

## Executive Summary

**Course Title:** And How are the Children? Improving Outcomes for Children of the Incarcerated

**Outline of Training:** The primary goals of the “And How are the Children? Improving Outcomes for Children of the Incarcerated” curriculum is to build a base of understanding and awareness about the impact of parental incarceration and the unique challenges faced by children of the incarcerated and their families and caregivers. The curriculum is also designed to provide an opportunity for child welfare workers, service providers and criminal justice professionals to examine their own policies, procedures and practices as they relate to children of incarcerated parents. This training provides tools for continued development and refinement of system responses to children of incarcerated parents. By the end of the training, it is hoped that each participant will be encouraged to lead others in the movement to prioritize, protect and parent the children of incarcerated and justice-involved parents.

The training will achieve these goals by:

- *Creating a training atmosphere that fosters open exchange and exploration among participants.*
- *Providing an interactive learning experience focusing on the unique challenges and dynamics of this population.*
- *Providing current information on local, state and national trends.*
- *Providing actual case studies that investigate the challenges of preserving family-child relationships.*
- *Providing information on best and promising practices as they relate to dealing with these children and their parents.*
- *Action planning.*

The training can be delivered in a half day or full day format.

Sample Full Day Improving Outcomes for Children of the Incarcerated Training Agenda	
9:00 am to 9:15 am	Welcome/Expectations & Ground Rules/CIP Quiz
9:15 am to 9:45 am	Icebreaker
9:45 am to 10:15 am	Film “A Sentence Apart”
10:15 am to 10:20	Stretch Break
10:20 am to 12:30	Panel Discussion: Youth, Mom and Dad Impacted by Incarceration
12:30 to 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 am to 2:00 am	Why these kids? (Quiz overview)
2:00 pm to 3:00	The Road Children of Incarcerated Parents Walk
3:00 pm to 3:10	Stretch Break

3:10 pm to 3:45 pm	Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights – Rights to Reality Action Planning and Report Out
3:45 pm to 4:00 pm	Closing and Evaluation

**Handouts for the training**

- Agenda
- Evaluation Form
- Action Planning Forms
- Children Bill of Rights
- How to Explain Jails and Prisons to Children
- Bibliography

**Target Audience:** The full day curriculum has been delivered to multi-disciplinary community teams as well as discipline specific audiences within those teams. The community teams usually are comprised of law enforcement, community corrections, educators, corrections, child welfare, early childhood education, community based organizations, the treatment community, parents re-entering the community from prison and others who are genuinely interested in improving outcomes for these children. The curriculum is modified for discipline specific audiences by tailoring the problem solving and action planning exercises to their respective functions. The training is designed to give agencies and community members tools to address the unique challenges and dynamics of this population.

Because much of this information is not generally known, both new and veteran staff could benefit from the course. It works well with supervisors, line staff and support staff. The exercises are a great opportunity for team building and information sharing. The participants walk away with plans that they can begin to implement.

**Outcome Objectives for Participants:**

**Goal One** - To present a basic understanding of the unique challenges faced by children of the incarcerated and their families.

- **Outcome Objective:** Participants will have a basic knowledge of key concepts/terms, general operational practices of other jurisdictions, and exposure to the current literature on the subject.
- **Outcome Measures:** Pre-training assessment and plus/delta satisfaction survey.

**Goal Two** - To develop a community of professionals committed to improving outcomes for children of the incarcerated and their families.

- **Outcome Objective:** Through informal discussions and participatory learning techniques participants will problem solve and action plan around unique issues facing children of the incarcerated and their parents.
- **Outcome Objective:** Participants will share past experiences and compare past and present techniques for dealing with this population within their organizations.
- **Outcome Objective:** Participants will have opportunities to test ideas and receive feedback freely.
- **Outcome Measures:** Production of an action plan.

**Goal Three** - To remove the stigma associated with children of the incarcerated and their parents.

- **Outcome Objective:** Participants will accept responsibility for and change practices that may increase trauma to children of the incarcerated.
- **Outcome Objective:** Participants will recognize the unique challenges and be willing to assist children of the incarcerated and their families.
- **Outcome Measure:** Pre-Training Assessment and Plus/Delta Evaluation.
- **Outcome Measure:** Production of an action plan.
- **Outcome Measure:** Number of Signatures on the Bill of Rights at the end of the training.

### **Ways that Supervisors can support the Transfer of Learning from the classroom to the job...**

#### **BEFORE the training**

Supervisors should gather some information about what is happening in their organization as it relates to children of incarcerated parents. Ideally, a pre-training meeting to address current practices related to these children would be helpful to get people thinking about this population. The following questions could be used to guide the discussion:

1. How knowledgeable are you about the issue of the impact of parental incarceration on the children?
2. What is your attitude about incarcerated parents and their children?
3. Are there any efforts underway within our organization to address the issues that are specific to children of parents who are arrested or incarcerated? If yes, what are they?

4. How many children that you serve would you estimate have a parent that is incarcerated? How would you go about finding this information?
5. What strengths, tools, and policies does your organization have that might be useful in improving outcomes for children of incarcerated parents?
6. What are the current challenges facing your organization in addressing the issue of children of incarcerated parents? (e.g. poor departmental practices, lack of collaboration, lack of resources etc...)
7. What resources exist in your community to meet the needs of children of incarcerated parents? (E.g., transportation for visitation, parenting classes (caregiver and parent), relief nurseries, support groups, mentor program, school liaison, and child welfare services, etc.)
8. Are there challenges to accessing services for this population of children? If so, what are they?

Supervisors should also distribute the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights which can be downloaded from [sfcipp.org](http://sfcipp.org) to the prospective participants. The participants should be told that we will be using these during the training.

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

### **AFTER the training**

Follow-up meetings should be held to discuss implementation of the plan created during the meeting. A library should be started within the organization with the most current literature on the subject available. If multi-disciplinary, there should be a plan for how to keep the respective organizations working together. Follow-on Technical Assistance is available to the participants from the trainer or other groups specializing in this issue in the Bay Area.