections and Pacific Lutheran University co-sponsored a voluntary statewide survey of offenders, gathering data about offender backgrounds, their families and their children. The survey is based on a random sample of male and female offenders from 15 institutions. The results will be available in September 2006 to inform legislators, Department of Corrections and partner agencies about offender views on the needs of their children and families. After study over the course of eight months, the Oversight Committee offers these recommendations for consideration by the legislature, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Social and Health Services, and our partner agencies in local communities.

### **Oversight**

#### Recommendation 1: Oversight

Create a policy level position, funded by the Department of Corrections (DOC), to work on the systemic parenting issues faced due to incarceration. The intent would be to provide intervention to reduce intergenerational incarceration and to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations or any others made by the legislature concerning children of the incarcerated.

### **Data Collection**

#### Recommendation 2: Gather child data during the court hearing process.

Develop a protocol for gathering information about children as part of the criminal hearings process, including bail hearings and sentencing. Determine how this information can be shared with appropriate service providers.

#### Recommendation 3: Gather child data in Department of Corrections

##### Diagnostic and Reception Centers

Develop a protocol for gathering information about children as part of the reception process, while offenders are being classified and oriented to the Corrections system. Children's information can be used in development of a family plan and transition planning, and can be used by facilities for on-going design of family friendly services.

### **Professional Development**

#### Recommendation 4: Develop arrest protocols for adults with children.

Create and distribute law enforcement arrest protocol for when children are and are not present at place and time of arrest, incorporating a basic protocol for handling children who are present and possibly exposed to illegal drugs (such as, but not limited to, methamphetamines or manufacturing equipment).

Recommendation 5: Educate human service, judicial and education professionals.

Develop and then provide education and training for staff about the special needs of children of prisoners at institutions whose constituency includes children of incarcerated parents. These institutions include schools, social welfare and child protection agencies, foster care agencies, mental health centers, juvenile detention centers, child care agencies, courts, jails and correction facilities.

**Innovations in Services**

Recommendation 6: Provide child care for families

During court proceedings

Create drop-in child care centers at or near courthouses and/or identify existing child care resources for every jurisdiction that can be utilized for care of children while parents/caregivers are in the courthouse for criminal proceedings and related matters.

Recommendation 7: Collaborative Inside/Outside Family Resource Centers—  
A Three Year Demonstration Project

This recommendation provides staffing to ensure that while offenders are incarcerated they are working at skills and connections that will help them resume parenting at the same time that families are being assisted to find needed services during the time the incarcerated parent is away. At transition, when plans are made for the offender's reentry, staff inside corrections centers and staff in the community work together to help the family successfully deal with reintegration or to help them plan how to support the children if they decide not to reunite. This new model for services delivery is innovative and collaborative in nature, requiring a mix of public and private funds, staffing, coordination, and evaluation.

- A. Focuses on sustaining the family during the parent's incarceration. Build community partnerships between DOC, DSHS, law enforcement, judicial systems, community family and child service providers, faith communities, community colleges and education services, Workforce Development and employment services. Co-locate staff and services in Family Resource Centers (FRC) in trial communities easily accessible to children of incarcerated parents, their caregivers and their re-entering parents.
- B. Focuses on planning for family reunification and offender reentry. DOC personnel specialized in both offender and family management work as Family Classification Counselors (FCC) in the prison facilities and Family Community Corrections Officers (FCCO) housed in the FRC. This multi-disciplinary team would coordinate an inside/out strategy to support the implementation, monitoring and successful achievement of a Family Service Plan. (See Appendix B to explore the components of a possible Family Service Plan.)

Recommendation 8: Implement systemic programs that encourage contact, increase communication and strengthen the changes of reunification between children and their incarcerated parents.

Recommendation 9: Promote Family Economic Stability.

Promote economic stability in families where children of incarcerated parents reside. Promote the capacity of inmates to provide for their children upon release in order to build durable family relationships and healthy living environments for those children.

The Oversight Committee also identified some promising practices that merit further study. Existing services for children of offenders in Washington State and the United States are identified in the Appendix, as is helpful information about Recommendation 7. The report concludes with a bibliography.

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## I. Authority for Report

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During the 2005 legislative session, HB 1426, Children of Incarcerated Parents was passed by the Washington legislature and signed by Governor Christine Gregoire. The legislation directed the Department of Corrections, in partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services, to establish an oversight committee to develop a comprehensive interagency plan to provide the necessary services and supports for the children of this state whose parents are incarcerated in jail or prison. The plan was to include:

- Identification of existing state services and programs, as well as recognized community based services and programs, for children whose parents are incarcerated;
- Identification of methods to improve collaboration and coordination of existing service and programs;
- Recommendations concerning new services and programs for children whose parents are incarcerated, involving both interagency and community based efforts;
- Identification of evidenced-based practices and areas for further research to support the long-term provision of services and programs for children whose parents are incarcerated, including the following:
  - (i) Identification and ongoing collection of data relating to incarcerated individuals in the state who have children under eighteen years of age; and
  - (ii) Identification and sharing of information relating to children of incarcerated parents who are involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, to the extent permissible under federal and state law.

This report is a summary of the work of the oversight committee.

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## II. Members of the Task Force

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### **Department of Corrections**

Belinda D. Stewart, Superintendent, Washington Correction Center for Women  
Dee Crocker, Coordinator of Community Involvement, Washington Correction Center for Women

### **Department of Social and Health Services**

Betsy Rodgers, Child Welfare Services, Children's Administration  
Tom Berry, Economic Services Administration  
Patricia Edwards, Juvenile Rehabilitation

### **Law Enforcement and Jails**

De (Wm) F. Dennis, Jail - Chief Deputy, Island County Jail  
Rick Kieffer, Police – Chief, Normandy Park Police

### **Education**

Kathleen Z. Russell, Pacific Lutheran University  
Kathleen O'Neill Sande, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

### **Legal/Judicial**

Patrick Dowd, Office of Public Defender  
Harry McCarthy, King County Superior Court Judge  
Rick Peters, WA Association of Prosecuting Attorneys; Thurston County  
Janet Skreen, Senior Court Program Analyst

### **Community Based Organizations**

Tamzyn Palmer, Children's Home Society of Washington  
Jennifer Eugene, Volunteers of America West WA (VOAWW)  
Lorrie Milford, Volunteers of America West WA (VOAWW)  
Beth Minker, Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
Ron Murphy, Casey Family Programs

### **Caregivers**

Kristie Lund, Relative

### **Faith Based Organizations**

The Rev. Paul Benz-ELCA, Public Policy Office of Washington  
The Rev. Marvin Charles, Divine Alternatives for Dads  
Karen Johnson, COO, Life Development Resource Center

### **Legislative Liaison**

Rep. Mary Helen Roberts

### **Executive Assistant**

Karen Campbell-Woods

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### III. Oversight Committee Process

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The Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) appointed Ms. Belinda D. Stewart, Superintendent of Washington Correction Center for Women (WCCW), and Ms. Betsy Rodgers, DSHS Children's Administration, to select and convene an oversight committee. Working with Ms. Dee Crocker, Community Involvement Coordinator from Washington Correction Center for Women and Dr. Kathleen Z. Russell from Pacific Lutheran University, the group recruited a diverse committee that met the legislation's requirement for representation from the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the courts, prosecuting attorneys and public defenders, and community-based agencies working with families of individuals who are incarcerated as well as caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated.

The oversight committee's initial meeting took place at Pacific Lutheran University's Columbia Center on September 8-9, 2005. The group divided into subcommittees on Pre-Incarceration, Incarceration, Re-entry, and On-going Services. Each sub-committee was encouraged to add members to assist with its ongoing investigation of its area, and was charged with gathering information to document current services, unmet needs of children and families, and best practices and empirical research in the area, and to crafting recommendations. The oversight committee met three times in the fall of 2005, and then met monthly through spring of 2006. At each oversight committee meeting, subcommittees reviewed their findings and their recommendations. All recommendations had input from every oversight committee member.

The subcommittees used a variety of methods to gather information, from attempting to survey service providers in their areas, to interviewing offenders, service providers, caregivers, and adult children of offenders. Resources in Washington state and around the nation were cataloged (Appendix C, D). A review of the literature was completed (Appendix E). The Department of Corrections and Pacific Lutheran University co-sponsored a voluntary statewide survey of offenders, gathering data about offender backgrounds, their families and their children. The survey is based on a random sample of male and female offenders from 15 institutions. A complete report of this work will be made available to the Departments and to legislators by September 30, 2006.

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## V. Children with Incarcerated Parents

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From the point of their parent's arrest, children of prisoners endure a silent sentence of their own. Deprived of one of the wage earners who would ordinarily support them, burdened with a secret that isolates them from their peers, and often moved from their home once or more frequently after their parent's arrest, these children embark upon a journey through unfamiliar territory that parallels that of their incarcerated parent. This journey is likely to impact their economic and physical wellbeing, their school success, their social support systems, their emotional health, and their prospects for the future. Children of the incarcerated tend to come from resource poor families and tend to be cared for in families whose resources are compromised by their presence. They are at higher risk to fail at school, to have behavior problems and to go to prison themselves. They are likely to feel anger, depression, and isolation.

Between 1991 and 1999 in America the number of children with a parent in a state or federal prison rose from 936,500 to 1,498,800 (Mumola, 2000). While about 90% of incarcerated fathers reported that their children lived with their mothers, only 28% of women said that the father was the child's caregiver. Twenty-eight percent of children of incarcerated mothers in the US are cared for by their grandparents. Data for Washington State will be available in September 2006. In the interim, extrapolating from Oregon's figures and adjusting for the larger Washington State prison population, it would be reasonable to anticipate that at least 20,000 children in Washington have a parent who is currently in prison. (Children with Incarcerated Parents, 2002). This does not include those with parents in jails or those under the supervision of community corrections. Children with incarcerated parents are a growing population of children at risk.

The policies of public or private agencies are not intended to punish the children of prisoners or the families of prisoners but often they create unintended impediments to maintaining a familial connection to the offender, they do not support children and families, and they do not prepare offenders to build durable families when reunited with their children. This is true at all steps of the journey from arrest to re-entry. Not all children can live with their offender parent post-incarceration. When kinship care is not available, these children, especially if they are older, can linger in foster care awaiting adoption. DSHS reports that as of May 31, 2006, there are 1,949 children who are legally free awaiting adoption in Washington State. 1,000 of them are living in the home that has been identified as their permanent home, in other words, they are being fostered by persons hoping to adopt them. 673 of them are over the age of 10. In fiscal year 2005, 31% of these children were

adopted within 24 months, a figure just slightly below the national average (Rodgers, 2006).

Caring law enforcement officials may inquire about children when they are present or when there is evidence that children live in the home when an arrest is made, but formal provisions in local arrest policy are inconsistent, don't require follow-up with helping agencies unless there is no caregiver available or abuse or neglect is suspected and may miss children who simply aren't home when a parent is arrested. Similarly, there is no requirement that inquiries about children be made at sentencing of offenders or that the location of children and families are considered when offenders are placed in or moved within correctional facilities. Our society may not want to acknowledge prisoners, but their children do. According to the San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated parents, "they need contact with their parents: to have that relationship recognized and valued even under adverse circumstances (2003)." In fact, "children who regularly visit with parents from whom they are separated, according to several studies, show better emotional adjustment, IQ scores and behavior than those who do not (Gauch, 1989)."

Many human services agencies have basic services for economic, health and mental health supports that would be appropriate for children of offenders though they are not identified services for that group specifically. There are no listings in the services directories in even the largest counties in Washington for services to those who have an incarcerated family member (Where to Turn Plus, 2005; Helpline Directory, 2005). Families and those who care for a child with an incarcerated parent report that they fear seeking support from state funded agencies might result in the loss of custody of the children in their care, or incur high costs that the incarcerated parent will spend a lifetime repaying after their release. Children may not seek counseling even in those least stigmatizing of settings, school, fearing stigmatization from teachers and peers.

Though many agencies deliver general services for children and families, it seems that few agencies track whether or not children they serve have an incarcerated parent. Little data is maintained about the needs of children of prisoners and little empirical evidence is available about the success of the few, relatively new programs that do exist to serve this population. While a few agencies have recently begun to work together to serve children of the incarcerated there is little coordination of services. These children have not had an identity as a distinct service category and have consequently fallen through the cracks between agencies.

Family friendly events are becoming more available at Washington prisons and the Department of Correction has recently reviewed visit policies with the intent of making visiting a positive experience for families. The high

cost of travel to visit an incarcerated family member housed on the other side of the state often constitutes a significant obstacle for families who are already working hard to mitigate the loss of a wage earner. It is not just gas and lodging that are costs to families, but work time lost when a family member is incarcerated on the other side of the state requiring hours of travel time each way. A 2003 study at Washington Correction Center for Women found that the female offenders listed transportation issues as an important reason their children do not visit them more often, second only to caregiver issues (Gregson et al, 2003). In general, over 60% of offenders in state and federal prisons in the US are incarcerated over 100 miles from their last place of residence (Mumola, 2000).

Families who permit the incarcerated parent to keep in touch by phone pay a significantly higher rate for those collect phone calls than collect call rates for the non-incarcerated, and when they send funds to their incarcerated family member, between 30% and 85% of their dollars are collected by the state for fines, restitution, offender savings accounts and victim compensation accounts. The effect of these policies, which are intended to improve programs for offenders and to promote community safety, imposes a further burden on families who have lost a wage earner and then are penalized for the very things that support their relationship with the incarcerated parent.

Finally, while parents await release from prison, interest on court costs accrues and families may accumulate a child support bill which must be repaid (Griswold & Pearson, 2003). When an offender is released and overcomes the hurdle of finding employment after prison, it is not unusual for their wages to be garnished to repay the state for the support of their family. The extent of this debt can be staggering, especially for those in minimum wage jobs who are attempting to support a family.

In all of these ways, children of the incarcerated and the persons and families who care for them are sentenced along with their offender parents. Children whose parents are incarcerated are seven times more likely to go to prison themselves (Mumola, 2000). These burdens borne by children during the parent's incarceration create barriers to maintaining relationships, to reforming nurturing families after release, and to successful offender re-entry.

The Bill of Rights for Children with Incarcerated Parents says this: "Research consistently indicates that the strongest predictor of successful prisoner re-entry into society is abiding family bonds. Supporting these bonds (unless there is evidence that to do so would endanger the child) and reducing the obstacles to maintaining them, is not only of paramount importance to children; it may also be the best anti-recidivism approach around (San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents, 2003)." Offenders who reconnect with their families in sustaining ways are less likely to re-offend.

In those neighborhoods and communities where the state spends more than \$1 million on securing offenders in jails and prisons, “million dollar neighborhoods,” that the culture and social norms influencing marriage, courtship, definitions of family, and gender roles are indelibly altered (Travis, 2005; Braman, 2004). The rising rates of incarceration and this disconnect between offenders and families alter how entire low-income, multi-ethnic communities understand the roles of men, women, and families.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of rigorous evaluations of adult corrections programs. While they found that cognitive-behavioral treatment has a proven positive impact on sex offenders, the outcomes of many correction programs were difficult to assess because there is little empirical evaluation. This includes prison and community corrections programs delivered by the state, by faith based agencies, or by some collaborative amalgam.

Still, the National Institute of Corrections posts a 2002 report from the Management and Training Corporation that asserts that programs proven to reduce recidivism include correctional education, substance and drug abuse treatment, cognitive skills training, and re-entry programs. In addition to age, employment, education, prior convictions, and drug use, the predictors of recidivism include impaired or insufficient social networks. While the primary intent of the Oversight Committee is not to enhance re-entry programs for offenders, helping offenders build durable family relationships may reduce recidivism for them and reduce the likelihood that their children will go to prison later in life. The essence of serving children of offenders is preventing their later incarceration and making it more likely that they will be contributing members of society. Reducing recidivism for parents and preventing incarceration of children both work to slow the rate at which we are forced to invest in new prisons.

This report is a first attempt to address policies, practices, and conditions that impact children of prisoners, and to raise the salience of this issue in Washington. As such, it is not a complete blueprint of optimum services for children of prisoners but rather a starting point, suggesting policies and practices that signal a new direction in how we respond to the needs of this vulnerable population.

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## VI. Recommendations

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### Oversight.

On October 5, 2004, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Social and Health Services and Pacific Lutheran University co-sponsored a symposium for 100 key decision-makers in Washington. The purpose of the symposium was to educate leaders, to elevate the salience of the issue and to energize policy-makers and service providers to address the needs of children of offenders. The response was positive and overwhelming: this population of children had been invisible to most leaders and agencies. This first, overarching and very important recommendation, therefore, ensures that children of prisoners and their families remain a target population served, studied and considered in the formation of new policy.

In her comprehensive book about children with incarcerated parents, Nell Bernstein (2005) recommends that 5% of corrections budgets be allocated to support prisoners' families both during and after their incarceration. Travis (2004) stresses the significance of family connections during offender re-entry following incarceration. The Child Welfare League of America's Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners, the Family and Corrections Network, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, and multiple non-profits across America have targeted this issue as a principal focus. The states of Arizona, California, New Hampshire, Virginia, Hawaii, and New York have studied or provided services to children of offenders. Oregon pioneered research and new practices in parenting education, and the work of the Oregon Center for Social Learning and the Criminal Justice Policy Research Institute at the Portland State University is now administered through the Oregon Department of Corrections.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: OVERSIGHT**

Create a policy level position, funded by the Department of Corrections (DOC), to work on the systemic parenting issues faced due to incarceration. The intent would be to provide intervention to reduce intergenerational incarceration. This position would:

- Oversee implementing the recommendations made by the Children of Incarcerated Parents Oversight Committee
- Develop and oversee a statewide commission consisting of community, state agency, and judicial members, which will be charged with developing community based support for incarcerated parents and their children
- Identify and secure resources for child and family needs in order to impact and promote successful re-entry to society after incarceration
- Collect and analyze family outcome measurement data and encourage the empirical study of effective programs

- Continue to address the unique needs of female offenders and their children through examining emerging national practices
- Identify federal, non-state and private financial support for programs for children of prisoners.

Human Resources: One position with appropriate support.

Financial Impact: Approximately 1.75 million dollars per year. This figure constitutes roughly 2.4 % of the Department of Corrections budget, rather than the 5% recommended by Bernstein (2005).

Outcome Measures:

- Outcome and empirical data from programs for children and families is shared among public and private partners in this venture.
- New initiatives based upon empirical data are created and monitored.
- Funds, appropriately used, increase the number of programs and services for children and families of offenders
- Information about outcomes is used to eliminate those programs that are not effective and to make program improvements where appropriate, verified in on-going assessment.
- Family programs are implemented in all DOC facilities.

## **Data Collection**

Oregon and now Washington are among very few states who have attempted to identify how many children have an incarcerated parent. While we await the analysis of Washington state data, we can extrapolate from Oregon figures about offender parents that there are likely to be between 20,000 and 24,000 children in Washington who have a parent in prison. National data suggest that 57% of adult male and female inmates are parents (Mumola, 2000). The Child Welfare League of America estimates that only about half of incarcerated parents have visits from their children so simply looking at visit records is not an effective estimator. “Despite the enormous growth in the US prison population, particularly in the number of women incarcerated, little is known about children...who have at least one parent in jail.” (Alaska Justice Forum, 2002). Simply put, at no point in the process from arrest, through the court, and into jails and correctional facilities, is information about offender children, their caregivers, or their needs systematically solicited, recorded, or shared. It is impossible, then, to design adequate and effective services to assist them.

Because collecting this information is a new practice, it is likely that parents awaiting trial and at incarceration may not be forthcoming with officials about their children. Policies like the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which are designed to enhance permanency for children, are also

experienced as a threat by parents who wish to retain their parental rights (CWLA, 2002). To secure the best information, multiple opportunities to gather data are essential.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: GATHER CHILD DATA IN THE HEARING PROCESS**

Develop a protocol for gathering information about children as part of the criminal hearings process, including bail hearings and sentencing. Determine how this information can be shared with appropriate service providers. Children's information can be included in and gathered through:

- Initial appearances
- Detention review notes (screeners)
- Probable cause certification
- Pre-sentence report
- Report completed by private attorney.

Human Resources: Personnel will be needed to develop policy and procedure, to train staff (particularly court staff such as bail screeners), to track implementation, and to follow-up for procedure improvements after implementation. There will be an additional workload increase for including information on children in reports that come before the court and in disseminating that information to the appropriate agency.

Financial Impact: Minimal FTE impact. Most cost will be associated with training and with determining how and with whom to share information.

Outcome Measures:

- There will be high quality data continuously improved by pre-/post-surveys regarding children of suspects (post-arrest, pre-conviction).
- Jails and correctional facilities will receive information about offenders for use in program design.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: GATHER CHILD DATA IN DOC RECEPTION CENTERS**

Develop a protocol for gathering information about children as part of the Department of Corrections Diagnostic and Reception Center process, while offenders are being classified and oriented to the Corrections system. Children's information can be used in development of a family plan and transition planning, and can be used by facilities for on-going design of family friendly services.

Human Resources: Partial FTE personnel will be needed to develop policy and procedure, to train staff, to track implementation, to follow-up for

procedure improvements after implementation, and to determine where data will be stored. There will be an additional workload increase for making periodic reports from the data to inform program development within Department of Corrections and among those partner agencies working with offenders during incarceration and at release. This could be a primary task of a DOC policy level person as suggested in Recommendation #1.

Financial Impact: Minimal FTE impact if data is stored in an existing DOC data base. Most cost will be associated with training counselors to gather and use this information in transition planning.

Outcome Measures:

- Family information for each offender is used in transition planning.
- Community partners receive aggregate information about offender families from DOC and local correction facilities for use in grant writing and program development.
- DOC uses offender family data in on-going reviews of culturally appropriate programs, family friendly events, and developing community networks.
- Aggregated family information is used when correction centers plan expansion of visiting facilities.

## **Professional Development**

Children are sometimes not assured of appropriate care, safety or comfort when their parents or caregivers are arrested, largely because of the relative scarcity of consistent, written protocols and procedures for law enforcement officers. Not all law enforcement agencies have such protocols for handling children at the time of the adult's arrest, nor for identifying the whereabouts of children who may not be present at the time of arrest, nor for handling children who are present and possibly exposed to controlled substances. While significant inroads have been made in some communities, others could benefit from having a model written protocol for customization and adaptation by their law enforcement agencies. Other entities such as human services providers who share the same population of children of arrestees could benefit from consistent procedures and protocols, aiding them in providing swift and efficient responses that help that population of children.

In "Leaving No Child Alone: A Training and Planning Guide for the Emergency Response to Children of Arrestees," authors Barbara Smith and Anna Laszlo note, "The trauma of separation from a caretaker can have significant psychological and emotional manifestations in children," and "[a] recent study of law enforcement and child welfare policies and practices reveals that there remains wide variation in the way law enforcement and child welfare agencies across the country respond to the emergency

placement needs of children of arrestees.” Oregon reported similar findings in its “Children of Incarcerated Parents Project Report to the Oregon Legislature on Senate Bill 133.” “A national study done in 1998 estimates that of the parents arrested, 67 percent were handcuffed in front of their children, 27 percent reported weapons were drawn, 4.3 percent reported a physical struggle, and 3.2 percent reported the use of pepper spray.” (Children of Incarcerated Parents Project, 2002). There is no reason to think that Washington is immune to this problem. The intent of the Oversight Committee is not to hinder the safety or procedures of law enforcement officials in the course of the apprehension of criminals, but to ensure that there is support for children in those unfortunate circumstances where they are involved.

An informal survey of law enforcement agencies requesting written protocols, performed by the Pre-Incarceration subcommittee during fall 2005, found that an overwhelming majority of the responding Washington law enforcement jurisdictions do not have written protocols and procedures for assuring the appropriate care, safety, or comfort of children of arrestees. While some may have informal arrangements with local agencies, such as Child Protective Services, those arrangements are largely informal agreements.

Children who have an arrested or incarcerated parent are not assured of sensitive or understanding treatment by school or human service professionals despite the fact that so many Americans have experienced arrest and incarceration. 1 of 32 persons in the United States are reported to be under some sort of correctional supervision (CWLA, 2002). The process from arrest to incarceration may not be familiar to these professionals and the needs of children whose parents are in that process have had only limited study.

Children at each stage of their growth and development react to the loss of an incarcerated parent in different ways (Adalist-Estrin, 2003). Research indicates that “Any institution dealing with vulnerable youth will likely serve numerous children of incarcerated parents. In many cases, children do not feel able to talk about this aspect of their experience, and, in part as a result of this, find little in the way of support among the adults with whom they interact. When adults are sensitive to the needs, not to mention the existence of children of incarcerated, they are better prepared to offer the support these children need.” (Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights.) It is as important to inform educators and human services professionals as it is to develop consistent arrest protocols for situations where children are involved.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4: Develop Arrest Protocols for Adults with Children**

Create and distribute law enforcement arrest protocol for when children are and are not present at place and time of arrest, incorporating a basic protocol for handling children who are present and possibly exposed to illegal drugs (such as, but not limited to, methamphetamines or manufacturing equipment).

Human Resources: Convene a workgroup of stakeholders. Pierce County is developing an arrest protocol for situations where methamphetamine and children are suspected of being present at the same time. When released, Pierce County's protocol can be used as a model to inform development of the recommended statewide protocol. Personnel will be needed for training law enforcement officers, tracking progress of implementation, communication, and feedback for future revisions.

Financial Impact: Minimal FTE impact, with estimated costs of \$25,000. Cost is difficult to determine, depending on any existing local protocols with Children's Administration and other agencies. Funds will be needed to purchase training materials, produce CD-ROM and checklist. The Pre-Incarceration subcommittee has reached out to Seattle Chief of Police, Gil Kerlikowske, who has indicated a willingness to both collaborate and help defray the costs by provision of materials.

Outcome Measure:

- Reduction in the number of children who are without care during the arrest of a parent.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5: Educate Human Service, Judicial and Education Professionals**

Develop then provide education and training about the special needs of children of prisoners for staff at institutions whose constituency includes children of incarcerated parents, including schools, social welfare and child protection agencies, foster care agencies, mental health centers, juvenile detention centers, child care agencies, courts, jails, and correction facilities. Collaborate with legislative subcommittees and administrative agencies, such as health and human services and corrections, early childhood education, and health care as well as court services for juveniles, to define the content of the training. Content should include the continuum of concerns for children from pre-incarceration to offender re-entry. Include training in new worker orientation and continuing education.

Human Resources: Agencies designate existing staff members to participate in collaborative training development. This would be a significant addition to the work load of several staff members during training development, then would be added to existing training activities.

Financial Impact: Minimal FTE impact, with estimated costs of \$25,000. Estimated costs include statewide planning meetings, curriculum development, training delivery, material and supplies, and post training evaluation and follow-up.

Outcome Measures:

- Enhanced awareness of the needs of children with incarcerated parents is translated into new programs in agencies in Washington’s “million dollar communities” (see section V).
- Increased number of school attendance days for children with an incarcerated parent.
- Children of prisoners and agencies who serve them make positive reports of their experiences.

## **Innovations in Services**

To offer the most “family-friendly” access to an array of economic and practical services, and to promote maintaining offender involvement with children from arrest through reentry, the Oversight Committee proposes an interwoven system of services, supports and incentives that blend the best of existing Department of Corrections services with those of partner agencies in the community. The recommendations which follow address a network of services which already exist and suggest modifications to coordinate services or to tailor services to benefit children and families of offenders more directly. In some cases, the services improvements target offenders or former offenders but it is in the service of the larger goals of family self-sufficiency and durable family connections. A brief rationale precedes each recommendation.

### On-Site Child Care

When a parent goes to court and does not have adequate child care, they are forced to bring their minor children to court with them. In this setting, child victim-witnesses may encounter their accused abusers in the halls during recesses, or may have to sit through painful scenes commonly seen in court, such as domestic violence proceedings, custody battles, and arraignments, sometimes witnessing one parent being led away to jail. Parents attending to their own legal matters can fail to effectively assist their children with the stress they experience at these confusing times, or they may fail to appear in court because they do not have access to child care.

Children under stress can distract judges, attorneys and other participants, taking valuable time away from legal proceedings. The courtroom is not an ideal setting for children to grasp the finer nuances of what is happening to their parent so alternatives need to be found to reduce the stress on kids whose parents are on trial.

**Recommendation 6: Provide child care for families during court proceedings**

Create drop-in child care centers at or near courthouses and/or identify existing child care resources for every jurisdiction that can be utilized for care of children while parents/caregivers are in the courthouse for criminal proceedings and related matters. Legislative passage of this recommendation is needed because it effects policy and procedure involving many organizations at several levels of government, and requires planning for these centers for children in renovation efforts that change existing and create new facilities. In addition to providing direct care, drop in centers would deliver information about Family Resource Centers (See Recommendation 7) and other services for children with incarcerated parents.

**Human Resources:** Personnel will be needed to identify existing resources, to design and build new child care centers, and to serve as child care providers. Some purchase of service may be possible from providers, and coordination with community agencies like Children's Home Society may minimize costs to the state.

**Financial Impact:** This varies from site to site. To provide some examples: Children's Home Society of Washington estimated \$133,000 total cost to open the downtown Seattle drop-in childcare center in 2004. The Jon and Bobbe Bridge Drop-In Childcare Center at the Regional Justice Center in Kent, serves up to 1500 children annually with an annual operating budget of \$142,662, the new Seattle Municipal Court Drop-In Childcare Center and the Bridge Drop-In Center can serve up to 12 children at any one time. Parents are asked to pay a minimal charge of \$5 per day of child care, but no child is turned away if the parent is unable to pay. Jurors in the King County Superior Court are given the opportunity to donate their jury fees and travel reimbursements to support the program and contributed \$90,000 toward funding the Center. Grant funds also support these centers.

**Outcome Measures:**

- On-going program evaluation demonstrates that parents, court personnel, and other stakeholders are satisfied with childcare services.
- Waiting lists serve as an indicator of unmet need and warn local facilities if more childcare services are warranted.
- Statistics on the number of children served and their treatment needs inform future planning.

- Local agencies are aware of the service as it becomes part of local resource directories.

Criminal court procedures and parental focus are significantly enhanced by the safe and calm environment provided for children.

### Family Resource Centers

When a parent is arrested, other caregivers can be abruptly thrust into the primary parent role. Sometimes offenders as well as their surrogate care providers have had troubled childhoods with little knowledge of appropriate parenting, and caregivers may have few financial resources for additional family members, or be older family members near or at retirement age. Family members may avoid intervention of state programs, fearing that the assistance they provide will either challenge the informal custody arrangements made by the incarcerated parent or obligate the parent to repay child financial supports upon their release. Racial and linguistic minorities in particular, who tend to appear in incarcerated populations in numbers larger than they occur in the general population, experience high levels of mistrust which creates a barrier to service provision because of negative associations toward social service providers (Cross et al, 1989). Research suggests that children's trauma can be reduced when as much uncertainty as possible is removed. While it is known that children experience less trauma when they can safely reunite with their parents, it is also known that reentry is a most traumatic experience for children, second only to their parent's arrest (CWLA, 2002).

To address this trauma, the Oversight Committee believes the development of a systematic family plan is essential. Parent education for offenders would be a required component of the family plan. As part of actively pursuing a family plan, the Department of Corrections would make an effort to locate offenders as near families as possible. While offenders are serving their sentences, families would be supported at Family Resource Centers in the community. Agencies in the community would collaborate to make existing services more accessible in non-stigmatizing environments and to develop and seek funding for supportive services to children and caregivers. This inside/outside approach to services coordination, a truly new and collaborative innovation, would serve children while facilitating successful offender reentry.

In other states, collaborative programs like this are beginning to emerge, though it is still too early to have empirical evidence of their success. Examples of collaborative and innovative efforts by state agencies and community based agencies include the Oregon Department of Corrections Children of Incarcerated Parents Project; The Osborne Association Family Resource Center ([http://www.osborneny.org/Family\\_Resource\\_Center.htm](http://www.osborneny.org/Family_Resource_Center.htm)); St. Rose Family Reunification Program (<http://www.strosecenter.org>);

Arkansas Centers for Youth and Families, Family Matters Program; World of Difference, San Francisco Unified School District (Bernstein, 2005).

The Oversight Committee believes that a three year pilot for this two part recommendation is essential to allow sufficient time for start-up, for service delivery, for evaluation, and for adjustment of the service delivery model to enhance family success. The Project has an “inside/outside focus; that is, while offenders are incarcerated they are working at skills and connections that will help them resume parenting at the same time that families are being assisted to find needed services during the time the incarcerated parent is away. At transition, when plans are made for the offender’s reentry, staff inside corrections centers and staff in the community work together to help the family successfully deal with reintegration or to help them plan how to support the children if they decide not to reunite.

New staff positions are required in the community and within corrections centers to implement this innovation which will receive rigorous evaluation if it is implemented as planned. Development of a model such as this will require adjustments in the service delivery plan along the way. A three year demonstration project approach will permit staff and evaluators to refine methods for recruitment, services delivery, and assessment and will make it possible to see if client outcomes are actually attained. .

**Recommendation 7: Collaborative Inside/Outside Family Resource Centers—A Three Year Demonstration Project**

- A. Focuses on sustaining the family during the parent’s incarceration.
  - 1. Build community partnerships between DOC, DSHS, law enforcement, judicial systems, community family and child service providers, faith communities, community colleges and education services, Workforce Development and employment services.
  - 2. Co-locate staff and services in Family Resource Centers (FRC) in trial communities easily accessible to children of incarcerated parents, their caregivers, and their re-entering parents.
  - 3. Family Resource Centers hire and supervise staff to be Intervention Advocates (IA) and Case Managers (CM).
    - a. Culturally competent and/or bi-cultural specialists would provide support to children, caregivers and re-entering parents that reflects an understanding of diversity between and within cultures.
    - b. They would also provide crisis intervention for children at the time of a parent’s arrest, information & referral to diverse, culturally appropriate community supports, and oversee development of an integrated Family Service Plan (FSP) based on an individual family needs assessment. (See Appendix A for a more complete development of what FRC’s and IA’s offer).

- B. Focuses on planning for family reunification and offender reentry.
1. DOC personnel specialized in both offender and family management work as Family Classification Counselors (FCC) in the prison facilities and Family Community Corrections Officers (FCCO) housed in the FRC.
  2. The multi-disciplinary team coordinates an inside/out strategy to support the implementation, monitoring, and successful achievement of a Family Service Plan. (See Appendix B to explore the components of a possible Family Service Plan.)
  3. This team also works with the offender on issues of employability.

A mix of state appropriated funds, grant funds, and foundation support would be sought to finance this project. Key stakeholders in this collaborative venture might include OSPI, DOC, DSHS, law enforcement, the judicial system, community family and child service providers, the mental health community, volunteers, parents/children/caregivers, the faith community, victim's advocates, public and private education program providers, economic development services providers, offender change program providers, and culturally specific community services. The design of this project includes funds for the empirical research that will prove its success or permit modifications and improvements in services.

Human resources:

- A. Grant request to fund staffing and overhead of Family Resource Center.
- B. State support for 6 new positions and associated overhead for DOC personnel. These DOC positions require new monies. Oversight from the position defined as part of Recommendation 1 would be essential for the success of this project.

Financial impact: \$404K for one year to cover DOC expenses. Private grant applications are being developed using existing information on current Family Resource Center staffing and programming. Estimate three to six months for program and grant development. One year for State budget approval and program implementation.

Outcome measures:

- Positive child outcomes will include consistent child school attendance and completion.
- Increasing demand for child and caregiver support group services as demonstrated by waiting lists.
- Increased numbers of community agencies use FRCs to deliver programs for children and caregivers.

### Parent-Child Contact

While gathering information about existing services, the Subcommittees on Re-entry and On-going Services held focus groups and discussions with inmates, former inmates, caregivers, adult children of incarcerated parents, and service providers. Consistent with current literature, inmates, caregivers and children all report that the experiences of arrest, courtroom hearings, visitation and their “inside/out” experiences are very scary and confusing, which adds further trauma to the issues of attachment, separation and loss. When offenders are incarcerated at a distance from their families, the costs of phone calls, travel, and time lost from work for visits compound the difficulty of sustaining a connection with children and family. In some cases, offenders can’t visit their children because the child’s custodial parent doesn’t want the child to see the offender.

#### **Recommendation 8: Implement systemic programs that encourage contact, increase communication and strengthen the chances of reunification between children and their incarcerated parents.**

- A. Reduce the financial barrier associated with phone calls. DOC has started this process by signing a contract with a new telecommunications provider. The terms of the contract substantially reduce the collect-call fees families must pay to accept a call from an inmate-parent. This reduction in fee can help increase child/parent communication.
- B. Explore videoconferencing as a substitute and/or supplement to in-person visitation. The equipment is installed and available in DOC sites participating in the current Re-Entry Program.
- C. When considering an inmate-parent for transfer to another facility, DOC will develop a protocol to take into consideration the following factors:
  - ✓ Is a Parenting Plan in place?
  - ✓ What is the history of children visiting the inmate-parent?
  - ✓ Does the caretaker family have the resources to transport the children for visits if the parent-inmate is transferred more than 60 miles away? 100 miles away?
  - ✓ If the inmate-parent must be moved more than 100 miles away, does the institution have access to lodging for children and caretaker families?
- D. We recommend expanding partnerships with community organizations that already provide some transportation to adult and juvenile correctional facilities in Washington. Current levels of transportation are not sufficient for all those who would like to participate, and not all DOC facilities are included. Programs meriting expansion include:

- ❖ Prisoners for Christ operate a van for families visiting institutions currently available for adult parents. JRA can pursue re-establishing this relationship for young parents. Expansion might be able to include pick-up at central locations.
- ❖ Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts transport girls door to door from King, Snohomish, Thurston, and Pierce Counties for monthly meetings at the prison. Expansion would provide paid staff for escorts since more families wish to participate than can be accommodated.
- ❖ Rebuilding Families, Inc (RFI) sponsors buses that travel from Western WA to Pine Lodge in Eastern WA three times a year. Expand to cover all of Western WA and assist with making escort arrangements.
- ❖ Matthews House in Snohomish County has a bus and housing next to Monroe Correctional Complex. Expansion could include more pick-up locations for travel to the four facilities.
- ❖ Volunteers of America (Words Travel, Family Connections) transports children from Kitsap, Skagit, King, Snohomish and Pierce counties once a month as part of their weekly literature program at Monroe Corrections Complex and Washington Correction Center for Women.
- ❖ Children's Administration case workers also may escort children to the facilities. Expansion might involve doing this in a more organized fashion for more than one family at a time.

We recommend also subsidizing use of mass transit such as Greyhound or other bus lines to bring children and caregivers for institutional visits. State of Washington Travel Vouchers can be used easily to purchase tickets when a credit account is established.

- E. Establish additional door-to-door services for children whose caretakers are not able to accompany them on visits. This would require providing trained staff as escorts, having caretakers sign a release, etc.

Human Resources: Community based organizations that are willing to coordinate with DOC, CA, and transportation organizations. Housing/lodging providers are needed. Department of Corrections and Children's Administration would do internal coordination and training of staff. Support staff would coordinate visits. Volunteer or staff drivers will be needed to transport families from bus stop/depot to institutions. Oversight position identified in Recommendation 1 plays an essential role here.

Financial Impact: Phone collection dollars will be reduced, making less funding available for programming. Dollars are also needed for transportation, housing/ lodging, and videoconferencing. Estimate 18 months to accomplish this.

Outcome measures:

- Visitation between parents and children increases by 25%.
- Visitation options are evenly used (Video, in-person, phone calls, etc.)
- With minimal impact on Offender Betterment Programs, reduction of 25% in phone costs will occur within the first two years of implementation, and by 50% within 10 years of implementation.
- Additional visitation methods are incorporated (e.g. after hours visit hours to support working caregivers who transport children for visits).
- Use of facility parenting programs increases by at least 25%.
- Visitation policies have been reviewed, revised and reassessed.

*Family Economic Stability*

To address trauma of offender's children, we must examine the child's economic well-being and that of the offender. Division of Child Support studies show that receiving regular child support is an important factor in helping families achieve and maintain self-sufficiency (DSHS, 2003). Non-custodial parents (NCPs) are more likely to pay support regularly when the amount they are required to pay is appropriate for their financial circumstances. Custodial parents will then have a more reliable income stream and their children will have a chance for economic stability. Appropriate adjustment and effective management of all inmate parents' financial obligations, including child support, facilitates family reunification and economic stability, and children fare better in reunified and/or economically stable families.

Washington's 2001 Child Support Joint Agency Collection Project (involving DOC, DCS and the Employment Security Department) demonstrated that outreach to inmates regarding their child support obligations does make a difference, both in terms of the burden of back support they owe and how much current support they pay when they leave prison. DCS staff also concluded that outreach efforts should be focused on the intake prison at Shelton and need to be supported with sufficient staff to respond to inmates in a timely and individualized fashion—the complexity of the paperwork and the low literacy level of many inmates are serious obstacles to their navigation of the child support system. Evidence from incarceration and child support projects in Colorado, Illinois, Texas and Massachusetts show that inmates respond positively to help with finding employment and managing their child support obligations, and that employed former inmates pay more child support (Pearson & Griswold, 2005).

In interviews with inmates and former inmates, the Subcommittees on Re-entry and Ongoing Services learned that though offenders recall being informed about court costs and their obligation to repay child support

payments paid by the state during their incarceration, they are often shocked by the size of these obligations upon their release. Several reported that payments challenged their capacity to support their family after their release. These interviews inform the recommendation below.

### **Recommendation 9: Promote Family Economic Stability**

Promote economic stability in families where children of incarcerated parents reside. Promote the capacity of inmates to provide for their children upon release in order to build durable family relationships and healthy living environments for those children.

- Build upon the lessons from the 2001 Child Support Joint Agency Collection Project to:
  - Explore more effective ways to identify inmates who are parents
  - Provide inmates with accurate, timely and accessible information about their financial obligations and options (including both child support and other obligations)
  - Provide sufficient staff support and better collaboration between DOC, the courts, vocational rehabilitation, employment agencies, and DSHS Division of Child Support to achieve these two action steps:
    - a. Provide a resource person within the corrections institution knowledgeable about the child support program, to assist NCPs with paperwork, guide them through administrative processes, and get answers to questions. This could be a responsibility of specially prepared Family Classification Counselors (FCCs) proposed in Recommendation 7.
    - b. Provide inmate with the tools to communicate with DCS more directly than by mail. Phone access via a toll-free number or the ability to call DCS collect would enable inmates to speak directly to their officer or Claims Officer and “appear” by telephone for a hearing.

Human resources: Staff time from members of DOC, DSHS/DCS, ESD, and Court staff would be required for planning. Staffing recommendations from Recommendation 7 would work to accomplish some of these goals as would coordination from Oversight personnel identified in Recommendation 1.

#### Financial Impact:

The outreach and information sharing portion can be accomplished within existing resources. There could be fiscal impact to the state or other government entities if policies were changes to reduce inmates’ financial obligations; the size of this impact would depend on the specific policies adopted.

Reduction in collection of child support arrears might be compensated by increased current support collections, decreasing inmates' families' reliance on public assistance. Investments in employment and training assistance for former inmates might produce pay-offs in increased child support collections.

Outcome measures:

- Incarcerated parents report being better informed about their financial obligations and options.
- Increased percentage of inmate parents take advantage of existing opportunities to modify child support orders and other financial obligations related to incarceration.
- Increased current child support payments by inmates exiting prison, leading to more economic stability in these families, decreased dependence on public assistance and stronger parent-child bonds.
- Reduced recidivism among inmate parents participating in programs to modify financial obligations and promote employment, leading to strong parent-child bonds.

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## VII. Promising Practices

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In the short span of 9 months, the Oversight Committee has identified practices that merit more research and consideration, but which are not fully developed at this time. Some are logical extensions of the recommendations in this report, some require more empirical data to assess, and others require changes in federal or non-governmental policy, like that of professional education associations. They are noted here as possible next steps.

Earlier in this report collecting data about offender children was identified as an important part of serving them. The task force believes it should not be left solely to offenders to identify families in need of services, since some offenders mistrust the court and corrections systems. To that end, we suggest exploring the application for federally subsidized school lunches, available at all schools, as a vehicle to ask caregivers if the child or children for whom the application is being completed has an incarcerated parent, and if they would like to sign a release of information to facilitate securing services for these children. Caregivers have the freedom to ignore this attempt at outreach. What is unclear is how schools might share this information, or whether this would prove stigmatizing to families who have an offender parent.

Other countries, the United Kingdom in particular, have well-developed furlough systems, sometimes called “graduated release,” that allow offenders to sample returning home for short stays as they near their release date. Release is among the most stressful of offender family experiences, and this would allow both the family and the offender to negotiate what roles will belong to whom when reunification is imminent. “The politics and nuances of classification should not inhibit the effective use of pre-release programs. Public safety is threatened when inmates are released from maximum security and solitary confinement directly to the community.... (Larvae, 2001). “The president’s crime commission noted years ago: ‘This process of graduated release permits offenders to cope with their many post-release problems in manageable steps, rather than trying to develop satisfactory home relations[s], employment and leisure time activity all at once upon release. It also permits staff to initiate early and continuing assessment of progress under actual stresses of life (Petersilia, 2003, p.98).

Though furloughs have been tried in this country, there have been issues with importation of contraband to correction facilities and failures to return from furlough. Still, this idea may have merit when used in conjunction with the “inside-outside” approach of Recommendation 7. It bears further research and consideration.

The pursuit of economic self-sufficiency is important to the Oversight Committee. With time, it would be possible to explore the viability and fiscal impact of deferring repayment of fines, court cost and victim compensation to allow offenders with families a period of initial asset accumulation (6 months or longer). This should especially be considered for those offenders fulfilling the family parenting plans mentioned in Recommendation 7.

In a similar vein, we believe it will be important, to the extent permitted under federal law, to work with inmates who are close to release and offenders after release to manage repayment of arrears on child support. It is important not to create further obstacles for families who are trying to meet their current family needs. The 2001 Child Support Joint Agency Collection Project achieved only limited gains in post-release employment largely because of the disappearance of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding that had supported the project. The proposed Family Resource Centers (See Recommendation 7) might be an appropriate vehicle for directing former inmates to training and employment opportunities and to making the request for reduction or waiver of support repayment more accessible to offenders.

Finally, it is important that the entities governing professional education of social workers, corrections officers, marriage and family therapists, counselors, educators, psychologists, physicians, and other professional helpers include the special needs of children of offenders, and that social histories completed by these professionals note whether this is an issue their child or adult clients face. Work with accrediting agencies was beyond the scope of the Oversight Committee, but may be an important part of prevention in the future.

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## VIII. Conclusions

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The recommendations in this report are a first attempt to address policies, practices, and conditions that impact children of offenders. We believe that these recommendations will pave the way for other service and policy improvements that will empower family connection and facilitate reunification and successful offender reentry.

The recommendations of the Oversight Committee on Children of Incarcerated Parents cover the continuum from arrest to reentry/reunification and consistently rely upon a handful of strategies. The recommendations are integrated with each other to form a holistic framework that benefits children and families. For example, Recommendation 7B, Family Classification Counselors, and Recommendation 9, which includes relief of interest on court costs for offenders following a Family Plan, are interrelated.

Most of the recommendations are collaborative in nature, constructed around partnerships between public and private agencies. Recommendation 5, training professionals who serve children with incarcerated parents, and Recommendation 7A, Family Resource Centers, extend across public-private boundaries. In similar fashion, Recommendation 8, systematic programs to increase child contact with parents, relies upon oversight described in Recommendation 1.

The recommendations are designed to promote prevention. The Oversight Committee believes that implementation of these recommendations will reduce the number of children with incarcerated parents who will go to prison themselves and increase the number of successful family reunifications. In turn, the impact of this prevention is to reduce recidivism and the number of prison beds needed, to increase the number of persons gainfully employed, and to build durable family connections.

Finally, each recommendation comes with suggested outcome measures and a preliminary cost estimate, and where appropriate requires on-going program evaluation. Recommendation 7 is proposed as a demonstration project to test it as a model. The Oversight Committee believes that accountability is important for all public and private agencies serving families.

We offer these recommendations for your consideration, and are available to answer questions or discuss our work. Thank you for this opportunity to serve Washington, and the children of offenders and their families.

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## IX. Acknowledgements

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The work in this report would not have been possible without the efforts, time, and thoughtful input of many people. While we cannot acknowledge everyone by name, the Oversight Committee on Children with Incarcerated Parents wishes to note significant contributors.

First, thanks to all the adult children and families of former offenders and current offenders who were so helpful in characterizing their experiences and needs. Their thoughts and ideas informed the Committee and were instrumental in the development of these recommendations. Among them we are especially grateful to Amy Metcalf and Anne Beazizo, the Tonya Jones Family, Claudia Sorum, Frank Boulet, Dan Lemery, and Sandy Jeffers.

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 The Rev. Ricky Willis and Ms. Sonja Heard  
 Joenne Harhy, Community Partnerships, McNeil Island Correction Center  
 Washington Representatives Ruth Kagi and Eric Pettgrew  
 Washington Senators Debbie Regala and Jerome Delvin  
 Nell Bernstein, author of All Alone in the World:  
 Children with Incarcerated Parents  
 Arlene Lee, Child Welfare League of America

"The year 1997 is a year I will never forget. I remember I was in the 5th grade, two weeks before my graduation, my mother went to jail. I was in my room asleep and I felt a kiss on my cheek, and I heard my mom tell me she loves me. The next morning I woke up and my uncle told me that my mom was in jail. I felt so hurt inside because I didn't understand what had just happened. It was something I just couldn't understand, because my mom was such a sweet person to people so, how could she end up in jail. As I got older, my friends started to ask me; why doesn't your mom ever come to any of the function? I would tell them that she was in California or on a business trip because I felt ashamed. I always thought to myself, 'if I told them, they would make fun of me.'

The first couple of years I didn't get to see my mom very much. We didn't have anybody to drive me or my sister to (facility name) to see her. It was hard for me growing up without my mom. I felt so alone; I didn't have anyone to talk to about what was going on in my life. Sometimes I just wanted my mom to be there so she could take care of me when I was sick, be there when I am sad, and even have a mother and daughter fight. When I got to high school I couldn't ever focus on my work, because I felt like I couldn't deal with the fact that my mom was in jail. Around my sophomore year, I wanted to drop out of school and have a baby by any boy who would give me one. But, I had to realize that I couldn't make the same mistakes my mom and my sister did.

Finally, my mom moved to (facility name) and signed me up for the girl scouts program. Even though I was older then most of the girls, it didn't matter to me because I got to spend time with my mom. I started the girl scouts program when I was a junior in high school. I was 17 years old at the time. Being in that program helped me to have a stronger bond with my mom. We talk about a lot of things. I also tell her how my life is out here. Hearing my mother's voice and seeing her face makes my life so much easier. Seeing my mother twice a month makes is so easy. I graduated from \_\_\_\_High School in 2005 and I have a job and my own apartment now. If it wasn't for the Girl Scout program I wouldn't have seen my mom for a very long time. But, I am thankful that they have this program so that all young girls can see there mom and have a really close relationship with them. I also think that my mom is very happy that she gets to see me because I am her youngest daughter and she wants me to be something in life. She always told me never follow in her footsteps. My mother is proud of me and I am proud of myself. I thank god that he blessed me with such a wonderful, strong mother even though she made mistakes. She learned her lesson and when she gets out in 15 months, she plans on changing her whole life around. I can't wait until that day comes. Living without a mother is hard, but if you put your minds together like we did you will get through it. God Bless." Taniesha---18 years old

*Excerpted from the booklet Touch Your Face in My Dreams™ published by Western Prison Project in December 2005.*

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X. Appendices

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**Appendix A**  
**Recommendation 7: Family Resource Centers (FRC)**

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**FRC's target caregivers, children and reunifying offender parents.**

**FRC's Disseminate culturally appropriate and diverse resource information** through a variety of media to include:

- Brochures at Courthouses
- Brochures at Bail Bonds offices
- Brochures suitable for law enforcement to distribute
- Brochures suitable for judicial system
- Brochures suitable for school counselors
- Brochures at jails
- 1-800# hotline
- Website
- Presentations
- In-service trainings for professionals working with children

**Resources information includes:**

- County specific mental health
- Medical
- Food Banks
- Clothing banks
- Housing to include rent assistance
- Training and employment opportunities with career placement
- Parenting classes
- Support groups for youth and caretakers
- Alanon
- AA/NA
- Mentoring for youth
- Academic tutoring
- Child Care
- Early Head Start/First Start
- Legal Services –including economic recovery options and immigration issues
- Interagency collaboration with reentry project to facilitate returning offender in family sustainability
- Financial literacy and economic development services
- Connection to DSHS- including child support information and options
- Relatives caring for kin
- Access to language services
- Therapeutic art/music programs
- Family Case Manager when more than one need is present

- Seeking Safety Classes for Youth
- Providing in-service training to teachers and other related professions
- Conflict resolution skills
- Building self-esteem
- ESL, ABE , GED and other education programs
- Culturally specific community services

**FRC Information Advocates work with law enforcement protocols and can accompany officers when children are present and an adult is arrested.**

**IAs Target: Arrestees/offenders who act as custodial or are an active parent in a minor's life.**

Law Enforcement will contact an Intervention Advocate (IA) to go on arrest with them when children are presumed to be present. Same IA would be also available by pager when children unexpectedly are present.

This IA would:

- Assist child with helping understand the legal system.
- Help locate temporary safe housing through families, family resources; DSHS....go is informal placement, referring other family members to FRC case management as needed.
- Focus on maintaining as much normal routine for child as possible during arrest through sentencing, e.g. school, activities, church, etc.
- Taking child to jail to visit as appropriate.
- Helping child maintain contact with custodial parent.
- Be culturally competent and/or bi-cultural.

When sentence results in parent incarceration beyond 2 months the:

- IA will recommend those 1<sup>st</sup> time offenders appropriate for FCC/O assignment.
- IA works on long term safe placement for youth as sentencing mandates.
- IA works with FCC/O in mediating a family communication plan.
- IA transitions longer term child relationship to a mentor.

The IA is also funded through independent grants.

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## Appendix B

### Recommendation 7: Family Classification Counselor

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Department of Corrections Family Classifications Counselors (FCC) will be assigned to any 1<sup>st</sup> time offender sentenced to prison who intends to reunify with their family in the targeted community. This FCC will work with the offender from classification through release to Family Community Corrections Officer (FCCO). Management will include development of the family plan, monitoring the offender's adherence to the plan, administering incentives such as deferral or reduction of financial obligations, facilitating communication, and negotiating institution placement to benefit family communication when possible.

For those offenders sentenced to prison the FCCO will start working with the FRC and the FCC six months prior to the offender's reentry. They will focus on preparing both for transition and support during the first three months. For offenders who are sentenced to jail for two months or more the FCCO will assume on their caseload.

Because the recommendation is intended to provide a rural and urban target county, involving both east and west of the mountains, and offenders may serve their time at any facility across the state, etc., the need is for two FCC's and four FCCO's. The FCCOs would co-locate with the FRC. It is anticipated that 48 first time offenders and their families would be in this program during the trial. The FCC can manage this caseload at a DOC site however the FCCO assumes more responsibility for the entire family readiness and therefore, their caseload would be 6-8 families at any one time. The financial impact of these positions for one year:

Salaries 6X60K (loaded)	360,000
*Incentives at \$500 per family	24,000
State vehicle motor pool hours for FCCOs	<u>20,000</u>
	\$404K of new money

A parenting plan would be negotiated with the offender and family members. (A model plan is available if requested.) The FCC would monitor offender's adherence to the plan. After three months of successfully completing terms offender would be eligible for family communication incentive. This could include visiting expenses for transportation, housing, telephone. No money would be given to the offender or family directly. It is strongly suggested that, since these are typically financially marginalized families, that successful reentry could include deferment of legal and financial obligations as long as youth remains in school and offender crime free. Ultimately, after five years, the fees could be forgiven entirely.

The Family Resource Center (FRC) would be privately funded for two years. Cost estimates depend on the facility used –whether it is to be built, bought, leased, already owned by a stakeholder, or require renovation- and staffing costs and overhead. At

the conclusion of the trial, based on successful outcome measures, additional funding may be sought from the legislature.

We recommend that selection of pilot sites be informed by the DOC-PLU Washington Children of Incarcerated Parents (ChIP) Survey, which queried parents about where their children reside. We further recommend that at least one urban and one rural site be selected.

Outcome Measure:

- Youth whose offender parent is working at a Family Service Plan will attend school consistently. (Note: Since we are measuring this program over one year, it is not feasible to evaluate youth involvement with the justice system. Since one of the biggest factors in an individual's success is education, and this is often the only source of stability in these children's lives, we choose to look at only one quantitative item: School attendance. If these children stay in school their opportunities are immeasurably improved.)

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**Appendix C: Resource List of National and Non-Washington State Programs**


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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Contact Person/Address</b>	<b>Description</b>
Amachi	National, private	Muna A. Walker, Amachi Program Officer Public/Private Ventures 2000 Market Street Suite 600 Philadelphia, PA 19103  Telephone: 215.557.4418 Fax: 215.557.2270  Net: <a href="http://www.ppv.org">www.ppv.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:mwalker@ppv.org">mwalker@ppv.org</a>	People of faith mentoring children of promise. Amachi's hope is that one-to-one mentoring by caring adults will significantly improve the life opportunities of the children. Studies have clearly demonstrated that the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) mentoring model has positive effects - and now through Amachi, the strengths of mentoring and congregational volunteers are brought together.
Annie E Casey Foundation	National, Private	Doug Nelson 701 St. Paul Street Baltimore, MD 21202 ph: 410-547-6600 <a href="http://www.aecf.org">www.aecf.org</a>	"Partnerships between Corrections and Child Welfare: Collaboration for Change"
Arizona Fathers and Families Coalition	National, private	James C. Rodríguez, M.S.W., CEO & President AZFFC P.O. Box 8267, Phoenix, Arizona 85006. 800-603-9309 <a href="mailto:jrodriguez@azffc.org">jrodriguez@azffc.org</a>	Voluntary advocacy association created in 1994. Dedicated to promote developing healthy family relationships and increasing the involvement of responsible fatherhood. A national agency committed through effective services, education, training, and advocacy to make a difference in the lives of fathers, mothers, children & communities.
Center force	Private, statewide	Centerforce Main Office 2955 Kerner Blvd., 2nd Floor San Rafael, CA 94901 Tel: (415) 456-9980 ext. 116  <a href="http://centerforce.org/">http://centerforce.org/</a>	Provides service, education and advocacy for offenders and their families.

Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents (CCIP)	Regional, Private	Denise Johnson and Katherine Gabel The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents P.O. Box 41-286 Eagle Rock, California 90041 626.449.2470  <a href="mailto:ccip@earthlink.net">ccip@earthlink.net</a>  <a href="http://www.e-ccip.org">www.e-ccip.org</a>	Provides parent education, self-help support groups, information, referrals, mentoring, family reunification support, family therapy, public education, legal assistance and advocacy. Provides technical assistance, training, policy development and research services in a variety of areas related to children of prisoners.
Child Development-Community Policing Program	Private, local	Colleen Vadala Yale Child Study Center 47 College Street Suite 212 New Haven, CT 06510 Phone: 20378570	Program to reduce the impact of violence on children targeting children and families who are victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of violent crimes. Coordinates the efforts of the New Haven Police Department and mental health clinicians by providing interdisciplinary intervention to children and families who are victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of violent crimes.
Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants(CURE)	Private, national	Charles and Pauline Sullivan National CURE P.O. BOX 2310 National Capitol Station Washington, DC 20013-2310 202-789-2126 <a href="http://www.curenational.org">www.curenational.org</a>	CURE --- Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants, is a nation-wide grass roots organization dedicated to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.
CWLA	National, Private	Shay Bilchik President & CEO, CWLA 440 First Street, NW, Third Floor Washington, DC 20001-2085 Contact: Phone: 202/638-2952 Fax: 202/638-4004 <a href="http://www.cwla.org">www.cwla.org</a>	Advocacy group for children. Unit devoted to Children with Incarcerated Parents.

Family and Corrections Network Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners	National, Voluntary	Jim Mustin, Executive Director Family and Corrections Network 434/589-3036 32 Oak Grove Road Palmyra, VA 22963 fcn@fcnnetwork.org <a href="http://www.fcnetwork.org">www.fcnetwork.org</a>	Maintains a national resource list. And maintains the Federal Resource Center initiated by CWLA. Useful Library materials on website including "How to Develop Parent/Child Programs that Work"
LEARNS	National, Private	Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 101 SW Main St., Suite 500 Portland, OR 97204 503.275.9500 <a href="http://www.nyrel.org">www.nyrel.org</a>	LEARNS is a partnership of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Oregon and the Banks Street College of Education in New York. It receives support from FACES (Faith and Communities Engaged in Service) a project of the National Crime Prevention Council. LEARNS provides educational materials for mentors of children of prisoners.
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children		100 McAllister Street San Francisco, CA 94102 415/255-7036 lspc@igc.org, <a href="http://www.prisonerswithchildren.org">www.prisonerswithchildren.org</a>	Provides training, technical assistance, advocacy and litigation support to legal service offices and to prisoners, their families and advocates throughout California.
L.I.F.E. The Living Interactive Family Education Program	Public and private, local	Dr. Elizabeth Dunn Children, Youth and Families at Risk Project University of Missouri	Organization focused on the children of incarcerated parents and their families. Begun as a collaboration between the University of Missouri Extension's 4-H Program with Potosi Correction Center in Mineral Point, MO
National Fatherhood Initiative (National Fatherhood Clearinghouse and Resource Center)	National, private	Roland Warren, President 101 Lake Forest Boulevard, Suite 360; Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877 Phone: (301) 948-0599 Fax: (301) 948-4325 <a href="http://www.Fatherhood.org">http://www.Fatherhood.org</a> ( <a href="http://www.Fathersource.org">www.Fathersource.org</a> )	Improve the well being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible & committed fathers. Provide public awareness campaigns, research, and resources like curricula & technical assistance. Have an on-line catalog with a section for corrections.

The National Incarcerated Parents and Family Network	National, Private	Charles Stuart PO Box 6745 Harrisburg PA 17112 Phone: (717) 671 – 7231 Fax: (717) 652 – 7130 <a href="mailto:cstuart@incarceratedparents.org">cstuart@incarceratedparents.org</a>	Voluntary advocacy association. Goal is work with incarcerated mothers and fathers, adults and juveniles, and their families, to provide a support network and education source for them. Has received grants & delivers some services. Established in 2004.
The Osbourne Association	Private, statewide	Elizabeth Gaynes, Exec. Dir. Administrative Office 36-31 38th Street Long Island City, NY 11101 (718) 707-2600 Fax: (718) 707-3103 <a href="http://www.osborneny.org">http://www.osborneny.org</a>	Offers opportunities for individuals in conflict with the law to transform their lives through innovative, effective, and replicable programs that serve the community by reducing crime and its human and economic costs.
Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign		Denise Blake Reentry Project Director Outreach Extensions 7039 Dume Drive Malibu, CO 90265 (770) 964-5045 <a href="mailto:denise@reentrymediaoutreach.org">denise@reentrymediaoutreach.org</a>	Annie E Casey is supporting this project as part of the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative to improve the chance of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen families.
San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents (Zellerbach Foundation)	State, Private	<a href="http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/billofrights.pdf">http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/billofrights.pdf</a>  link to the Bill of Rights	Grass roots advocacy organization noted for programs for children with incarcerated parents. Publishes “Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights.”

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**Appendix D: Resource List of Programs in Washington State**


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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Contact Person/Address</b>	<b>Description</b>
Children's Alliance	WA state, Private	Jon Gould Deputy Director, Children's Alliance	Advocacy organization active in lobbying on behalf of children and their families and monitoring the conditions of children in the state of Washington.
Going Home Reentry Project	Federally funded WA state program	Clara (Candy) Curl Washington State Reentry Project 410 West 5th Avenue, Olympia WA 98504 (360) 664-9490 www.goinghomewashington.net	Reentry Teams are growing coalition of concerned citizens and caring professionals, joining forces in order to address increasing numbers of juvenile and young adult offenders being released each year across our state. Team members come from faith-based organizations, civic groups, non-profit services, law enforcement agencies, correctional facilities, schools, employment services and local neighborhoods.
Leave No Child Waiting Mentoring Project Children's Home Society	Federally funded WA state Program	Tamzyn Palmer Beth Minkler (206) 768 6622 <a href="mailto:tamzynp@chs-wa.org">tamzynp@chs-wa.org</a> <a href="mailto:bethm@bigsandlittles.org">bethm@bigsandlittles.org</a> New Holly Neighborhood Center Seattle, WA (King & Pierce Counties)	Provides adult mentors to children who have a parent who is under Department of Corrections supervision.
Leave No Child Waiting Mentoring Project Children's Home Society	Federally funded WA state Program	Kristi Karpenko (509) 663 – 0034 <a href="mailto:kristik@chs-wa.org">kristik@chs-wa.org</a> (Chelan & Douglas Counties)	Provides adult mentors to children who have a parent who is under Department of Corrections supervision
Mentoring Project Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Washington	Federally funded WA state Program	Erin McNally (360)891 – 8382 <a href="mailto:erinbbbs@msn.com">erinbbbs@msn.com</a> (Clark & Cowlitz Counties)	Mentoring services for children of incarcerated parents

Mentoring Project Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Inland Northwest	Federally funded WA state Program	Lucy Lennox (509) 328 – 8310 x20 <a href="mailto:llexox@bbbspokane.org">llexox@bbbspokane.org</a> (Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties)	Mentoring services for children of incarcerated parents
Mentoring Project Volunteers of America	Federally funded WA state Program	Jennifer Eugene (425) 259 – 3191 x2312 <a href="mailto:jeugene@voaww.org">jeugene@voaww.org</a> (King, Pierce, and Skagit Counties)	Mentoring services for children of incarcerated parents
New Connections	Pierce County	Mary Plante 613 S. 15th Street Tacoma, WA 98405 253-572-1561	
Fatherhood Ministries Divine Alternatives for Dads	Private, local	The Rev. Marvin Charles 5709 Rainier Ave. S Seattle, WA 98118 w(206) 723-3137 c(206) 396-7282	To provide fathers from all walks of life with the knowledge, encouragement and support they need to become positive, active and productive fathers.
PAVE Parents Are Vital in Education	WA	Heather Hebdon <a href="http://www.washingtonpave.org">www.washingtonpave.org</a>	Washington PAVE is a parent directed organization that works with families, individuals with disabilities, professionals and community members in all walks of life and with all types of disabilities. Since 1979, PAVE has provided information, training and support for over 1,000,000 individuals with disabilities, parents and professionals.
King Country Girl Scouts; Totem Council	Private, local	<a href="http://www.girlscoutstotem.org">www.girlscoutstotem.org</a>	Total of three councils doing Girl Scouts Beyond Bars.
COMPASS	Federally funded, local program	Kim Hause AmeriCorps Program Developer (509) 527 – 3077 Green Park School Walla Walla WA 99362 <a href="mailto:mkhause@bmi.net">mkhause@bmi.net</a>	Provides mentoring, support groups, video/web visiting, support for communication between prison and home, parent education, re-entry support, information and referrals.

Matthew House	Monroe, WA	Linda M. Paz, Exec Dir. (360)794 – 8720 16207 177 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, SE Monroe, WA <a href="http://www.matthewhousemonroe.org">www.matthewhousemonroe.org</a>	Provides prison visitor support and hospitality including child care, transportation and overnight lodging.
Rebuilding Families, Inc.	WA	Audrey Shaw C/O Washington Correction Center for Women 9601 Bujacich Road NW Gig Harbor, WA 98332-8300	A 501c3 foundation connected to WCCW that focuses on re-entry and transition issues for women.
Volunteers of America, Western Washington	Western WA	Jennifer Eugene, Program Manager Lorrie Milford, Director 2801 Lombard Avenue Everett, WA 98201 <a href="http://www.voaww.org">www.voaww.org</a>	Provides mentors to children (ages 5-15) of prisoners and family literacy for incarcerated parents and their children
Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Totem Council Pierce County Girl Scouts	Local branch of a national program	Robbin Seeberger, Program Specialist, 1000 Davis Place Dupont, WA 98327  (253) 475-0307	The Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Program provides services to girls who have mothers either previously or currently incarcerated. We provide mother/daughter monthly meetings and age-level based meetings throughout the month. Our program serves girls between the ages of 5-17. The program provides girls with programming that includes education on life and social skills, arts and crafts, science, and many more exciting opportunities.
Boy Scouts Scoutreach Program  King, Snohomish		Chief Seattle Council Boys Scouts of America 206-902-2331 206-725-5200 <a href="mailto:council@seattlebsa.org">council@seattlebsa.org</a> or visit <a href="http://www.seattlebsa.org">www.seattlebsa.org</a> .	The Boy Scout program began with Pacific Harbors Council in Tacoma and is run by Chief Seattle Council. There are nine boys in the program, which accepts boys 6 to 16. Plans are under way to expand both here and nationally, and possibly into the men's corrections center at Stafford Creek.
South Seattle Community College	King Co and the area	Joe Garcia and Kathy Wong New Holly Campus 206.768.6669	Program for career planning, connected to Community Corrections as part of SCCC's Workforce Development Program.

Relatives as Parents Program	Local, grant funded	Hilari Hauptman, Co-facilitator of State RAPP Coalition Aging and Adult Services Administration/DSHS/AASA P.O. Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600 haupthp@dshs.wa.gov 1-800-422-3263 or 360/725-2556 WSU <a href="http://parenting.wsu.edu/relative/index.htm">http://parenting.wsu.edu/relative/index.htm</a>	The Brookdale Foundation supports RAPP programs in WA state. Advocacy, education and supportive services are funded. These groups have been active in development of kinship care standards, education, and services.
Rainier Beach Community Center	Local	D'Juan Brown 8825 Rainier Ave S Seattle, WA 98118 Phone: (206) 386-1925 Fax: (206) 386-1399	Building a kinship care support group for incarcerated. Have a non-specialized kinship care support group now.
The Free Church	Local	The Rev. Zachary Bruce 7551 35th Ave SW Seattle, WA 98126 (206) 935-0170	Support Services for offenders at re-entry
"Breaking Barriers"		Gordon Graham (206)827-2630	Curriculum/video series about how offenders can change their thinking and then their behavior. Have one for youth as well who are in JRA. Designed for institutional use
TeamChild	Statewide	Anne Lee 1120 E. Terrace St., Suite 203 Seattle, WA 98122 (206)322-2444 <a href="http://www.teamchild.org">www.teamchild.org</a>	Provides civil legal advocacy for at risk youth. Serves King, Pierce, Spokane, Snohomish, and Yakima Counties. Diversion from delinquency for juveniles.

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