

SERVING INCARCERATED AND EX-OFFENDER  
FATHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

A REVIEW OF THE FIELD

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and  
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## Introduction

A recent Bureau of Justice Statistics survey of inmates in state and federal correctional facilities found that in 1999 an estimated 1,498,800 children in the United States had incarcerated parents. The survey also reported that over half of state and federal inmates were parents—and most of these were fathers.<sup>i</sup>

While researchers do attempt to document the effect a mother's incarceration has on her child, given the dearth of research on incarcerated fathers, it seems more difficult to interpret and measure the effect of a father's incarceration. This disparity might be attributed to any number of cultural orientations—the irrefutable bond between mothers and newborns, for instance, or that as primary caregiver, the need for a mother's presence and the effects of her absence are unambiguous. Fathers' relationships with their children, on the other hand, are less straightforward. Father-child connections begin after childbirth and are in many instances dependent upon both the child's and father's relationships with the mother. So it is no surprise that literature on the consequences of parental incarceration, and programming for incarcerated parents focuses on imprisoned mothers and their children.

Now, as a new fatherhood movement gains momentum, and rising incarceration rates affect more fathers and their families and children, policy and research implications and questions arise for them as well: How does a father's incarceration and release impact his children and family? What are the unique needs of fathers in prison, and the children and families affected by their absence? What role does corrections have in the maintenance of family ties and provision of services related to fathering?

Despite little research to-date to inform their efforts, practitioners in the corrections and human services fields—from prison administrators to program directors—have begun to respond to concerns about male prisoners' family roles and responsibilities with programming designed for fathers in prison. At the same time, as communities receive record numbers of returning offenders, they are responding to similar concerns about ex-offenders, many of whom resume emotional and financial responsibilities as parents after leaving prison. So, in addition to the general populations they already serve, community fatherhood and newly sprung reentry programs are adapting to address the unique problems faced by fathers with criminal histories.

New attention to fathers' emotional responsibilities to their children denotes a marked shift. Until recently, public policies and programs focused almost exclusively on men's roles as financial providers. But with more mothers in the workforce, and attendant challenges to all gender assumptions, identity as a man and father has come to mean more than one's capacity to be a breadwinner.<sup>ii</sup> Fathers are now recognized for their roles and potential as emotionally supportive and involved parents. Seizing this

shift, the new fatherhood initiatives of private philanthropic organizations and government agencies—from federal to municipal—tout broad objectives, and highlight fathers' emotional involvement in the lives of their children. Many of these initiatives, broadly titled the responsible fatherhood movement, include incarcerated and ex-offender fathers in their body politic.

Interest in incarcerated fathers and their families stems not only from the fatherhood movement and general interest in fathers' roles, but from changes in both the criminal justice and social welfare systems. In 2000, U.S. prisons and jails reached a combined inmate population of over 2,000,000—the number of parents in prison or jail has risen accordingly, from an estimated 452,500 in 1991, to 751,500 in 1999.<sup>iii</sup> Simply put, there are more parents in prison—and more children experiencing the absence of a father—than ever before.

Practitioners who run prison-based programs for fathers interpret the significance of a fathers' imprisonment in a number of ways, and advocate program design in various ways as well. Some posit that incarcerated men who are focused on becoming better parents while in prison are less likely to recidivate after they are released. Another theory states that men who participate in programs for incarcerated fathers interact with their children in ways which deter the development of intergenerational criminal behavior and delinquency—research shows that the children of incarcerated adults are at higher risk of criminal justice involvement than other children.<sup>iv</sup> Others speculate that the children of men who participate in programs for incarcerated fathers are less likely to succumb to other negative child well-being outcomes, such as declining school performance or the anti-social and aggressive behavior frequently associated with children from fatherless and/or poverty-stricken households. Some advocate fathering programs in prison because they provide structured time for inmates and contribute to a facility's capacity to control its population.

While little evidence yet exists to support any one of these ideas, they dominate current discussion of the utility, merits, and content of programs for incarcerated fathers. They reflect the perspectives of the many stakeholders involved in programming for incarcerated fathers: incarcerated fathers and their advocates; the children of incarcerated fathers; the families of incarcerated fathers, including their own families of origin; the mothers or caregivers of children with incarcerated fathers; state child support enforcement agencies; state corrections commissioners and wardens responsible for programming and security; and the private and not-for-profit providers and curriculum designers of programs designed to serve incarcerated fathers. Each of these stakeholders possesses a particular interest in the future development and operation of prison-based programs for fathers. These ideas also influence community-based initiatives that serve—usually by default—fathers recently released from prison and fathers with involvement in the criminal justice system. Many community- and prison-based programs alike also posit the basic premise that fathers have an impact on family

and community-well being, and that programs for fathers positively affect families and communities.

Conventional concerns also push the drive for parenting programs for fathers in the criminal justice system. A prison sentence interrupts a man's ability to support his family; if male prisoners develop and nurture an interest in their emotional roles as parents, perhaps they are more likely to assume responsible emotional *and* financial roles as fathers upon release. Some fatherhood programs identify participants who are able to establish paternity—and mandate that they do so if they have not already. This enhances the efforts of state child support enforcement agencies to locate fathers and collect support payment. The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) welfare law enacted in 1996 made child support payment as important to states' welfare budgets as it is to children and families. Child support payments to families on TANF are made to the state to reimburse cash assistance provided to these families. While child support orders can be modified while a father is in prison, paternity establishment while in prison ensures that payment—and repayment—can begin to be collected upon release.

Increases in the number of probationers, parolees and unsupervised releasees into communities across the country coincide with inmate population increases—an estimated 500,000 prisoners will have been released in 2000.<sup>v</sup> Ex-offenders often return home to difficulties for which they are unprepared. Securing employment and housing, and managing family reintegration pose great challenges to men who have been separated from their families, and who are unaccustomed to life outside. A number of federal, local and private initiatives aim to assist ex-offenders and communities during this transition, and many intend to address the parenting and family roles of the fathers they serve.<sup>vi</sup>

The building of a field is thus underway. It is comprised of curriculum development, program design and implementation, and a campaign of organized advocacy on behalf of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and their families. Its objectives are as diverse as imparting parenting skills to inmates with children, developing an appreciation for counseling and reflection, and assisting men with the range of human services systems they encounter upon release. While the drive to address the issues of incarcerated and ex-offender fathers and their families gains speed and firmly places itself on the radar screens of government and philanthropic agencies alike, the work itself—the provision of educational and counseling services for fathers in prison and in the community—remains a largely uncharted field. In an effort to bring to light practices and policies affecting fathers in the criminal justice and social welfare systems, this report uncovers the design, objectives, history, policy contexts, and other operating environments of programs designed for incarcerated and low-income fathers.

The review draws from a number of information sources, the form and content of which vary significantly. These sources include materials developed and disseminated by programs serving prisoners or low income fathers and their families; site visits and phone interviews with selected programs across the country; literature on families and the correctional system; conversations with practitioners and advocates who work with male prisoners, as well as informal conversations with program participants<sup>1</sup>; conversations with practitioners and advocates who work with female prisoners; the work of researchers and practitioners in the child development and child welfare fields; and participation in two regional policy meetings co-hosted with the University of Pennsylvania's National Center on Fathers and Families, and meetings hosted by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Reentry Court and Partnership Cluster Initiatives.

This review does not identify best practices for programs for incarcerated fathers or low-income fathers and their families. This is a developing field, and we believe identifying best practices would be premature without the longitudinal analyses in which programs are just beginning to engage. The report does, however, describe and compare various program structures and provides a basis and resource for future program development, implementation, and analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Program participants were anonymous to us, and were interviewed in group settings. Questions posed to program participants regarded only their impressions and ideas about programs and visiting policies.

## Historical Context in Brief

The history of parenting programs for incarcerated men is informed by the history of parenting programs for women. Unlike fathers, women's roles as parents have always had implications for corrections settings. Since the early days of women's prisons, pregnancy has made parenting a concern for incarcerated women and prisons. Unlike child care responsibilities prior to imprisonment and relationships with children during and after imprisonment, pregnancy could not be ignored by corrections authorities; with or without officially sanctioned policies and procedures, prenatal care, childbirth, and care for newborn infants had to be managed. While the view that women who are incarcerated are bad parents who neither deserve nor desire to be a part of their children's lives has long prevailed, women's parental roles are not easily dismissed.

Both the early attempts to morally uplift women prisoners and more contemporary rehabilitation efforts acknowledge maternal responsibilities as an important aspect of women's lives. For example, mid-nineteenth century U.S. women's prisons had nurseries that allowed women who gave birth during imprisonment to keep their babies with them, sometimes until the end of the prison term.<sup>vii</sup> Today, fewer than five states now permit prison nurseries, but almost all federal and state prisons for women offer one or more parent education course.<sup>viii</sup> Contact visits between mothers and their children are the norm, though fewer than fifty percent of imprisoned women see their children on a regular basis.<sup>ix</sup> A few prisons have more comprehensive parenting programs which include extended visitation arrangements, including overnight visits, children's activities, and children's visiting centers or areas in the general visiting area. Local jails are seldom as family-oriented. Parent education is not a standard offering nor are parent-child visits. Many local jails do not permit children to visit; others permit visits, but only non-contact ones.<sup>2</sup>

Several states provide community residences to house nonviolent female offenders who have infants or young children. These residential programs are typically run by private organizations that contract with the state and usually provide services such as job training, substance abuse treatment, case management, and parent education. They were developed with the idea that parent-child bonding is important to an infant's development and that women who have committed nonviolent offenses can safely serve their time in a secure community setting. The idea that the availability and use of community resources will prevent recidivism and help protect and nurture children also undergirds this correctional approach for women.

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<sup>2</sup> PATCH and MATCH of the Bexar County Detention Facility in San Antonio, Texas are notable exceptions. See the program section for information on PATCH. Also, New York City's Administration for Children's Services provides transportation so that children may visit their fathers and mothers at the city's jail complex on Rikers Island.

The assumption that most mothers in prison were not good parents prior to incarceration or do not know how to be good parents is a prevalent and underlying premise of many, if not most, programs for women. Participation in special parent-child visits or activities is often predicated on a mother's having successfully completed the prison's parent education series. Some institutions also use participation in extended parent-child visits as a reward for a prison mother's good behavior.<sup>x</sup>

Although the majority of incarcerated men are fathers of dependent children and most of these had parenting responsibilities prior to their imprisonment and can be expected to have similar responsibilities upon their release, men's parenting roles were, until recently, seldom addressed in correctional settings. Because men are rarely the primary caregivers of their children, their parenting needs and responsibilities have been of little concern to the criminal justice system. Also, negative images of incarcerated men prohibit interest in programs designed to connect them with their children. These men are often perceived as absent fathers who weren't involved with their children prior to incarceration, bad parents whose children are better off without them, or men who don't care about their children and are not affected by distance from them.<sup>xi</sup> Consequently, there is little public recognition of the parenting needs and issues of incarcerated men, and parenting is seldom elevated to the status of a public policy mandate or program priority for the criminal justice system.

Despite the absence of formal public policies and minimal public recognition of need, parenting programs are offered in a few prisons and jails, though they have not had anywhere near the longevity experienced by programs designed for women's prisons. The recent history of organized parenting programs for men and their children and families dates back to the early 1970's and perhaps to the 1950's. *The Prisoner's Family*, a book published in 1959, depicts family activities—such as picnics with children—at two men's prisons in California, and discusses a range of family services, though these are not described as parenting programs.<sup>xii</sup> An article published in 1973 article describes a family program for men at the Washington State Reformatory that included family education, childhood education and children's activities. And a program called Parents in Prison operated at the Tennessee State Prison for Men in 1981.<sup>xiii</sup>

The major purpose of the Washington and Tennessee prison-based parenting programs was to enhance fathers' understanding of the impact of incarceration on their children and to strengthen relationships between fathers and their children during and following incarceration. They were also designed to prevent child abuse and neglect when fathers returned home, and emotional neglect during their absence. Though early prison-based parenting programs for men started with the assumption that program participants would be married men whose children had been living with them prior to incarceration, the men who signed up for these volunteer efforts included non-custodial fathers as well as men who were not fathers. This attests to their wish to learn



more about parenting, as well as an interest in activities with a family and community orientation. Programs operated—and continue to operate—under the assumption that men want to be better fathers and need help in doing so.

#### Father Involvement and Responsible Fatherhood

Much of the initial interest and research on fathering—and father involvement in particular—was conducted in response to two currents in the research on families. The first is that relative to the amount of research focused on the role of mothers inside the household and their contributions to child well-being, until very recently there was virtually no research that concerned itself explicitly with fathers' roles. Consequently, we know very little about what we can definitively attribute to a father's presence in the household, other than his contributions as the presumed primary economic provider.

There are also a series of conclusions drawn by researchers concerning the well-being of children growing up in households where fathers are not present.<sup>xiv</sup> This deficit model approach correlates a number of negative child well-being outcomes with father absence. Research on the subject overwhelmingly concludes that children growing up in single-parent, fatherless households are poorer than children raised in two-parent households.<sup>xv</sup> Father absence is routinely interpreted as having a decidedly negative impact on a child's economic well-being. And similarly, a child's increased likelihood of being incarcerated if they have a parent—especially a father—who has been incarcerated is also interpreted as an outcome that is directly related to father absence.<sup>xvi</sup>

While reasons for providing parenting programs for men vary, practitioners who run these programs consistently rely on the conceptual presupposition that there are sound and compelling reasons for society to promote healthy and active involvement of fathers in the lives of their children and families. Advocacy on behalf of incarcerated fathers rests within this broad interest in father involvement, suggesting that even a prison sentence should not categorically interfere or unduly compromise a father's relationship with his children and family—and further, that the children of imprisoned parents should not be punished for a parent's transgression. Advocates for incarcerated fathers argue that as a core value, father involvement allows us to view incarceration as a moment—however unfortunate—that can be seized upon to equip fathers with the tools to become positively involved with their children and families, irrespective of the quality or extent of those relationships prior to being incarcerated.

Advocates for incarcerated fathers argue that being detained in a state or federal corrections facility is another especially disturbing and potentially disruptive version of father absence. Interest in programming for incarcerated fathers has undoubtedly been influenced by the conclusions drawn by researchers who have identified father absence

as a factor that consistently compromises household continuity, economic viability, and positive outcomes for children. Father involvement is, in effect, being proposed as an antidote for father absence. In an effort to raise and answer important questions about the nature and quality of an incarcerated father's involvement with his children, policy makers, researchers and practitioners accept the challenge of providing programs which—among other things—equip incarcerated fathers to become involved in their children's lives. Where and how the benefits manifest are important questions—and the answers vary depending upon whom you ask.

The literature on father involvement has spawned a related body of work on responsible fatherhood. Both have had a marked impact on our understanding of the ground that incarcerated and ex-offender fathers share—and do not share—with all fathers.

The broad-based responsible fatherhood movement grew from interest in father involvement, and emphasizes fathers' roles as nurturers and protectors of their children. Responsible fatherhood initiatives and policies for poor men and those whose children receive government payments focus less on fathers' rights and more on how fathers should behave. James Levine and Edward Pitt provide a prescriptive definition of responsible fatherhood: a man who behaves responsibly waits until he is prepared emotionally and financially before having a baby; marries before having a baby; establishes legal paternity when he becomes a father; actively participates in the continuing emotional and physical care of his child with the child's mother, from pregnancy onward; and shares the financial support of his child with the child's mother from pregnancy onward.<sup>xvii</sup>

Community-based parenting programs for low-income fathers have developed mostly in response to mid 1990's welfare reform legislation and are promoted by state governments and family advocates as key elements of the responsible fatherhood movement. Responsible fatherhood for these poor fathers, from a public policy perspective, focuses more narrowly on their role as financial provider and on the assumption that they neither acknowledge nor fulfill parenting roles and responsibilities. Responsible fatherhood policies and programs have, therefore, been designed to assure that these fathers pay or repay child support to the state for their children who are receiving or have received government cash assistance. Programs target non-custodial fathers, rather than married men with children or fathers who live in the same household with their children.

A cornerstone of these programs is the establishment of paternity to assure that there is a legal financial obligation on the part of the father. Other program elements such as parent education and job training promote or enhance compliance with the child support mandate. Participants are mandated or strongly urged to participate in these other program elements as a means toward avoiding violation of the support order.

In a few states responsible fatherhood policies and programs have been formally extended to include men in prison. The state of Illinois, for example, has paternity establishment programs in state correctional institutions. In some other states men in prison are not exempt from paying child support.<sup>xviii</sup> These new child support payment orders, or previously existing ones, remain in effect while the men are in prison. This occurs despite the fact that many men in prison do not have jobs and those that do generally have incomes substantially below the amount ordered for support. Participants in a meeting on fatherhood and the criminal justice system co-hosted with the National Center on Fathers and Families explained that some Tennessee judges justify these support orders and refuse to modify them on the basis that incarceration is voluntary unemployment on the part of prisoner fathers.

Generally, responsible fatherhood programs are not designed with incarcerated fathers or formerly incarcerated men in mind. Many formerly incarcerated men are, however, involved in community-based responsible fatherhood programs that target low-income, non-custodial parents. But these programs do not focus on ex-offender men specifically, and seldom address issues related to criminal histories or community reentry, though many of the participants in these programs have had criminal justice involvement.

There is, however, a conceptual bond between programming for incarcerated dads and the tenets of responsible fatherhood. Currently, the social and political rationale for prison-based programming for incarcerated fathers, as articulated by service providers and curricula designers, does not appear to be primarily rooted in a prison reform agenda. This is in marked contrast with programs for incarcerated mothers and their children, which are nested in a reform movement dedicated to ensuring that women are treated fairly and appropriately while they are held in custody. Many feminists and other advocates for women have argued that the U.S. prison system was built to house men, not women. Consequently, federal and state prisons are said to be ill-prepared to house women safely and appropriately, and lack thoughtfully designed and well-funded gender-specific programming—i.e., programming designed to meet needs considered unique to women. In an effort to accommodate the health-related needs of imprisoned women—especially prenatal and post-partum care and assistance with parenting and nurturing of infants and very young children, these advocates focus on modifying existing institutional prison settings and argue for the construction of alternatives. Well aware of the get-tough-on-crime environment in which they work, practitioners running programs for incarcerated fathers rarely characterize their work in prison reform terms, opting instead to identify with the tenets of responsible fatherhood.

The union between practitioners offering prison-based programs for incarcerated fathers and the proponents of responsible fatherhood has not been without its problems. Our convening of two regional meetings on fatherhood and the criminal justice system with the National Center on Fathers and Families indicate that two principal tensions tend to emerge. The first is that often, state responsible fatherhood movement initiatives and their representatives know little of the criminal justice system's far-reaching impact on families while fathers are in prison, and after they are released. Even where state delegations included representatives from prisons and other parts of the criminal justice system, participants often seemed unacquainted in the challenges faced by fathers involved in the criminal justice system.

A second tension arises from the suggestion that it is problematic to highlight the circumstances of incarcerated fathers. Some proponents of responsible fatherhood fear that attention to that sub-population of fathers might taint or otherwise compromise the political capital the movement has worked so hard to accumulate and mobilize. Advocates for incarcerated fathers who embrace the responsible fatherhood movement must often respond to inevitable and legitimate questions about whether or not particular offenses, such as sexual abuse of children, or rape, or repeated domestic violence and spousal abuse, compromise their ability to reach out to and benefit from the national movement. Some are unapologetic with respect to their constituents' criminal histories—others bar participation of certain types of offenders by placing eligibility requirements on program participation.

Programs for incarcerated fathers are fundamentally challenging our traditional ideas about parenting. They suggest that it is entirely possible to be a responsible nonresidential father and not have frequent, close contact with your child. And in a manner consistent with the new interest in father involvement, responsible fathering requires that our understanding of father involvement be expanded to include relationships between the child's mother and father, even if the mother and father are no longer involved. Curricula designed for incarcerated fathers all stress, to varying degrees, the importance of engaging with children in developmentally appropriate and sensitive ways over long distances, and for extended periods of time. And the more sophisticated and thoughtful curricula also require that fathers simultaneously develop an amicable relationship with their child's mother while incarcerated. Acknowledgement of both the relationship between the adults in a child's life and the constraints physical distance places on how fathers and children interact significantly modifies the traditional scorecards we consult when evaluating how well a person—especially a nonresident father—is parenting.

## Programs

This section describes the services and operating environments of programs visited, surveyed, and interviewed over the course of the project. Rather than provide a comprehensive list of programs, the following pages describe the variety of approaches programs take to parenting and fatherhood in prisons and communities across the country. Each listing provides information on program services; the prison or community population served; program eligibility guidelines; the extent to which the program coordinates with other government organizations; information on curricula, program staffing, and contact information; and evaluation, data collection and funding information, as available. The listings are followed by a program summary chart that provides an overview of services across programs.

Site visits were conducted for seven of the programs.<sup>3</sup> Information on the others came from surveys mailed to over fifty programs serving fathers or their families in communities and correctional facilities across the country—these programs were chosen from the *Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders* published by the National Institute of Corrections, and from *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood*.<sup>xix</sup> Though programs were contacted via phone and mail, not all responded, and only those whose activities are relevant to incarcerated or ex-offender fathers—or which provide particularly innovative or noteworthy services to their families—are included here.

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<sup>3</sup> Programs for which site visits were conducted: Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon, Family Reentry, FamilyWorks, Long Distance Dads, Paternal Involvement Project, Strengthening Families, and the Work Place Responsible Fatherhood Program.

## **FamilyWorks**

Sing Sing, Woodbourne, and Shawangunk Correctional Facilities, New York

### **Program Services**

FamilyWorks is a parenting program for fathers which operates in three New York state prisons. It was developed by Elizabeth Gaynes, executive director of the Osborne Association, a New York City non-profit which runs several local social service programs addressing criminal justice issues. FamilyWorks program services include both basic and advanced sixteen-week parenting courses, inmate counseling, and children's centers at both Sing Sing and Woodbourne Correctional Facilities in Upstate New York. A Brooklyn-based Family Resource Center provides information to families of New York State inmates, and post-release employment and social services to program graduates. Also, a toll-free information hotline is available to families of inmates statewide.

FamilyWorks aims to assist in maintaining family bonds during a father's incarceration and upon release, and to make the experience of having and visiting fathers in prison less jarring and as emotionally stimulating as possible for children. Courses and counseling for the father and a staffed children's visiting center equipped with toys, games and books encourage constructive visits for both father and child. The program seeks to create an atmosphere in which children can view their fathers in a positive light, and in which fathers can communicate in a more effective way. FamilyWorks believes that if men develop strong family ties while in prison, these stronger bonds will help them reintegrate into their communities once they are released, leading to positive outcomes in both the short- and long-run.

FamilyWorks has operated at Sing Sing since 1989 and at Woodbourne since 1997. Ms. Gaynes introduced the program at Rikers Island, but found that the relatively short lengths of time served by inmates there made it difficult to engage participants. She then brought the program to Sing Sing and Taconic state prisons. Ms. Gaynes has pointed out that at Woodbourne inmates had already begun their own parenting program, POPS, and were receptive to FamilyWorks; while at Taconic, though the prison superintendent wanted the program, the inmates hadn't requested it, and it didn't last.

### **Population Served/Eligibility**

The FamilyWorks course is available on a first come, first served basis to any Sing Sing, Woodbourne, or Shawangunk inmate. There are certain child-related crimes for which inmate caregivers must not have been convicted in order to be eligible to work at the children's centers. Men do not have to be fathers in order to participate in the program.

### Curriculum

The FamilyWorks curriculum was developed by Ms. Gaynes. When she began to develop the program, she reviewed various parenting curricula, but found none to be adequate or appropriate for the inmate population. She then did her own needs assessment and identified essential concerns she wanted the program to address, such as problems fathers may have communicating with their children's caregiver; authority issues—many find it difficult to maintain a parent's role from prison, and many have poorly developed ideas of discipline. Though her program was “soft” in this way, Ms. Gaynes believed people will do for their children what they won't do for anyone or anything else, and figured men would be willing to open up a little for a program like hers.

The curriculum for the first level course focuses on child development theory, and is taught by Dr. Carl Mazza, a Lehman College professor. The second level course provides an opportunity for participants to think about and apply what they learned in the first course to their own lives and early experiences. This course is led by Tom Alexander, the program director.

### Staffing

Executive Director, Program Director, Upstate Coordinator, Children's Visiting Center Director, Inmate Office Support Staff, Inmate Children Center Support Staff

### Evaluation and Data Collection

The program collects participant contact data, and is in the process of installing a case management system. FamilyWorks' first research evaluation will be conducted this year.

### Funding

Program operating funds come from the New York State Department of Corrections. The Bureau of Justice Assistance provides funding for the Family Resource Center.

### Contact Information

#### **FamilyWorks NYC Office:**

175 Remsen Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Brooklyn, NY 11201  
 phone: 718/637-6560  
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 program director: Tom Alexander  
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#### **Executive Office:**

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 New York, NY 10003  
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 fax: 212/979 – 7652  
 director: Elizabeth Gaynes

## Fathers and Children Together (FACT)

Blackburn Correctional Complex, Lexington, Kentucky

### Program Services

FACT is a partnership program between Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, and Blackburn Correctional Complex—a 394-bed minimum security state prison. The program provides parenting education, couples support groups, caregiver support groups and visitor transportation to program participants and their families.

The program was initiated in response to inmates' interest in using their time in prison to improve their parenting skills; none of the men's correctional facilities in Kentucky offered a parenting program. In 1992, Linda Everhard, who was then Unit Coordinator for the Blackburn facility, began development of the program in response to this interest. The following year, at Linda's request for assistance, the Kentucky Council on Child Abuse became involved, functioning as primary instructors for the class. Inmate participation in the development, implementation and fine-tuning of the program is a critical component of FACT.

The program has two primary components: 12 weeks of classes, and special visitation for the men and their children. Classes are two hours long and include a 10 minute break. Topics for the classes have evolved based on the needs and interests of participants over time. Although the lesson plan is designed in a sequential weekly format, topics are scheduled based on the availability of guest speakers and other considerations. Sessions on child behavior and development are presented early in the twelve weeks, while topics requiring a greater comfort level—like substance abuse or domestic violence—are kept to the second half of the three-month period.

Class size has ranged from 8-30, though the size is now limited to 25. 54 fathers participated in the most recent fiscal year. Participants are asked to make a commitment to attend class weekly; attendance is recorded and participants receive a graduation certificate at the end of the twelve-week period if they have not missed more than two sessions. Graduates are invited to continue attending classes and special visits for as long as they wish.

Because program participants are very diverse in experience and educational level, every attempt is made to minimize the extent to which reading level is a barrier, and maximize the assets of group diversity so that all feel they have something to offer. Though some lecture is involved, emphasis is on use of group discussion and exercises that teach curricular content. There is also a significant use of audiovisuals—the use of videotapes, graphic handouts and overhead transparencies are thought to contribute to maintaining a high level of interest.



#### Population Served/Eligibility

Any father, grandfather, uncle, stepfather, etc. may participate. No inmates are turned away from the class. If an inmate was convicted and sentenced on criminal abuse charges, for example, he is closely monitored during visits. Thus far no inmate has been rejected for reasons of conviction.

#### Staffing

There are four primary paid positions and one secondary position. All five are paid staff. No one staff person is on the FACT program for 100% of their time. There are also ten volunteers, which include guest speakers, assistance with a storybook project, and transportation for special visits.

#### Evaluation/Data Collection

Prevent Child Abuse – Kentucky has sought an outside evaluator, Morehead State University, to conduct an evaluation. An evaluation report is available, and the program plans to conduct ongoing evaluation.

Data on participants is collected on an application form inquiring about the children with which the inmate has or will have involvement. The application ensures appropriateness of the inmate for the FACT class.

#### Funding

The Blackburn Correctional Complex provides limited funding for food and film. The program also receives periodic funding from the Blackburn Chapel Support Council. \$40,000 funding for core operations was received for the first time in September 1999 from the Public Welfare Foundation. That grant has since expired.

#### Contact Information

Fathers and Children Together (FACT)  
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program director: Trey Berlin  
family support coordinator: Amanda Burdette

## Long Distance Dads

State Correctional Institution at Albion, Pennsylvania

### Program Services

Long Distance Dads is a prison-based fatherhood program providing parenting workshops for inmates at Pennsylvania's state prison facility at Albion, a medium-security facility in the northwest corner of the state housing 2,000 inmates.

Randell Turner, the program's designer, became interested in bringing the fatherhood workshop to the SCI after participating in one of the community support fairs held yearly at the prison. At the fairs, inmates within three years of their expected dates of release are put in touch with community-based organizations to which they can turn for re-entry planning and services upon release. LDD began in January 1996 at Albion, and was designed by Dr. Turner along with ten inmate peer leaders over an 18-month period. Dr. Turner and Parris Baker, the program's co-director, continue to oversee the program and is involved in the peer leadership training the program hosts. Two new curricula, LDD Level II and a Spanish-translated LDD program will be available by the end of the year.

The program now runs in all 21 male correctional facilities in Pennsylvania and to federal, state and county prisons in Utah, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Carolina, Michigan, California, Virginia, Minnesota and Massachusetts, as well as in Canada and Great Britain. Dr. Turner recently became Vice President of the National Fatherhood Initiative which will take over marketing of the Long Distance Dads curricula and training programs.

Children and family members do not actively participate in the program. Due to the sentencing policy in Pennsylvania, most inmates are sent to prisons which are at a substantial distance from their hometown, so child and family involvement is restricted. The program is seeking ways for family members to be involved.

Dr. Turner is also the founder of the community-based Fathers Workshop—the LDD parent organization which is housed in the Erie Family Center, a School District of the City of Erie facility. The Fathers Workshop offers a number of programs in addition to LDD—Dr. Dad teaches child health and safety to new/young fathers; Foundation for Fatherhood is a fatherhood curriculum for community programs; and the Fathers Workshop Training Institute which offers training to community leaders and program managers to develop fatherhood programs in their communities or facilities.

### Population Served/Eligibility

All inmates except sex offenders and men convicted of child abuse are permitted to participate. Men do not need to be fathers in order to participate. Participation in the

program is voluntary, and is not part of either the mandatory or prescriptive set of programs recommended to inmates at the beginning of their terms.

#### Curriculum

The 12-week character-based curriculum is facilitated by trained inmate peer leaders, and was developed by Dr. Turner and ten Albion inmates. Sessions focus on issues of character, developing the father-child relationship, communication, and anger management. The class meets once a week for two hours. The average attendance is 40-45 men who are divided into four groups with two peer leaders in each group. Peer leaders meet weekly with Dr. Turner and Parris Baker to review the previous week's session and prepare for the next.

#### Staffing

All staff are volunteers. Staff includes a director, co-director, a DOC Prison Psychologist, and DOC counselor.

#### Evaluation and Data Collection

The program tracks pre- and post-assessment outcomes related to the curriculum. The Pennsylvania DOC collects and keeps confidential all other inmate information. An evaluation of the program has been initiated with Penn State University and is scheduled for completion in 2001.

#### Funding

For the first three years the program was completely voluntary. During the last year the program received local community contributions of \$2,500, and a PA Department of Corrections contract for approximately \$15,000 per year for three years.

#### Contact Information

The Fathers Workshop  
Long Distance Dads  
1151 Atkins Street  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503  
phone: 814/871-6683  
fax: 814/871-6694  
director: Randell Turner, Ph.D.  
co-director: Parris Baker, MSW  
web: [www.thefathersworkshop.org](http://www.thefathersworkshop.org)

## **Nurturing Fathers/Parents Together, Vermont**

Montpelier, Vermont

### **Program Services**

Prevent Child Abuse-Vermont provides parenting education classes and support groups for inmates at two of Vermont men's correctional facilities. Both facilities use a modified version of PCA-V's Nurturing Fathers program, a curriculum published by the Center for Growth and Development, Inc. PCA-V had attended a training with the program's developer, and thought the curriculum would be useful for Vermont's male corrections population. The Vermont Department of Corrections—which, according to the department's family services director, finds family and parenting important—agreed on the need for a curriculum for men. In addition to the Nurturing Fathers program, a Nurturing Family program for parents involved in the criminal justice system and their children is delivered at Vermont Department of Corrections field sites. Parents Together, is administered at the majority of Vermont correctional facilities. Vermont DOC also supports a weekly play group for male offenders, their children and their children's caregivers, called the North East Kingdom Youth Services Play Group, at one of their facilities.

### **Population Served/Eligibility Requirements**

Requirements vary according to the program and facility. Sex offenders are not allowed to participate in programs that involve children.

### **Staffing**

Vermont staffs one program coordinator, along with volunteers. The coordinator and volunteers receive training from PCA-V.

### **Evaluation/Data Collection**

Program registration data is collected by PCA-V.

### **Funding**

The Department of Corrections provides \$25,000 to PCA-V for all parenting services. This funding is matched by a private organization.

**Contact Information**

**Nurturing Fathers/Parents Together**

**Prevent Child Abuse – Vermont**

**PO Box 829**

**Montpelier, VT 05601**

**phone: 802/229-5724**

**fax: 802/229-5567**

**program director: Linda Johnson**

**Vermont DOC, Director of Women Offender and Family Services: Maureen Buell**

**(phone: 802/241-2338; fax: 802-241-2565)**

## Parents in Prison

Baltimore, Maryland

### Program Services

The Parents in Prison program runs a group at male and female medium security facilities in Maryland. The program was developed in 1994 by a team of social workers. Barbara Boyle, the current director, coordinated program development and implementation.

The program is not run by an outside organization; rather, it is one component of a much larger group counseling program run by the Maryland Division of Correction. Parents in Prison consists of sixteen topic modules and two open sessions, which may be offered in sequence or reordered to meet the needs of a particular group. New members may enter the group during the module entitled “Decisions in Parenting” which is offered approximately every nine weeks. A new member must contract for at least ten sessions, and may remain in the group as long as the social worker’s clinical judgment is that the person requires the additional time to achieve the planned objectives.

Joint meetings involving family members are structured, and are not merely visits. There is a special meeting of the Parents in Prison group in which inmates’ parenting partners—the inmate’s spouse, or the child’s custodian—are invited to participate along with the group. In another session, children are invited and the session’s activities involve them.

Other programs in Maryland state prisons address life skills, reentry planning, job search, drug counseling, and counseling in other areas such as domestic violence, decision-making, communication and relationships—such programming is not part of Parents in Prison.

### Population Served/Eligibility

Inmates are eligible for the group at any time, and at any level of security. The individual must have an interest in improving his or her parenting skills and the expectation of being significantly involved in the life of a child. Wherever feasible, completion of a “Decision Making” group—a basic social work group also known as “Thinking, Deciding, Changing” and which is not part of the Parents in Prison program—is a prerequisite for joining. 127 fathers participated in 1999 in 9 groups of 12-14 participants.

### Staffing

All staff have masters degrees in social work, and have been trained in the agency's decision-making methodology, and mentored in running the Parents in Prison group. Volunteers are not used.

### Coordination with Outside Agencies

Parents in Prison has contacts with social service agencies throughout Maryland's 26 counties. Parole commissioners and hearing officers often visit state prison facilities to hear cases, and often recommend the program.

### Evaluation/Data Collection

Prior to entering the group, the participant is interviewed and the following paperwork is completed and signed: contract for groups, rules and regulations for group, "My Plan for Parents in Prison Group," and a pre-screening form which is a collection of data for assessing needs.

Progress reports on each participant are updated every nine weeks by the social worker. When a member leaves the group, he or she has an opportunity to share and receive feedback from the group. The social worker also conducts an individual exit interview. There is no certificate for completing the group, however, copies of the contracts and the periodic progress reports are placed in the participant's file.

### Funding

The program runs on Maryland Division of Correction funds, and uses DOC staff.

### Contact Information

Parents in Prison

Maryland Division of Correction

6776 Reiserstown Road

Baltimore, MD 21215

phone: 410/585-3300

fax: 410/764-5112

director: Barbara A. Boyle, LCSW-C

social work supervisor: Marie Carter, LCSW-C (phone: 410/651-9000)

## **PATCH (Papap and Their Children)**

Bexar County Adult Detention Center, San Antonio, Texas

### **Program Services**

PATCH is a program available to fathers at the Bexar County Adult Detention Center, a 3,670-bed jail in San Antonio. Participants all live in one 70-bed unit of the facility. Through the program, outside organizations come to the jail five times per week to present on various parenting and life skills topics, from nutrition and child development to child support and paternity. PATCH inmates must attend all five sessions in order to earn an hour-long Saturday contact visit with their children. Program coordinator Aida Camero estimates that about half the PATCH inmates receive visits. After their children leave, an hour-long process group is held for the men to discuss and assess their visits. The rest of the inmates at the jail do not receive contact visits—the non-contact visits other inmates do receive occur through a glass window and over a phone; these non-contact visits last 15 minutes.

PATCH began in 1993, after its sister program, MATCH (for mothers), had been in operation at the jail for seven years. Detention Ministries, Inc., a community-based organization, began MATCH in 1984 in response to the separation trauma they'd observed in mothers and their children when mothers were incarcerated. Seeing how important Detention Ministries' work was, the former county sheriff began funding MATCH in 1986. The current sheriff also acknowledged the importance of MATCH's work and so asked to implement PATCH. The jail provides program space, and salaries for three staff members and two security officers for MATCH/PATCH.

In addition to presentations by community-based organizations and contact visits, twice a month an organization called Project SAVE provides voluntary group counseling to discuss anger management and family relationship issues. Upon release from the jail fathers can receive outreach services through an organization called Detention Ministries, which assists formerly incarcerated parents, and provides support groups, crisis intervention, job development, information and referrals to parents, children and their caregivers.

Men apply to the program by filling out a human services request form—last year there were 373 participants, and 882 requests to participate. The average time in PATCH is 4 to 6 months.

The program has also been implemented at the Laredo Jail, the Fabian Dominguez State Prison, and the TDC prison in Beaumont, TX.

### **Population Served/Eligibility**

PATCH serves fathers detained at the Bexar County Jail. Generally, the men range in age from 18 – 40, and their children's ages range from 1 month to 16 years. Men



charged with murder, aggravated sexual assault, any harm to a child, or drug delivery are ineligible. Gang-involved inmates, or those charged with gang-related crimes are also ineligible, as are inmates with disciplinary problems.

#### Staffing

Three MATCH/PATCH staff members—a program coordinator, a MATCH assistant and a PATCH assistant, as well as two unit security officers.

#### Evaluation/Data Collection

In 1995 44 ex-offenders were recognized with “good citizenship awards) by the Bexar County Commissioner, Court, and elected officials for their collected 144 jail-free years which was calculated to add up \$2.5 million in tax savings. Jail data indicates that those inmates in the PATCH program have the least major incidents in the jail (0.01% of incidents last year). PATCH does collect demographic information on participants, and pre-tests and then post-tests them two months after the end of program participation. Test results have not yet been compared.

Last year there were 1,283 PATCH contact visits, and 2,590 children visited inmate fathers.

The program has proposed to conduct a formal research study to be conducted by a professor of psychology at Our Lady of the Lake University.

#### Funding

Operating costs provided by the jail amount to \$128,000 for program space, three staff members, and two security officers. The program also receives \$17,247 in in-kind donations.

#### Contact Information

Papas and Their Children  
200 North Comal  
San Antonio, TX 78207  
phone: 210/270-6330  
fax: 210/270-6118  
email: match.patch@juno.com  
program coordinator: Aida Camero  
Bexar County Sheriff: Ralph Lopez

## Strengthening Families

Montgomery County Pre-Release Center, Rockville, Maryland

### Program Services

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) at the Montgomery County Pre-Release Center (PRC) uses the SFP curriculum to serve the parenting education needs of male and female inmates at the center. Developed at the University of Utah in 1989, the curriculum aims to teach parenting skills to men and women recovering from drug addiction (ninety percent of the PRC's inmates are former substance abusers), and prevent drug use in their children. The Montgomery County PRC has offered parenting programs for the past 15 years—first for fathers, and later for mothers—through the local adult education department. But it has only recently implemented SFP, a program that has run in public housing developments and other disadvantaged communities across the country. The Montgomery County PRC is the first correctional facility to implement SFP.

The program involves both parents, their children aged seven to eleven, and their children's caregivers. The 14-week session meets one to two times per week at the center—the program provides transportation, gas money, or bus or subway fare for the children and their caregivers; dinner is also provided through a contract with a local restaurant. The center also provides child care services for children who don't fall into the seven to eleven age range.

Each session is broken into two parts. During the first half, parents and children work separately on the session's topic—these include subjects like setting limits; listening and communication skills; setting goals; and appropriate rewarding of good behavior. Parents and children work together during the second half of the session. Afterward, both parents and children are given homework assignments, and the children participate in a grab bag.

At the time of our visit in April of 2000, six families including seven children were enrolled in the program, and between six and seven fathers were involved. This was the first non-pilot group the program had run at the PRC.

In coordination with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the University of Utah, and the University of Maryland at College Park, the National Institute on Drug Abuse provided the PRC and five other sites in the area with a grant to implement the program as part of a five-year research project.

Most inmates at the Montgomery County PRC are area residents who've spent time in county jail (and in some cases, in state prison), and were moved to the PRC in preparation for release, which occurs within six months of admission to the center. During their time at the PRC, inmates participate in drug rehabilitation; GED, college, computer and vocational classes; and psychological support services.

**Population Served/Eligibility Requirements**

Participation is voluntary. Male and female inmates at the Montgomery County PRC who have children aged seven to eleven who are available to participate, are welcome to the class. An in-house program is available to inmates ineligible for SFP, though it doesn't involve families or offer incentives like dinner, to the extent that SFP does.

**Staffing**

The facility's supervisor of administration and training oversees the program at the PRC, and two outside social workers administer it.

**Evaluation/Data Collection**

Researchers from the University of Maryland will perform pre- and post-program testing to measure parenting skills, substance abuse, and arrest outcomes for both parents and their children who've participated in SFP at one of the regional sites. Post-testing will occur six months after program completion, and then on an annual basis for five years.

**Funding**

The PRC has a \$70,000 operating budget for SFP; this was granted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

**Contact Information**

The Strengthening Families Program  
Montgomery County Pre-Release Services  
11651 Nebel Street  
Rockville, MD 20852  
phone: 301/468-4200  
fax: 301/468-4420  
email: [corectns.sachs@co.mo.md.us](mailto:corectns.sachs@co.mo.md.us)  
supervisor: Jane S. Sachs

## Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon

Los Angeles, California

### Program Services

Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon are community-based fatherhood programs geared toward Latino fathers living in the East Los Angeles area.

The programs are part of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute (NLFFI), an affiliation of Bienvenidos Family Services, where both are housed, and the National Compadres Network and Behavioral Assessment, Inc. Through research, training and direct service, NLFFI addresses the role of fathers in children's and families' lives—as well as the cohesion of families generally—in a culturally sensitive context. Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon are two of a number of family-focused programs offered through the Bienvenidos East Los Angeles center (other centers are located in Altadena and Pomona).

Bienvenidos was established 14 years ago as a foster family agency. It was soon determined that more comprehensive work was required, so the program expanded to provide a variety of family services. These include case management, crisis intervention, parenting classes, family counseling, a women's therapy group, domestic violence groups, resource and referral services, a drop-in center, respite services, an emergency food bank, a family resource center and family recreation activities. Through its in-home support services, families are assigned a family support team that works closely with each family to stabilize family life and minimize risk factors. Many of the fathers involved in Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon are referred through one of Bienvenidos' other services or programs.

Both fatherhood programs are based on the idea of “palabra” which means “word” or “credence”. Through this concept the curricula and in-class discussion tie involved parenting to manliness. Taking one's responsibilities as a parent is taught as a crucial element to being a noble man.

Classes last two hours during which participants sit in a circle and discuss the day's assigned topic—if other issues or topics arise, those are also addressed. The programs use two separate curricula. Con Los Padres is a 16-week curricular program with an emphasis on child development. After two weeks of attendance, the men are informed of the \$100 stipend they'll receive upon program completion—they must participate in 14 of the 16 classes in order to graduate. Padres con Cara y Corazon is a 12-week program with a more cultural emphasis. The men in this program usually have older children who they don't bring to the sessions.

#### **Population Served/Eligibility**

Con Los Padres is designed for fathers between the ages of 16 and 25, and Padres Con Cara y Corazon is for fathers over 25.

#### **Staffing**

Administrative Director, Senior Parent Counselor and Mentor, Parent Counselor and Mentor, Parent Educators. A number of program graduates have gone on to work for other Bienvenidos programs, and one Con Los Padres staffer is a graduate himself.

#### **Evaluation and Data Collection**

Participants complete pre- and post-program questionnaires.

#### **Funding**

During its first three years, the program was funded by a grant from California's Department of Juvenile Justice which was administered by the District Attorney's office. The DA's interest had to do with paternity establishment and child support orders, and when they were funding the program, they ran talks on these topics at Bienvenidos.

The program's main source of funding comes from a Ford Foundation grant administered by the National Center for Strategic Non-Profit Planning and Community Leadership. The program is also supported by a Community Challenge Grant, which provides funding for case management and parent education, and a federal grant from the Abandoned Infant Assistance program. The Casey Foundation also funds their work.

#### **Coordination with Government Agencies**

Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon are not linked to prison or re-entry programs, but do receive probation referrals. One probation officer in particular has been especially enthusiastic about the program and actively encourages probationer participation.

#### **Contact Information**

Con Los Padres and Padres con Cara y Corazon

5233 East Beverly Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90022

phone: 323/728-9577

fax: 323/728-3483

email: [fs@bienvenidos.org](mailto:fs@bienvenidos.org)

fatherhood parenting facilitator: Rodrigo Contreras

## **Family ReEntry**

Norwalk, Connecticut (main office); a satellite clinical office in Bridgeport and additional programs in New Haven, Stamford, Niantic and Cheshire

### **Program Services**

Family ReEntry takes a clinical approach to its life skills, domestic violence, anger management, mentoring, and parenting-related support groups and individual and family counseling. All services are provided to clients at no charge.

The program's mission is to "empower individuals and families to reduce violence, crime, abuse, and neglect." Family ReEntry programs were originally designed to work within the criminal justice system, but are now operating in various agencies and organizations including alternative incarceration programs, offices of adult probation, drug rehabilitation centers, housing projects, schools, child care centers and community agencies.

Family ReEntry's programs focus on five areas: Life skills programs assist men, women, and youth involved in the criminal justice system; fatherhood initiatives assist fathers and father figures, particularly those men who have become disconnected from their children and/or face significant challenges in parenting, co-parenting, or parenting-apart to become more positively involved in the lives of these children; parenting programs assist parents or caregivers address the needs of the children in their care and enhance their capacity to nurture, discipline, and socialize children appropriately; mentoring programs assist at-risk children and youth develop social, emotional, academic, and behavioral skills; and domestic violence offender treatment programs treat male offenders.

Children and other family members are involved to the extent that it is clinically useful, safe and feasible—this varies from program to program. Often, family members and children are involved indirectly (e.g., via planned activities and outings).

### **Population Served/Eligibility**

The principal eligibility criteria are that the client has an identified need and that Family ReEntry's programs can reasonably meet that need. The program does not treat sexual offenders as the primary diagnosis. It also does not provide primary services for substance abuse. Offenders with a high risk of violence and sexual assault would typically not be referred or accepted into the programs. Most participants are mandated by probation to attend or receive services as a part of rehabilitative programs mandated by the department of corrections.

Generally, offenders in the mentoring program will be excluded if they have a history of violent behavior (i.e., they pose a risk to the mentor), or have not met the correctional facility's behavioral criteria. In addition, the scheduled release data should

be no more than 24 months subsequent to the start of the program. Ideally, participants will be selected through a voluntary process that includes participation in a 12-week group and an individual assessment session. A post-release needs assessment is done and services identified.

#### Staffing

Four full time staff and 16 paid contractual staff. There are also four university interns, but they are not paid. There are seven on the board of directors—all are volunteers. Staff receive ongoing group and individual clinical supervision, and specialized training in areas such as domestic violence, parent-child relations, family therapy, and communications and problem solving.

#### Coordination with Government Agencies

Family ReEntry currently works with Connecticut's Office of Adult Probation, Family Division, Department of Corrections, and through subcontract agreements with private service providers. It has also collaborated with the Offices of Alternative sanctions, Family Relations Units, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor.

#### Evaluation/Data Collection

The program collects intake and discharge data on program participants. Some of Family ReEntry's programs are funded by the United Way—these are annually evaluated. Reports and outcome measures are required under most state contracts and are compiled quarterly or annually. Long-term follow-up data are collected whenever possible. A number of research projects are currently underway.

#### Funding

27% of the program's funding comes from a state contract, and 63% from private funding (foundations, corporations, churches, individuals). The total funding base for 2000 is \$420,700.

#### Contact Information

Family ReEntry  
9 Mott Avenue  
Suite 105  
Norwalk, CT 06850  
phone: 203/838-0496  
fax: 203/866-9291  
web: under construction  
director: A. Stephen Lanza, MA, LMFT

## **Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources of Fairfax County, Inc.**

Fairfax, Virginia

### **Program Services**

OAR services are designed for people adversely caught up in the criminal justice system. It has a 29-year history of helping incarcerated offenders successfully return to their communities; supervising community service as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent misdemeanor offenders; supporting families in crisis due to the incarceration or arrest of a family member; and helping ex-offenders maintain a crime-free lifestyle. The organization's initial concept was for concerned citizens to visit jail inmates and provide guidance and support for a successful return to the community. Today the program serves both the offender and their families. OAR of Fairfax County is the largest of seven affiliated local agencies in four states.

Parenting classes for men are offered at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. The classes are run once a week for 90 minutes over a six-week period. The class usually begins with 20 inmates selected to participate, and ranges from 10 to 15 at the time of graduation. Court appearances, parole visits and security issues in the facility impact attendance at times.

OAR staff, whose members hold master's degrees and certification in counseling and criminal justice, designed the OAR parenting class curriculum.

Outside of the jail, a family support group meets twice a month. A group called "Saturday Friends" meets every Saturday and focuses on the needs of children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. Other support includes school supplies, field trips, and holiday gifts.

### **Population Served/Eligibility**

All inmates at the Adult Detention Center can learn about OAR programs through orientation sessions at the jail. Interested inmates are evaluated for level of interest and motivation. The program is voluntary. However, an individual may not be selected for the program for inappropriate behavior, release date (i.e., less than six weeks remaining on a sentence) or waiting list status.

### **Staffing**

OAR has a total staff of 23, and has between 90 and 100 active volunteers. Drawn from the community and provided with 15 – 22 hours of special training, they are prepared to work with offenders, families and children in a variety of roles. Either a staff member or volunteer facilitates the OAR parenting class for men.



**Evaluation/Data Collection**

Throughout the year, OAR provides evaluation data and information to its funding sources. The last comprehensive independent evaluation was conducted in 1991 by the Virginia Department of Corrections.

**Coordination with Government Agencies**

Probation makes informal referrals to OAR. And once an offender is released, referrals are made to the appropriate service providers to continue any recommended programs in the community.

**Funding**

OAR receives financial support from Fairfax County Community Funding Pool; Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services; Virginia Department of Corrections; Fairfax-Fall Church United Way; and donations from individuals, churches, businesses and organizations in the community.

**Contact Information**

Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources of Fairfax County, Inc.  
10640 Page Avenue, Suite 250  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
phone: 703/246-3033  
fax: 703/273-7554  
web: <http://www.oarfairfax.org>  
executive director: Carla Taylor

## **Paternal Involvement Project**

Chicago, Illinois

### **Program Services**

The Paternal Involvement Project (PIP) uses a comprehensive case management approach to help fathers support their families both financially and emotionally. PIP provides life skills, health, legal, social, employment, counseling, crisis intervention and community-based support and referrals to low-income non-custodial fathers. Services are designed to increase labor force participation, improve families' financial health, decrease welfare dependency, and yield closer, on-going father-child relationships.

Supporting the program's general case management, counseling and referral are two core program components: job readiness and placement; and family development and parenting education. Paternity establishment—a part of family development—involves providing fathers with the information and assistance they need to establish paternity; job readiness involves classroom sessions and “real world” assignments that cover finding and maintaining employment—the PIP staff also identify sources of employment and assist participants in finding jobs; parent education involves a classroom curriculum that covers twelve topics and includes a monthly family outing for fathers, their children and their children's mothers.

Men are referred to the program through outreach presentations (each staff member presents once per month at community-based organizations), the Child Support Enforcement office's non-custodial parent services unit, and the courts. In the last two years, PIP has also been reaching out to judges and attorneys to make them aware of PIP, and to encourage referral. The program also works closely with child support enforcement to help men modify their support orders.

Participants must establish paternity, attend parenting classes and father/child activities, enroll in GED classes or certificate programs if they have not completed their education, and enroll in job readiness classes if they are unemployed.

In addition, PIP furnishes job placement and long term follow-up, counseling, monitored visitation, legal services, and public policy advocacy.

### **Population Served/Eligibility**

PIP is designed for low- or no-income non-custodial fathers aged 16 – 45 who are not married to their children's mothers and not living in the same home as the child/mother, though a few non-custodial mothers also participate in its programs. Participants must be the birth parent of a child residing in Chicago or Cook County who receives or has received AFDC or TANF in Illinois. The PIP employment coordinator estimated that at least 35% of the men the program serves have criminal records.

### Staffing

Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Policy Director, Family Development Coordinators (includes several program alumni), Employment Coordinator, Case Manager, Outreach Specialist, Office Manager, Employment Specialist, Family Development Specialist, Administrative Assistant

### Evaluation and Data Collection

A PIP participant completes a comprehensive personal, family, educational, and employment assessment when entering the program.

### Funding

The program operates with an annual budget of about \$600,000, 80-85% of which is from private and foundation grants, and 15% from government contracts. The PIP Professional Training Institute—the education, training and technical assistance arm of the organization designed to teach government and community-based staff and traditional human service providers how to work with low-income, non-custodial fathers—generates about 5% of the program’s funding base.

### Coordination with Government Agencies

In addition to funding and referrals from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid Division of Child Support Enforcement, PIP also works with the Cook County Sheriff to provide PIP services to inmates in the county’s boot camp. PIP also receives referrals from courts, and is in the process of implementing a formal referral and case management capacity with probation and parole.

A consultant is working with the Office of the Cook County Public Defender and the Office of the Inspector General to develop a pilot project on fathering and foster care issues. The consultant also serves on the defender office’s court improvement committee, where he vouches for paternal issues.

### Contact Information

The Paternal Involvement Project  
6800 South Wentworth Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60621  
phone: 773/651-9262  
fax: 773/651-9297  
email: pipfathers@aol.com  
web: www.pipfather.org  
director: Robert Houston

## The Work Place Responsible Fatherhood Program

Memphis, Tennessee

### Program Services

The Work Place is a comprehensive four-week program which includes job readiness, job placement, follow-up, parent education, and case management services. The Work Place Responsible Fatherhood Program is a track which uses the same program model as The Work Place, but which is designed specifically for unemployed non-custodial fathers.

Participants in the Responsible Fatherhood project are referred by the Shelby County juvenile court, where program staff go on a scheduled basis to meet with new referrals. Participants include men who are in court to establish paternity, as well as those who've been picked up on a child support warrant—almost all are non-custodial fathers of children whose caregivers are receiving TANF payments, though 13 women have been referred to the program so far this year. In the case of those referred because of a support warrant, judges hold off ten weeks on resetting the support order and mandate that the father must either participate in the Work Place Responsible Fatherhood program, or obtain a job on his own. Staff noted that while some judges will not approve part-time jobs as acceptable employment, others focus on whether the support is paid rather than on the source of the father's money, or the nature of employment.

The parent education class focuses on typical responsible fatherhood topics such as personal values, spirituality, conceptions of manhood, the emotional and financial responsibilities of a non-custodial parenting, anger management, and communicating with women. The sessions also cover HIV/AIDS, understanding the child support system, and staying out of the criminal justice system.

Prior to being placed on a job, program participants must undergo a criminal background check and drug screening. A negative drug test is needed to be placed on a job. A criminal background does not exclude individuals from the program, but is used for placement purposes, as some employers will not hire individuals with a criminal history.

The Work Place functions as a staffing service for several local businesses, contracting with employers in the Memphis area to recruit, screen, and provide “soft” job skills training for entry level workers. Participants must graduate from the job readiness program in order to be placed on a job. Typically the jobs are permanent, full time positions with potential for advancement. During the first three to four months on the job, the participant is an employee of the Work Place. Like temporary employment agencies, the program receives a fee from the employer for each employee it helps place.

#### Population Served/Eligibility/Requirements

The Responsible Fatherhood program at the Work Place serves non-custodial parents who are unemployed or underemployed. In order to graduate from the program, participants must complete the job readiness program, cannot be absent for more than two days, and cannot be late to class more than three times.

#### Staffing

Staffing includes the director, a case manager, a job trainer, and a human resources manager—and the broader services and staff of the agency. The agency's executive director implements program policies and handles the budget and other key decisions.

#### Evaluation/Data Collection

The program currently measures its success by its ability to contract with local businesses and government agencies. In a typical class of about 22 or so, there are, on the average, about 7 who eventually graduate. There are no formal evaluation reports at this time.

#### Funding

The major funding source for the Responsible Fatherhood program is Welfare-to-Work support. For the fiscal year ending June 1998, the Work Place had revenues close to \$1,700,000.

#### Coordination with Government Agencies

From November 1999 through April 2000 the Work Place offered components of The Work Place to men near the end of their term at the Memphis Penal Farm. Administration at the penal farm supported having job readiness training and employment interviews at the prison, but the program was terminated due to funding problems.

#### Contact Information

The Responsible Fatherhood Program  
Parent Agency: The Work Place  
245 Wagner Place, Suite 200  
Memphis, TN 38103  
phone: 901/527-5627  
fax: 901/527-0867  
program director: Reverend Frank Anderson

## **Project SEEK (Services to Enable and Empower Kids)**

Flint, Michigan

### **Program Services**

Project SEEK aims to prevent delinquent behavior, halt intergenerational crime and stabilize families affected by incarceration by addressing the needs of children of inmates in Genesee County, Michigan. Participants are identified through the county probation department's pre-sentence investigation, after which families of inmates with children age 10 and under are offered SEEK's services. These include home visits; support groups for both the children and their caregivers; referral to other county services for other needs such as financial assistance, housing, health care, or mental health or legal services; and facilitating communication between incarcerated parents and their children where appropriate. Program staff use a child development curriculum called Building Strong Families during home visits.

The program was begun as a pilot project in 1988 by the Michigan Departments of Mental Health, Social Services, and Corrections as an innovative way to address the state's growing prison population. It is currently sponsored by Genesee County's Departments of Community Health, Corrections, and Social Services, as well as the Mott Children's Health Center.

### **Population Served/Eligibility Requirements**

Though Project SEEK does help facilitate communication between inmate parents and their children, the program focuses on the needs of the children of incarcerated parents (both fathers and mothers). To be eligible an inmate must be sentenced to 7 years or less, and have a child under the age of 16.

### **Staffing**

The program is staffed by one full-time coordinator, four full-time project specialists, and one part-time clerk/aide. The program contracts additional staff for assistance with children's groups and other program services as needed, and also contracts with local agencies for transportation services.

Staff receive training in conflict resolution, as well as the Building Strong Families curriculum. The program is also developing its own training program which will cover prevention programming, working with the Department of Corrections, working with infants, issues specific to incarceration of a family member, and cultural competence.<sup>xx</sup>

### **Evaluation/Data Collection**

Registration data is collected in an intake form, and the program is engaged in an ongoing longitudinal study through which data on families in the program is collected just after the inmate is sentenced, 6 months after intake, one year after intake, and

then on a yearly basis. Data was collected consistently from 1988 through 1997, and the program plans to resume data collection. Results from the 1989 through 1993 portion of the study are available at <http://www.fcnetwork.org/reading/mott.html>.

**Funding**

The program is funded by the Genesee County Community Health, the Family Independence Agency, and the Mott Children's Health Center. The Family and Corrections Network reports on its site that the annual cost for replicating Project SEEK is approximately \$275,000 to serve 150 children living in 100 families.

**Contact Information**

Project SEEK

c/o Mott Children's Health Center

806 Tuuri Place

Flint, MI 48503

phone: 810/767-5750

fax: 810/768-7507

program coordinator: Carol Burton, MSW

## **Prison Family Support Services**

Richmond, Virginia

### **Program Services**

Prison Family Support Services (formerly the Prison Visitation Project) began in 1978 as a volunteer transportation program for Richmond area families visiting relatives in prison. The program grew to involve the United Way and area churches which provide volunteers, vehicles, and financial support in the provision of transportation to 21 state prisons and correctional units, as well as meals when visitors return from their trips. The program also provides counseling; support groups; information on prison visiting and correctional policies and procedures; and referrals to other services for housing, employment, and child care needs. Additionally, the program has begun a school-based pilot program to help the children of incarcerated parents.

Between 75 and 80 members of PFSS families are provided transportation each week to visit Virginia prisons. There were 4,144 visits taken by families in fiscal year 1998-99. PFSS offers a monthly support group for parents of incarcerated children no matter what the age of the child—about 12 families attend regularly. The PFSS Milk and Cookies (MAC) program serves the children of incarcerated parents in two area elementary schools—social outings and children’s support groups are offered to these children. Twenty-three children are involved in the MAC program. PFSS recently conducted a series of pre-release workshops for families to help them prepare for being reunited with a released family member—24 families attended.

A fee of \$4 for adults and \$1 per child is charged per trip for the transportation program, not to exceed \$6 per family, no matter how large (a family is considered one adult, and all accompanying children under age 18 and over 1 year old and walking).

### **Population Served/Eligibility Requirements**

For participation in transportation and case management services, a family member must be an inmate in one of the 21 prisons to which PFSS provides transportation. Participation in the program’s other services only require verification of relationship to a person who is incarcerated.

Family members can live anywhere and participate in the program’s transportation services, though their services are most accessible to Richmond families.

### **Staffing**

The program staffs a full-time director; one part-time program support assistant; and for the school-based program there is one full-time program director, and one program assistant. There are also over 100 volunteers, most of whom help with Saturday meals.



#### Evaluation/Data Collection

The program was evaluated in November 1996 by the executive director and two researchers from Virginia Commonwealth University. An outcome evaluation survey was conducted in spring of 2000, and a report should be available by the end of 2000. Participant registration data such as address, telephone number, birthdate, name of inmate being visited, and the inmate's state number are collected.

#### Coordination with Government Agencies

Counselors, wardens and other Department of Corrections staff are informed of the program's services, and flyers are often posted in common areas within participating prisons. PFSS also attends mission fairs at local area churches and United Way agency fairs during fundraising campaigns.

PFSS is also in contact with other agencies, like the Department of Social Services, which impact PFSS families, and refers them to Richmond area resources for emergency financial assistance, food, clothing, housing, employment and other needs.

#### Funding

United Way provides some of the funding for the budget (a \$11,500 allocation and \$18,000 donor designations received for fiscal year 1999-2000). Other fiscal year 1999-2000 funding sources include Richmond area churches that contributed \$16,000; the Jackson Foundation contributed \$19,897, and an anonymous foundation contributed \$6,500. Visitors using PFSS transportation services paid a total of \$11,926 that fiscal year. Individual contributions totaled \$7,500.

Funding for the school-based program is separate from the PFSS main budget. The school program is funded by the United Way, foundations, and other contributors.

#### Contact Information

Prison Family Support Services  
One North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 400  
Richmond, VA 23219  
phone: 804/643-2401  
fax: 804/643-2464  
email: [staff@pfss.org](mailto:staff@pfss.org)  
web: [www.pfss.org](http://www.pfss.org)  
director: Fran Bolin, MSW

## PROGRAMS IN PERSPECTIVE...

	Prison-Based Services	Community-Based Services	Curricular Parent Education	Counseling	Services for Families of Incarcerated/Ex-Offender Fathers	Facilitated Parent/Child Visits	Parole/Probation/Court Referral or Linkages	Re-Entry Services	Eligibility Restrictions	State-Funded*	Paid Staff	Volunteer Staff	Evaluation**
FamilyWorks/NY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
FACT/KY	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Long Distance Dads/PA	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓
Nurturing Fathers/VT	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Parents in Prison/MD	✓		✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		
PATCH/TX	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthening Families/MD	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Con Los Padres/CA		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Family ReEntry/CT		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
OAR/VA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
PIP/IL		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Work Place/TN		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		
Project SEEK/MI		✓			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
Prison Family Support/VA		✓			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓

\* Either in-part or full funding

\*\* Either on-going or complete

## Assessing Parenting Programs

Each of the programs listed in the previous section takes a different approach to the provision of parenting services. Choices regarding program design are based on factors like capacity, resources, policy contexts, prison rules, and visiting policies that vary from facility to facility, and community to community. Indeed, there are a number of characteristics and contexts that those exploring, implementing, or evaluating parenting programs for incarcerated or ex-offender fathers should consider. Does a prison-based program enlist a community organization to provide services inside the facility? What type of services are offered? Does the program focus on parent education? Is counseling provided? Who participates? Are children and families involved? What outcomes are expected? Is the program privately funded or does the facility's budget cover it? The answers to these questions vary with the culture, environment and resources of each facility and community.

Site visits to seven of the listed programs afforded us more detailed insight into these differences in program design and operation, and gave us the chance to speak not only with program directors, but with other staff, program participants, and corrections administrators as well. Project staff were also able to observe parent education classes at each of the prisons visited.

Six of the visited programs were selected based on their reputation for successful or promising service approaches. The seventh—the Work Place Responsible Fatherhood Program in Tennessee—was discovered during the southern regional meeting co-hosted with the National Center on Fathers and Families, and was noted for having an innovative approach to helping men address both work and family issues.

Program objectives and methods were diverse, and while we attempted to identify a few core elements of the prison- and community-based programs we visited, that proved to be a much more difficult challenge than anticipated. Still, one program element—parenting classes—did consistently emerge. Most of the programs devoted considerable time to discussing, in a traditional classroom setting, how to be a good parent. These sessions usually covered topics like child development, discipline, parental roles, and character building. Many programs also provide individual and group counseling to explore men's relationships with their children, their own parents, and their children's mother and/or caregiver. And a few—but not all—of the prison-based programs also provide structured visitation for fathers and their children.

### Parent Education and Program Curricula

All the programs visited offered parent education. Like programs for incarcerated women, parent education courses are usually the central—and only—component of parenting programs for men in prison. There are, however, notable exceptions: the

FamilyWorks program at Sing Sing includes two parent education courses, a family support group, individual counseling, and a staffed children's center; in addition to parenting-related seminars, PATCH at the Bexar County Adult Detention Center hosts hour-long weekend visits for fathers and their children, as well as post-visit counseling or process groups. During its five year operation the Parents in Prison program at the Tennessee State Prison offered home study courses, structured parent education courses, special seminars open to the entire prison population, a children's area in the prison visiting room, family gatherings, an inmate support group, and fund raising projects. Comprehensive services and activities like these are rare in correctional institutions for men.

A review of curricula from the programs we visited indicates that parenting behaviors and skills are only a small portion of what these programs teach. Whether community- or prison-based, character development and managing interpersonal relationships were the central curricular foci of most programs. Courses last from four to sixteen weeks, with classes for all the courses lasting from one to two hours weekly. Group discussion was an integral part of each course. Course content and teaching methods do, though, vary significantly; some courses focus on issues of character, and others on child development; some are facilitated by inmates, others by social workers.

In our view, the FamilyWorks curriculum was the most comprehensive of those reviewed and visited. The basic course reviewed stages of development, children's developmental needs, fathers' roles, interpersonal skills, and how incarcerated fathers can be involved in their children's lives. A variety of teaching tools including handouts, popular books, and videotapes were used to achieve objectives and engage students in learning. Course format and assignments for the basic class resemble those of a college course, and includes a well-developed syllabus, class assignments including book reviews and written reports, and guest lecturers. On the night the project team observed a class session, the course instructor taught Maslow's hierarchy of needs.<sup>4</sup> Like a college-level lecturer, the instructor—a college professor—elicited comments and discussion from the students. FamilyWorks also offers an advanced parent education course for men who successfully pass the first course—the second course functions as a therapy and support group.

Also notable, the principles and conceptual framework guiding the curricula of each of the programs were rarely explicit, though the underlying premises for course

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<sup>4</sup> Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) is a psychologist best known for his recognition of the hierarchical organization of human needs according to their potency and primacy. Maslow reasoned that the most basic needs are survival-oriented and that more subtle growth-oriented needs—such as the need for affection and self-esteem—become effective motivators of human behavior only after more basic needs are met. See *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry/IV*. Fourth Edition. ed. Sadlock, B.J. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1985.

content could sometimes be inferred. The staff of the Con Los Padres did indicate that “palabra” (which means “word” in Spanish) was the central guiding concept of their program. They use the word to denote the importance of being a man of one’s word, and taking care of one’s responsibilities. However, palabra does not seem to be a central concept or guiding theme in the curriculum.

Generally, the courses’ content proved to be richer in practice than the curricula revealed. Long Distance Dads program staff advised that attachment and bonding theory provide the conceptual framework for the parent education course that program offers. Like the Con Los Padres palabra concept, this theory is not necessarily evident in the curriculum guide. The preamble to the Long Distance Dads curriculum suggests another theme. It states that “most men in prison were raised by women, mothers and grandmothers, and therefore, do not know how to be consistent, nurturing parents.” Although not everyone would agree that men who were raised by women do not know how to be nurturing parents, or that men raised by men would necessarily know how to parent, the preamble corroborates with the program’s emphasis character building. The Long Distance Dad’s curriculum is an adaptation and revised form of a parent education course for teenage fathers. Inmate program participants assisted in the adaptation of the curriculum for prison use. However, the guide to curriculum presents few parenting approaches especially pertinent to incarcerated fathers. This is not to say that special issues related to parenting from prison were not discussed; to the contrary, they emerged repeatedly and were freely discussed during the session we observed, suggesting an improvisational approach to curricular instruction.

Programs did not seem to have hard and fast rules about course goals, objectives, or content. The curricula appeared to be driven primarily by the background and interests of current instructors—spirituality was a theme prominently reflected in a course taught by a minister; Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was central to a course taught by a university professor; and a series of self-reflection exercises predominated in the course designed and taught by a therapist.

Most of the curricula we viewed were designed by the current or previous course instructors, and many were under revision. Though most curricula were only a year or two old, a number of them were being revised because materials were dated; others because classes needed to be condensed into fewer sessions. Most programs reported that materials needed to better reflect the special needs and circumstances of incarcerated fathers.

The project team sat in on a number of sessions during which program participants critiqued their courses. Many program participants described the need for more information to help prisoners deal with parenting from a distance. These included handling difficulties and problems with their children’s mothers, advocacy for better visiting conditions, and suggestions on ways to resume parenting after an extended

period of limited contact with one's children. One man's expression of a desire to "keep it real"—in reference to course content and administration—suggested that curricular adjustments are needed to make the course relevant to the needs and concerns of fathers in prison.

None of the community-based courses were designed specifically for men who had been incarcerated, though one of the course modules for the Work Place Responsible Fatherhood Program does, however, address fathers' involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. The three other modules focused on character building, relationships with children's custodial parents, and family roles within the broader context of fathers rights and responsibilities.

Although broader issues of empowerment, community development, social justice, and oppressive environments inevitably emerged during meetings and interviews, as major problems and factors facing incarcerated and ex-offender fathers and their families, these issues were seldom mentioned in the course designs of community- or prison-based programs. Presumably, these societal issues are addressed as they emerge during class discussions. They could also just as likely be deemed inappropriate topics for parent education classes. There were some indications that such discussions would indeed be censored if included in curricula. In one prison, administrators issued a rule requiring pre-publication review of a parenting newsletter after it printed an article on the repeal of Pell grants—which once funded college courses for prisoners. Another prison required classroom instructors to submit everything to the prison administration for approval prior to use. A third prohibited classroom instructors from giving anything—e.g., course outlines, notes, etc.—to class participants. Negotiation between prison administrators and program providers around course content and practices was a consistent theme in the prison-based programs.

Interviews with the staff in all of the programs emphasized the importance of group discussion, confidentiality within the group, and excellent facilitators in conducting the courses. They also revealed the need to be flexible with course content and topic selection. Most programs did not strictly adhere to their curricula, and instead allowed group discussions to go where they may.

### Program Evaluation

Program evaluation, research, and documentation of program histories and experiences are not standard features of the programs we explored. Program providers' primary measures of success include program longevity, their ability to secure program funding and/or volunteers, their ability to attract, retain, and graduate participants, and positive media coverage. Individual stories and testimonials provided by men who have had some measure of success after graduation also provide proof of success.

FamilyWorks, for instance, has never conducted an empirical research study or formal evaluation of its program. Neither has it detailed or documented program operations or history. (Programs experiences were, however, used to develop three resource guides for families and service providers serving children of incarcerated parents.) Still, FamilyWorks considers itself successful. The program has operated at Sing Sing for more than ten years, and has expanded to two other state prisons; and since its inception, FamilyWorks has obtained its operating budget from New York's Department of Correctional Services. It is comprehensive and uses paid professional and prisoner staff, many of whom have been with the program for two years or longer. And it is viewed favorably by prisoners and administration and has survived despite ongoing changes in the prison and corrections department administration. Staff are able to point to program graduates who have completed their prison sentences and are now doing well in their communities and can also provide examples of positive media coverage including a documentary of the program aired on Court TV and Black Entertainment Television (BET).

The different programs emphasized different program attributes as distinguishing features and/or measures of success. Long Distance Dads staff indicated that using an instrument that measured their knowledge of the course materials, on average, program participants had higher post- than pre-test scores. They also believed that favorable endorsement of the course by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and several prisons' requests for copies of the curriculum, or for staff to do training at their facilities, are also indicative of success.

The Work Place and its Responsible Fatherhood program has been featured in several articles in Memphis newspapers as an innovative and effective approach to meeting Memphis employers' needs for entry-level positions. Only one third of the participants complete the rigorous demands and requirements of the responsible fatherhood program. Of those who do, almost all get and keep permanent, full-time employment. While the program does collect and report on participant data, it has not studied the differences between those participants who succeed and those who don't, or the reasons behind participant success.

Two evaluations planned for the Paternal Involvement Project have been altered considerably—the researchers were not able to obtain the needed sample sizes, use the planned data collection tools, or conduct the desired analysis. Both studies were ultimately changed to report basic statistics and process data in lieu of program results and outcomes. The project does have funding for research and evaluation—and it has the benefit of board members and consultants with the expertise and background to provide leadership in research design and implementation.

Of the programs interviewed, few had conducted a formal evaluation, though most were in some stage of either securing research commitments and funding, or conducting longitudinal studies of their populations.

### Prison Contexts

Several factors influence the ability of programs to operate effectively, enduring parenting programs within secure correctional facilities. Primarily, the warden must positively assess the program. The program must not pose a security threat, in whichever way a threat is perceived; outside staff and volunteers must adhere to all rules; and benefits must outweigh any costs to the facility. At both Sing Sing and Albion, the program directors have the blessing of state-level officials in addition to the superintendents of the facilities they serve. They also explained that inmates who occupy leadership roles in the program must be model inmates—they must have the respect of other inmates as well as the institution’s administration.

We also found that the culture and work-related practices inside a prison can have significant influence over the curriculum development and implementation of programs for incarcerated fathers. The more savvy program directors and architects of curricula for incarcerated fathers were able to modify their curriculum in order to accommodate the logistics associated with delivering the program in prison settings. Logistical issues such as session duration, location, and the number of participants are, in turn, subject to the logistical constraints that go along with working inside prisons.<sup>xxi</sup>

The precautions taken to assure facilities are safe and secure vary considerably from one prison to another and within prisons from one day to another. Conflicting policies and procedures confuse staff and inmates alike, and the rationale or logic behind them is not immediately obvious to outside observers or those who live and work there. Many rules appear to be arbitrary while others are inconsistently interpreted and applied. Project staff observed, for example, that an item they were allowed to take into one prison during the afternoon was not permitted when the staff returned in the evening.

We also found that many program directors, especially those who began their work in community-based settings before moving into correctional settings, were naïve about the degree to which security concerns determine whether or not programs will be allowed to operate inside a prison. Program directors often cite the pedagogical rationales for their programs without stressing to corrections administrators that they also understand a prison’s security needs, and appreciate the extra work programming inside institutions implies for corrections officers.

The security-focused environment has a major impact on the types of fatherhood programs that can be implemented and sustained, the ways programs operate, the staff



and inmates who are allowed or choose to participate, and program outcomes. This environment also shapes the types of relationships fathers can have with their children, and influences the assumption of post-prison family roles and responsibilities.

The fathers we spoke with expressed difficulty being a responsible parent and understanding their children's needs without contact with their children. Sometimes this absence of contact is due to individual or family preferences. It is also due to correctional policies—prohibitive placement, telephone, and visiting policies can interfere with contact. Many states place prisoners far away from their homes, making regular, in-person contact between parents and children almost impossible. In Pennsylvania, prisoners are placed in institutions as far away as possible from their homes at the beginning of their sentence, moving them closer to their homes near the end of their sentence. Undoubtedly, it is difficult for men to reestablish family ties at the end of a sentence when contact was limited throughout the sentence.

Program providers agreed that parent education and paternity establishment alone cannot be expected to make major differences in children's lives. In order to assume parenting responsibility, a non-custodial father needs meaningful, regular contact with his children. In the absence of such contact young children may easily forget who their parents are, while older kids feel estranged from their fathers. Children may even begin to develop a fantasy parent who bears little or no resemblance to their father as he really is, they may romanticize their father's criminal history, or they may simply not perceive him as he would like them to.<sup>xxii</sup>

When distance from the prison is not a barrier for children's visitations, prison visitation policies and the prison environment directly and subtly discourage visits. Several restrictive visitation policies make visiting an ordeal for adults and sometimes impossible for children.<sup>xxiii</sup> Among these are restrictions on the frequency and duration of visits, rules regarding who may accompany a child on a visit, and, in some prisons, proof that the incarcerated father is the biological parent. Surveys of fathers in prison indicate that most fathers in prison are not married to the mother of any of their children and are not involved in an amicable relationship with her.<sup>xxiv</sup> It is unlikely that these mothers are enthusiastic about prison visits.

Even under the best familial circumstances, visiting is a difficult experience, and procedures can be intimidating and humiliating. A Florida legislature report found, for example, that the state's Department of Corrections had installed impediments to family contact for their inmates.<sup>xxv</sup> The report noted that some outdoor waiting areas for visitors did not have seating, shelter, or restrooms though visitors often had to wait up to two hours in these areas; there were no toys or books to keep children occupied during visits; visiting room vending machines were poorly stocked and lacked nutritious food; and visiting rules were applied inconsistently. The visiting conditions described in Florida are not unusual. However, the Florida legislature's passage of a law

requiring improvement of practices governing family visits is unusual, and could serve as a model for other states interested in developing improved contact visitation in tandem with parenting programs.

### Community Contexts

Although many of the men targeted by community-based responsible fatherhood programs have been, or are currently involved in the criminal justice system, for the most part, these programs have not been designed for these fathers. Community-based programs find it difficult to serve ex-offender fathers—these men have special issues and needs the agencies have not been trained to handle. Many of the community-based program directors we spoke with expressed how difficult it is for ex-offender fathers to participate in structured treatment, training, work, and parenting programs when there are court hearings, parole appearances, and other appointments and demands placed on men by correctional authorities and treatment agencies.

Paternal Involvement Project staff spoke of some of these same issues but emphasized the difficulty of placing criminally involved clients in good jobs. Program representatives at the regional meetings co-hosted with the National Center on Fathers and Families also revealed that employment is a major problem for formerly incarcerated fathers. More than most of the programs we visited, the Work Place Program is particularly aware of the barriers to employment their fathers face. In addition to addressing involvement in the criminal justice system as a course topic, the program also runs a criminal background check on each participant prior to placing him on a job. Rather than weed out fathers, the check helps the program place fathers on job sites where they are welcome despite their criminal histories. The program has contracts with several employers in the Memphis area who guarantee employment for program graduates. Like a temp agency arrangement, the employers pay the Work Place a fee for each employee and the employee stays on the Work Place payroll for two to three months following their job placement.

The Work Place staff stressed that not only are there few opportunities and resources available to recently released fathers transitioning from prison to community and family living, but few can afford to spend several weeks unpaid in a training program. Paternal Involvement Project staff, while not referring specifically to former prisoners, also talked about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining poor men in training and services programs that do not pay them.

The Work Place runs job readiness trainings at the Shelby County Penal Farm to help prisoners secure work soon after release. At the time of the interview, plans to expand the program to include all services available at the Work Place had been put on hold, as the state's Welfare-to-Work budget would not be providing funding for the

program, as expected. The Work Place program at Shelby was to be a pre-release program to facilitate the transition from prison to the community. Fathers in prison would be able to receive training prior to release, and would be assigned full-time jobs immediately upon release.

A number of prisons offer pre-release programs and some of these—like the Montgomery County Pre-Release Center—provide information and training on employment, as well as guidance with parenting and family relationships. Comprehensive pre-release programming like that found at Montgomery County is rare, and our discussions with service agencies and former prisoners revealed that there are major gaps and oversights in basic release services. For example, prisoners are not routinely issued a state identification card as a part of pre-release processing. Just having an identification card would facilitate transition and help prevent numerous frustrations during the initial post-release period. A source of identification is needed to take care of most daily routines, including viewing an apartment, cashing a check, seeking a job, or applying for temporary welfare assistance. An ex-offender left to obtain identification on his own may find himself in a conundrum, as two forms of identification are usually needed to obtain a non-driver's state identification card.

The staff of community-based agencies reported that many of the men they encountered did not have social security cards, a driver's license, or other forms of identification—nor did they have bills in their names, rent receipts, or other items that would allow them to verify who they are and where they live. A lack of identifying papers is not only a barrier to employment, but also to service access.

Child support enforcement and welfare reform requirements and restrictions also make it difficult for a formerly incarcerated father to re-integrate into his community and navigate the social service and criminal justice agencies which monitor or assist him. Probation mandates or housing policies may prevent him from living in certain areas, or with his family. Federal housing laws, for instance, prohibit individuals with drug offenses from occupying public housing. Child welfare licensing policies prohibiting individuals with criminal histories from residing in relative foster homes, might also interfere with reintegration. A non-custodial father returning from prison may have special difficulties locating or seeing his children if they are under the custody of the state. His parental rights may have been terminated or may be at risk of termination.<sup>xxvi 5</sup> These barriers are further complicated by adverse personal issues such

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<sup>5</sup> Termination could be due to a father's crime, his failure to have ongoing communication with his children, or his failure to comply with a court-ordered treatment plan—e.g., drug treatment or parent education. Generally, child welfare agencies and correctional systems do not have formal procedures for working together. There are seldom formal rules that child welfare caseworkers attempt to locate fathers who are involved in the criminal justice system, facilitate visits between fathers and their children, or see that fathers are notified of hearings about their children. In Illinois, for example, child welfare policies regarding incarcerated parents and their children in foster care apply to mothers only.

as gang involvement, domestic disputes, drug and alcohol problems, and recidivism. Lack of communication and coordination between service agencies that address each of these issues diminishes each agency's ability to provide the assistance fathers, and their children and families need.

Despite how many of their clients face these barriers to employment and reintegration, with few exceptions, most community-based responsible fatherhood programs focus their services on helping participants adhere to court orders related to financial support. The majority of these programs' clients are referred by family court or the state's child support enforcement office. While many fathers are leaving prison and returning to communities with accrued child support debt and ongoing legal obligations, few are leaving with the personal resources and jobs, or even the prospect of full-time employment, that would enable them to honor that debt and their other parental responsibilities.

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*Endnotes*

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## I: Location of fatherhood programs

As part of our review of fatherhood programs, we conducted a cursory investigation into the geographic distribution of programs—both prison- and community-based—that serve incarcerated and/or low-income fathers. We selected fatherhood-related programs out of two directories of fatherhood and family programs nationwide—the 1995 *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood* and the 1998 National Institute of Corrections’ *Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders*.

Map 1 shows the geographic distribution of 356 programs the directories identified.<sup>1</sup> Ten states had ten or more programs, 27 states and the District of Columbia had two to nine programs and 13 states had either one or no programs. California, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Minnesota are the top five states in terms of number of programs. Hawaii, Idaho, North Dakota, Rhode Island and Wyoming had no programs. Table 1 shows the number of programs by state and service area, as defined by individual programs. Service areas can range from the site-specific to very broad areas and include correctional facilities, portions of a state, an entire state, multiple states or the entire nation. Almost half of the identified programs did not define a service area. Of the programs that did report a service area, roughly 65 percent cover an entire state or parts of a state; almost 15 percent serve areas larger than a state; and about 20 percent function within a correctional facility (California’s programs account for 70 percent of this category of programs).

Map 2 takes a closer look at a state with several fatherhood-related programs. New York has 46 programs, most of which are located within New York City. 34 of programs did not report a service area, 2 are based in a correctional facility, 8 serve parts of the state and 2 serve the entire state.

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<sup>1</sup> This is neither a comprehensive nor up-to-date selection of programs—a number of the 356 programs no longer operate, and a number of new programs are not represented.

MAP 1: FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS BY STATE

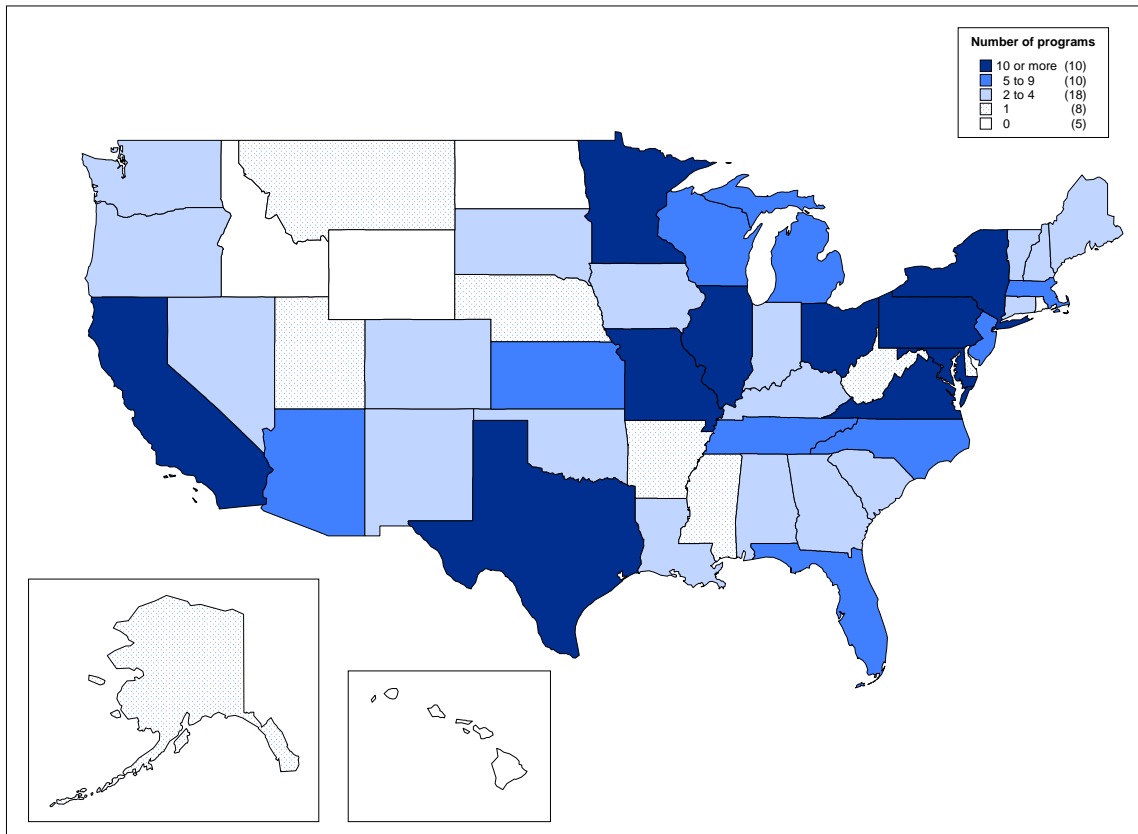
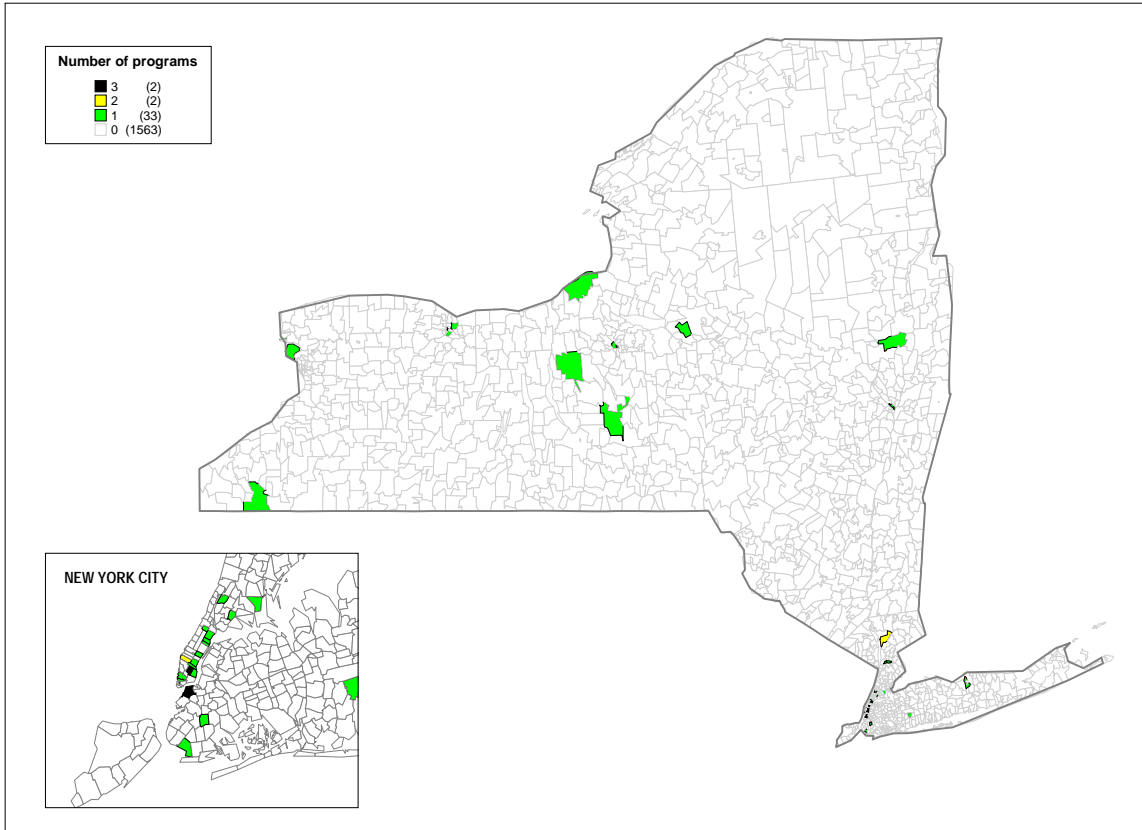


Table 1

State	SERVICE AREA						
	Total	Correctional facility	Part of state	Entire state	Multiple states	Nation	No information
Alabama	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
Alaska	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Arizona	5	0	2	2	0	0	1
Arkansas	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
California	54	27	7	2	1	2	15
Colorado	4	0	0	2	0	0	2
Connecticut	4	0	1	2	1	0	0
Delaware	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
District of Columbia	9	1	0	1	0	2	5
Florida	7	0	1	3	0	1	2
Georgia	4	0	1	1	0	0	2
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illinois	13	0	2	1	0	0	10
Indiana	4	0	0	1	0	0	3
Iowa	3	0	0	1	0	0	2
Kansas	5	1	1	1	0	0	2
Kentucky	3	0	0	2	0	0	1
Louisiana	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Maine	3	0	1	0	0	0	2
Maryland	10	0	0	1	1	1	7
Massachusetts	7	0	0	2	1	0	4
Michigan	8	0	2	1	0	0	5
Minnesota	19	1	1	1	0	0	16
Mississippi	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Missouri	15	0	4	4	0	0	7
Montana	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Nebraska	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Nevada	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
New Hampshire	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
New Jersey	7	0	2	1	1	0	3
New Mexico	4	0	0	3	1	0	0
New York	46	2	8	2	0	0	34
North Carolina	9	1	2	1	0	0	5
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ohio	13	0	3	1	0	1	8
Oklahoma	3	0	1	2	0	0	0
Oregon	3	0	1	0	0	0	2
Pennsylvania	21	2	7	1	0	2	9
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	3	0	0	1	0	0	2
South Dakota	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Tennessee	8	0	2	2	1	0	3
Texas	21	1	10	1	0	2	7
Utah	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Vermont	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Virginia	11	0	3	4	0	1	3
Washington	4	0	0	2	0	1	1
West Virginia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Wisconsin	6	2	0	2	1	0	1
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>168</b>



MAP 2: FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE BY ZIP CODE



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