

**REPORT TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH HAWAII STATE
LEGISLATURE 2008**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS ACT 256,
SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2006**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
FEBRUARY 2008**

**CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS TASK FORCE REPORT
PURSUANT TO ACT 256, SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII (SLH) 2006**

Background

Pursuant to Act 256, SLH 2006, the Task Force on Children of Incarcerated Parents, which was established by Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 128, Regular Session 2005, was extended to continue to operate through December 31, 2007. The Task Force was tasked to develop programs to aid children of incarcerated parents, strengthen these families, and break the cycle of crime and violence within them. The Task Force is attached to the Department of Human Services for administrative purposes and is required to provide a final report to the Legislature and the general public no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2008. The report shall include:

- (1) A summary of significant findings regarding children of incarcerated parents;
- (2) Statistics indicating the number of children with incarcerated parents in the State, including data on age, educational, financial, geographic, and socioeconomic demographics of incarcerated parents;
- (3) Data and analysis to determine the relationship between specific variables and frequency of parental incarceration;
- (4) Data and analysis to determine the relationship between parental incarceration and various adverse outcomes for children of incarcerated parents;
- (5) Case studies of children of incarcerated parents;
- (6) Recommendations as to whether the Task Force should be further extended;
- (7) Multiple theoretical models for improving the welfare and general well-being of children of incarcerated parents; and
- (8) Proposed legislation, if any.

The Task Force was responsible to:

- (1) Develop a system to identify children of incarcerated parents in Hawaii and to make referrals as appropriate;
- (2) Determine the impact that parental incarceration has on children of incarcerated parents;
- (3) Identify the needs of children of incarcerated parents and develop responsive programs;
- (4) Identify local programs and models, including Neighbor Island programs and models; and
- (5) Review other jurisdictions' activities, policies, directives, and laws relating to children of incarcerated parents and derive best practices models therefrom.

Status:

The Task Force convened its first meeting on May 7, 2007. Additional meetings of the Task Force were held on May 30, July 3, October 30, November 5 and December 18.

In addition, the Task Force workgroups held meetings in all but one county (Kauai) as follows: Hawai`i County Workgroups: West Hawai`i: September 10, East Hawai`i: September 18; Oahu County Workgroup: Waianae: October 30; Honolulu: December 14; and Maui County Workgroup: Wailuku: November 16.

1) Summary of Significant Findings:

Hawai`i, as in most other jurisdictions, does not systematically collect data on children of incarcerated parents. However, based upon samples of populations from local research projects, estimates have been calculated. The calculations are based on two samples of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons in Hawai`i. It is not known to what extent these samples are representative of all incarcerated persons in Hawai`i. National estimates from the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents suggest that 75% of female inmates are parents to an average of 2.4 children, while approximately 66% of male inmates are parents to an average of 2.0 children.

The Hawai`i samples vary from the national estimates in that women tend to have more children and men tend to have fewer. Fewer of Hawai`i male inmates in the sample are parents (58% vs. 66%) while more of the female inmates are parents (85% vs. 75%) than nationally. These estimates should be viewed with caution due to the small sample sizes and non-representative nature of the sampling.¹

Custody status of children of female inmates:

- Roughly 70% of children of incarcerated mothers were minors.
- As nationally, grandparents are often the caregivers for the inmate's children, especially when the mother is incarcerated.
- A spouse or partner is less likely than the grandparent to be the caregiver.
- Fewer children than nationally go into the foster care system.
- Child's custody unstated in many cases (unknown 13.4%).
- Other adult relatives and friends sometimes act as caregivers²

Dr. Marilyn Brown surveyed incarcerated parents at Hawai`i Community Correctional Center regarding their parenting concerns and the status of their children. This survey was conducted without benefit of funds or staff other than the voluntary assistance of Department of Public Safety personnel and University of Hawaii-Hilo (UHH) undergraduate students. The survey report is attached. These conclusions are noted:

"The main needs assessment findings from this study (which are not unexpected) are that the caregivers of inmates' children appear to be financially strained and children (who are mainly school-aged) need help with their education."

¹ Sample estimates are from the following report: Brown, Marilyn (2006) *The B.E.S.T. Program: Report on Program Implementation and Preliminary Outcomes*. Prepared for Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.

² Brown, Marilyn. 2003. *Motherhood on the Margins: Rehabilitation and Subjectivity among Female Parolees in Hawaii*. Diss. Sociology Department, University of Hawaii-Manoa.

A major recommendation for further research is that caregivers must be a significant part of the needs assessment process. Some inmates may not be aware of the real needs of their family members on the outside—particularly if the child(ren) are in foster care or in cases of prolonged separation. Other incarcerated parents may be unsure of the day-to-day needs of their family members on the outside due to lack of effective communication. Some inmates may be hesitant to provide details about their families, fearing (due to lack of trust in government) adverse actions by the State. Therefore, reaching out to caregivers is an essential part of the equation.

Across the nation, very few correctional jurisdictions collect data on children of incarcerated parents. As a result of legislation passed during the 2007 Hawai'i Legislative Session, the Department of Public Safety (PSD) has been tasked with creating a system to capture relevant data.

Correctional institutions are effective in collecting data relating directly to the individuals under their control but are relatively inexperienced in collecting, updating, and maintaining data on families of those who are incarcerated. Indeed, managing information of this scope is challenging due to the ever-changing dynamics of families in general and these families in particular. Also, there needs to be a means of translating data into the necessary programs and services, services that will be delivered by private and public agencies other than corrections. Therefore, a reasonable approach may begin with PSD identifying parents early in their involvement with corrections (possibly at intake and then at other points following adjudication). Through partnerships with community-based organizations and/or the University of Hawai'i, PSD may build its capacity to the point where it can meet these new obligations.”³

With respect to the day-to-day handling of cases by various agency and social workers, it is discovered that there is no particular focus or program that deals with the specific issue of children of incarcerated parents. While it is acknowledged that certain programs, such as SKIP, do exist to support incarcerated parents who take their role of parenting seriously, there are no broader programs for all incarcerated parents to deal with issues of reunification and the “time warp” upon release and return to their families, where roles and situations have changed in their absence.

We note also that upon arrest, children are often left in the care of relatives. Currently, no assessment or investigation is conducted as to the propriety of placement. Often, only when a report of child abuse or neglect is made, an investigation by the Child Welfare Services agency (CPS) may be initiated. In addition, no protocol exists for police departments regarding the arrest of a parent in front of children. Often, the sight of parents being handcuffed before their children is traumatic. The arrival of strangers from CPS to take custody of children and placement in a strange new place for the night continues the trauma. There is no communication with the child's school regarding this event, so even if the child is kept in the same neighborhood, no one in school is aware of what the child is going through unless they request help themselves. Additional discussion is needed to coordinate

³ Brown, Marilyn, PhD. & Jedediah Kay (2007) *Hawaii County's Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Needs Assessment of Parents, Children, and Caregivers*

the support of children at the time of arrest and continue to provide them with support thereafter.

- 2) Statistics indicating the number of children with incarcerated parents in the State, including data on age, educational, financial, geographic, and socioeconomic demographics of incarcerated parents.

The Hawai'i County Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force initiated contact with the Hawai'i Community Correctional Center (HCCC) regarding incarcerated parents and the status of their children. With permission from Warden Peter MacDonald and valuable assistance from Ruth Forbes of the Offender Services Section, a survey was conducted of inmates at HCCC, Hale Nani, and the PSD House for Women during the week of September 17, 2007.

This survey was conducted without benefit of funds or staff other than the voluntary assistance of PSD personnel and UHH students. As such, the scope of the research is not large and the data should be interpreted with their limitations in mind. However, we hope that this information will prove valuable both as a means of determining need among the families of incarcerated persons on Hawai'i Island and as a pilot project from which lessons might be applied to future research in this area.

Methodology

With logistical assistance from HCCC, a team from UHH (consisting of Dr. Marilyn Brown and a student research assistant) delivered questionnaires to the housing modules at HCCC, Hale Nani, and the PSD House for Women. In accordance with Committee on Human Subjects protocol covering research among inmates, the purpose of the project was explained verbally and in writing along with the following provisions:

- No names or other identifying information were to be used.
- Participation was entirely voluntary.
- Participants could expect no direct benefits—although families might benefit from the knowledge gained through the research.
- Participants could decide to answer some questions and skip others if they chose, or not to participate at all.

After instructions were provided, those who chose to participate filled out the questionnaire and turned in the completed form to the desk personnel. This was later to be placed in a sealed pouch to be delivered to the Offender Services Section. While some individuals chose to fill out the questionnaires on the spot, others kept them to do at their convenience.

The head count of inmates in the various housing units of HCCC and Hale Nani in the week preceding the survey was 283. Of these, 112 inmates completed and turned in their questionnaires for a response rate of approximately 40%. A higher response rate is desirable, but given the voluntary nature of this research, it is within expectations. This means that we do not know the extent to which these results can be applied to HCCC or

correctional institutions as a whole in Hawai‘i. The Task Force’s study does represent the first attempt to address the dearth of data on Children of Incarcerated Parents and, as such, we hope it proves useful.

The Participants

Of the 112 respondents, 74 (66.1%) were male and 37 (33.0%) were female⁴ as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	74	66.1%
Female	37	33.0%
Missing	1	0.9%
Total	112	100.0%

The majority of inmates (64.3%) participating in the survey were under 40 years of age, with an average (median) age of 35 as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-19	6	5.4%
20-29	30	26.8%
30-39	36	32.1%
40-49	27	24.1%
50-59	9	8.0%
60 and Over	2	1.8%
Missing	2	1.8%
Total	112	100.0%

As with the majority of people in Hawai‘i, individuals identify with multiple ethnic groups. Native Hawaiian ancestry was the salient ethnic category for this population—comprised mainly of people from multiple ethnicities and racial groups. As with other correctional populations in the State, Native Hawaiians are over-represented as inmates at HCCC. While Native Hawaiians make up roughly 22% of the State’s population, over 50% of these inmates identify themselves as Native Hawaiian as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondent Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Non-Hawaiian	54	48.2%
Hawaiian	58	51.8%
Total	112	100.0%

⁴ Data were missing in one case.

A large majority of these respondents (89.3%) report that they are Hawai‘i Island residents. Only 4 (3.6%) hail from Neighbor Islands, leaving 8 (7.1%) who consider Non-Hawai‘i communities home (Table 4).

Table 4. Respondent’s Community

Community	Frequency	Percent
Hawai‘i Island	100	89.3%
Neighbor Islands	4	3.6%
Other	8	7.1%
Total	112	100.0%

In examining the correctional status of these respondents, we found that roughly half of the inmates (49.1%) were awaiting trial. The remainder consisted of persons sentenced to less than one year (25%) and others serving sentences of more than one year (22.3%). As Table 5 suggests, most of those incarcerated at HCCC who participated in the survey tended to be serving short sentences while roughly half were awaiting adjudication.

Table 5. Respondent’s Correctional Status

Correctional Status	Frequency	Percent
Pretrial	55	49.1%
Less than 1 year	28	25.0%
More than 1 year	25	22.3%
No Response	4	3.6%
Total	112	100.0%

Respondents’ Children

Three quarters (75%) of the inmates surveyed reported having at least one child (as shown in Table 6), with one female respondent a mother of 10.

Table 6. Respondent Parental Status

Children	Frequency	Percent
No	27	25%
Yes	85	75%
Total	112	100%

The 84⁵ parenting inmates profiled for this study had a total of 206 children among them, with the majority (104) of children being female. As shown in Table 7, the majority of children (77.2%) are under the age of 18 years. Of these minors, over half (53%) are pre-adolescent children.

Table 7. Children's Ages

Age in Years (2007)	Frequency	Percent
1-5	41	19.9%
6-12	70	34.0%
13-17	48	23.3%
18 and over	47	22.8%
Total	206	100.0%

When examining parenting by gender, nearly 84 percent of female inmates are mothers (31 of 37), while 70.3 percent of male inmates are fathers, as shown in Table 8. Parenting women reported an average of 3.3 children compared with 2.3 children for parenting male inmates.

Table 8. Parenting by Gender*

Inmates and Children	Mothers	Fathers
Number of Inmates	31	52
Percent of Inmates	83.8%	70.3%
Average Number of Children	3.3	2.3

*Data missing in one case.

We asked parenting respondents about their children's ages, gender, and with whom the children were living. Additionally, we asked about who was the child's legal guardian (in terms of relationship to the inmate), whether children were in foster care, and where the children lived currently. Children's current living situations are reported in Table 9:

Table 9. Children's Care Givers

Living Situation	Frequency	Percent
Child lives with mother	56	29.8%
Children living with grandparent	42	22.3%
Child living on their own	32	17.0%
Child lives with foster parent(s)	19	10.1%
Child lives with siblings (or in-law siblings) of inmate	15	8.0%
Child lives with other adult (hanai)	12	6.4%
Child lives with father	9	4.8%
Children deceased	3	1.6%
Total	188	100.0%

*Data for 18 children were missing.

⁵ One of the 85 inmates indicated that he/she was a parent, but did not go on to complete the survey. Therefore, we have data on 84 parents only.

As might be expected, given that the majority of this sample is male, most children (nearly 30%) reportedly live with their mothers. Over 20% live with grandparents. A substantial number (17%) live on their own. Just over 10% are in foster care. Others live with an adult other than those named (sometimes a hanai parent). Few (under 5%) live with fathers. A few parents report deceased children.

As might be expected as well, a number of arrangements are found when respondents report on the legal guardianship of their children. Table 10 lists these diverse patterns of guardianship of children:

Table 10. Children’s Legal Guardian

Legal Guardian	Frequency	Percent
Child's mother	56	29.9%
Grandparent	40	21.4%
Child no longer a minor	37	19.8%
Foster or adoptive parent	17	9.1%
Child's father	15	8.0%
Other/hanai	11	5.9%
Sibling or sibling in-law	11	5.9%
Total	187	100.0%

As might be expected given patterns of living arrangements, in about 30% of cases, the mother is reported as being the legal guardian. Grandparents serve as guardians in just over 20% of cases. Discrepancies exist between patterns of child residence and reported legal guardianship. Without the opportunity for follow-up questions, the reason for these discrepancies cannot be determined.

Parenting and Institutional Involvement

We next asked a series of questions that reflect concerns about what happens to children upon a parent’s arrest, parental involvement with Child Welfare Services (CPS), and about certain patterns of offenses related to family violence. Table 11 illustrates that just under 30% of parents had custody at the time of their arrest, while 42.9% did not have custody. (Over one-quarter of participants failed to respond to this question.)

Table 11. Child Custody at Arrest

Custody of any child(ren) at the time of arrest	Frequency	Percent
Data Missing	23	27.4%
No	36	42.9%
Yes	25	29.8%
Total	84	100.0%

What happens to children upon the arrest of their parent? A variety of answers emerged when respondents were asked about who became the caregiver immediately upon their arrest. Table 12 indicates no clear pattern due to the large number of missing responses (63%).

Table 12. Who Took Care of Child upon Parent's Arrest?

Caregiver upon Arrest	Frequency	Percent
Child's Mother	14	16.7%
Child's Father	2	2.4%
Grandparent	8	9.5%
Aunt	3	3.6%
Uncle	1	1.2%
CPS	3	3.6%
Missing data	53	63.1%
Total	84	100.0%

We asked respondents several questions about Child Welfare Services (CPS) involvement. The first asked whether the individual had ever been involved with CPS. As shown in Table 13, nearly 40% of parents responded that they had had some type of involvement with CPS, although the majority (56%) reported none.

Table 13. History of CPS Involvement

Involvement with CPS	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	38.0%
No	47	56.0%
Data Missing	5	6.0%
Total	84	100.0%

We also asked whether respondents had a current CPS investigation (case) open. As shown in Table 14, most (77.4%) reported no current CPS investigation, but 13.1% did.

Table 14. Current CPS Investigation (Case)

CPS Case Open?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	13.1%
No	65	77.4%
Data Missing	8	9.5%
Total	84	100.0%

Given these patterns of CPS past and current involvement, it is not surprising that a number of respondents report that their parental rights had been terminated. Table 15 indicates that over one-quarter of respondents had had their rights terminated at some point in the past. These data are presented for both females and males:

Table 15. Termination of Parental Rights

Parental Rights Terminated	Females		Males		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	12	38.7%	10	18.9%	22	26.2%
No	18	58.1%	38	71.7%	56	66.7%
Missing Data	1	3.2%	5	9.4%	6	7.1%
Total	31	100.0%	53	100.0%	84	100.0%

This analysis shows that termination of parental rights of mothers occurs at a fairly high rate. Out of 31 mothers, 12 (38.7%) had had their parental rights terminated. Termination of parental rights was not unusual for fathers; nearly 19% of fathers reported the termination of their parental rights.

We also asked respondents about whether they had had convictions for family-related offenses. As shown in Table 16, 21.4% of parents reported a past conviction for domestic violence, terroristic threatening, or child abuse.

Table 16. Convictions for Domestic Violence, Terroristic Threatening, or Child Abuse

Convictions for Family Related Violence	Female		Male		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	2	6.5%	16	30.2%	18	21.4%
No	28	90.3%	33	62.3%	61	72.6%
Missing Data	1	3.2%	4	7.5%	5	6.05%
Total	31	100.0%	53	100.0%	84	100.0%

Male parents (30.2%) were much more likely to report having had a conviction for family-related violence compared to female parents (6.5%).

Visitation and Relations With Children

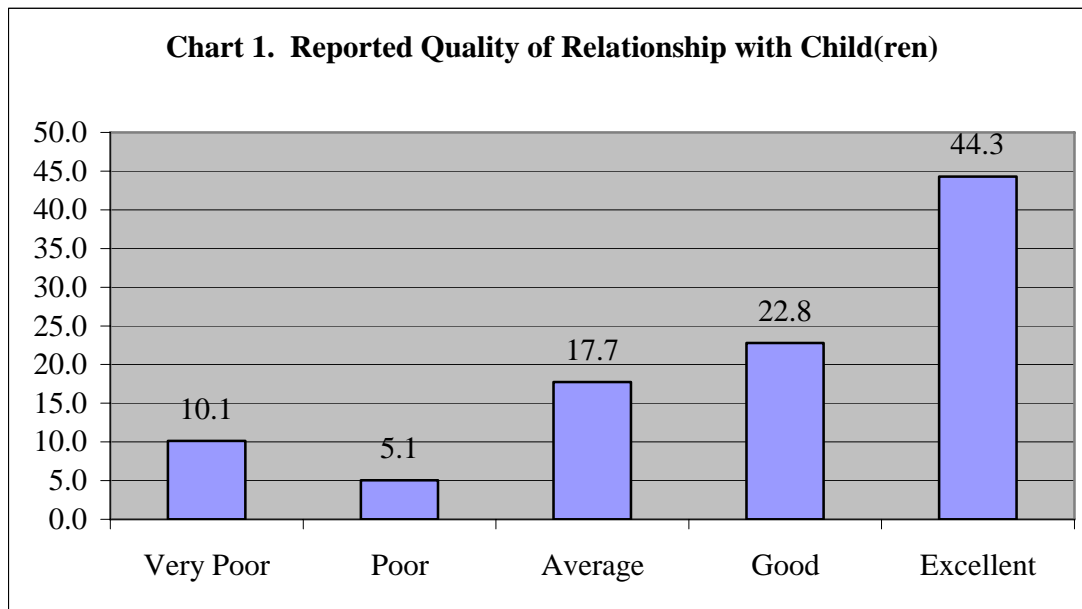
Maintaining relations with children during incarceration is difficult. Studies suggest that parental visitation during incarceration enhances the inmate's chances for successful reentry (Bernstein, 2005; Holt & Miller, 1972; Kupers, 2000). Most (59.5%) of parenting inmates at HCCC report visitation with children during their incarceration as shown in Table 17. However, approximately a third report having had no visits.

Table 17. Visitation with Children

Visits with Children while Incarcerated?	Female		Male		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	20	64.5%	30	56.6%	50	59.5%
No	9	29.0%	18	34.0%	27	32.2%
Missing Data	2	6.5%	5	9.4%	7	8.3%
Total	31	100.0%	53	100.0%	84	100.0%

Approximately 65% of female parents compared with nearly 57% of male parents reported having visits with children while incarcerated.

What are relationships between incarcerated parents and children like? Of those responding to this question (79), most report that their relationships with children are “good” to “excellent” (67.1%) as shown in Chart 1:



Prior to their incarceration, the majority (71.4%) reported that they provided support for their children as shown in Table 18:

Table 18. Support for Children Prior to Incarceration

Support for Children	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	71.4%
No	19	22.6%
Data Missing	5	6.0%
Total	84	100.0%

Needs of Inmates, Caregivers, and Children

We asked respondents what sorts of information they might need during their incarceration about parenting, family support, or family resources. Table 19 lists responses indicating interest in various topics. Most highly rated were those items associated most directly with their relationships with their children: communication (35.7%); reunification (28.6%); and parenting classes (23.8%).

Table 19. Incarcerated Parents Need for Further Information

Want to know more about	Frequency	Percent
Communication with Children	30	35.7%
Information on family reunification	24	28.6%
Parenting Classes	20	23.8%
Working with Child Welfare Services(CPS)	14	16.7%
Mentoring for children	11	13.1%
Understanding foster care	5	6.0%

And, finally, we asked a series of questions about what incarcerated parents imagined that their children and their caregivers might need.

We asked respondents to examine a list of possible services or types of help and indicate to what degree they believed that these services or interventions were needed. They were asked to choose among the following ratings for each type of help:

- 0 = They (caregivers and children) don't need help with this
- 1 = Not much need for this
- 2 = Some need for this
- 3 = They need this a lot⁶

⁶ Brown, Marilyn, PhD. & Jedediah Kay (2007) *Hawaii County's Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Needs Assessment of Parents, Children, and Caregivers*

Table 20. Respondents' Estimation of Caregiver/Children Need

	Do Not Need		Not Much		Some		A Lot		Don't Know		Count
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Total
Babysitting/Childcare Needs	31	41.9	4	5.4	9	12.2	25	33.8	5	6.8	74
Support Group for Caregiver	29	39.7	7	9.6	12	16.4	20	27.4	5	6.8	73
Housing	25	33.8	4	5.4	9	12.2	30	40.5	6	8.1	74
Transportation	25	33.8	3	4.1	12	16.2	29	39.2	5	6.8	74
Parenting Skills	26	35.6	5	6.8	12	16.4	25	34.2	5	6.8	73
Counseling for the family	25	34.7	2	2.8	14	19.4	26	36.1	5	6.9	72
Workshops/Education for caregiver	27	37.0	8	11.0	6	8.2	28	38.4	4	5.5	73
Financial Assistance	17	22.7	2	2.7	10	13.3	41	54.7	5	6.7	75
Legal Help/Advocacy	22	30.1	6	8.2	12	16.4	27	37.0	6	8.2	73
Grandparents Rights	27	36.0	10	13.3	4	5.3	27	36.0	7	9.3	75
Health Care for the Child	18	24.7	2	2.7	13	17.8	35	47.9	5	6.8	73
Health Care for the Caregiver	23	31.5	3	4.1	11	15.1	29	39.7	7	9.6	73
Information/Referral	25	33.8	7	9.5	7	9.5	28	37.8	7	9.5	74
Respite	24	32.9	7	9.6	14	19.2	22	30.1	6	8.2	73
Programs for Children	16	21.9	3	4.1	17	23.3	33	45.2	4	5.5	73
School Fees	19	25.7	5	6.8	6	8.1	38	51.4	6	8.1	74
Problems with drug/alcohol use for children	38	52.1	3	4.1	8	11.0	20	27.4	4	5.5	73
Problems with drug/alcohol use for caregiver	34	46.6	5	6.8	5	6.8	25	34.2	4	5.5	73
Physical Walk-In Resource Center	26	35.6	8	11.0	6	8.2	27	37.0	6	8.2	73
Help for children to do better in school	20	27.8	2	2.8	9	12.5	37	51.4	4	5.6	72
Translation for those not speaking English	44	60.3	4	5.5	5	6.8	15	20.5	5	6.8	73
On-Line Resource Center	30	41.1	5	6.8	12	16.4	22	30.1	4	5.5	73
Call-In Resource Center	29	39.7	5	6.8	10	13.7	24	32.9	5	6.8	73
Computer Literacy Training	22	30.1	5	6.8	11	15.1	31	42.5	4	5.5	73

This report was prepared in conjunction with the activities of the Hawai'i County Children of Incarcerated Task Force. We gratefully acknowledge Warden Peter MacDonald and Ms. Ruth Forbes. Without their commitment, this project could not have been accomplished. We appreciate the help of HCCC staff with implementing the project. And, of course, we truly appreciate the participation by the inmates of the Hawai'i Community Correctional Center. This report also acknowledges the leadership of the Office of the Prosecutor of the County of Hawai'i, particularly Deputy Prosecutor Charlene Iboshi and Ms. Lisa Faulkner-Inouye who provide the creative energy behind these and more activities on behalf of the families of Hawai'i Island.

We also gratefully acknowledge the help of those who participated in the meetings of the Task Force, the Neighborhood Place of Kona, Queen Lili‘uokalani’s Children Center. Thanks also to Ms. Sherilyn Tavares who assisted in the preparation of this report.

3) Data and analysis to determine the relationship between specific variables and frequency of parental incarceration.

The Task Force has no access to the data of the Department of Public Safety; additional work is needed to assure timely access to appropriate data.

4) Data and analysis to determine the relationship between parental incarceration and various adverse outcomes for children of incarcerated parents.

The research on children of incarcerated parents suggests that this is a population at risk. It is likely that children had significant needs and risks prior to the parent’s incarceration. The arrest and incarceration of the parent, however, exacerbates underlying family strains and adds to the problems of children and their caregivers. Some general themes found in the literature are as follows:

- Regardless of the circumstances, children experience the loss of a parent as traumatic. Trauma interferes with children’s developmental tasks.
- Parental loss is thought to have different impacts depending upon the stage of the child’s development.
- Instability and uncertainty are typical in the lives of children of incarcerated parents, making it difficult for children to cope.
- Children of incarcerated parents have to adapt both to crisis events and long-term separation; interventions should seek to prevent long-term “maladaptive” behaviors.
- Children of incarcerated parents experience stigma and social isolation.⁷

The following tables summarize research from the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents compiled from the Urban Institute.

Table 21. Possible Developmental Effects of Parental Arrest and Incarceration on Young Children

Developmental Stage	Developmental Characteristics	Developmental Tasks	Influencing Factors	Effects
Infancy	Limited perception & mobility Total dependency	Development of trust & attachment	Parent-child separation	Impaired parent-child bonding
Early Childhood (2-6 years)	Increased perception, mobility and improved memory Greater exposure to environment, ability to imagine	Development of sense of autonomy, independence & initiative	Parent-child separation Trauma	Inappropriate separation anxiety Impaired socio-emotional development Acute traumatic stress reactions & survival guilt

⁷ Urban Institute. 2002 Background Paper: Children of Incarcerated Parents. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Middle Childhood (7-10 years)	Increased independence from caregivers & ability to reason Peers become important	Sense of industry Ability to work productively	Parent-child separation Enduring trauma	Developmental regression Poor self-concept Acute traumatic stress reactions Impaired ability to overcome future trauma

Source: K. Gabel and D. Johnston, 1995, Children of Incarcerated Parents, New York: Lexington Books.

Table 22: Possible Developmental Effects of Parental Arrest and Incarceration on Adolescent Children

Developmental Stage	Developmental Characteristics	Developmental Tasks	Influencing Factors	Effects
Early Adolescent (11-14 years)	Organization of behavior in pursuit of goals Increased abstract thinking Puberty Increased aggression	Ability to work productively with others Control expression of emotions	Parent-child separation Enduring trauma	Rejection of limits on behavior Trauma-reactive behaviors
Late Adolescent (15-18 years)	Emotional crisis & confusion Adult sexual development & sexuality Formal abstract thinking Increased independence	Development of cohesive identify Resolution of conflicts with family, society Ability to engage in adult work & relationships	Parent/child separation Enduring trauma	Premature termination of dependency Intergenerational crime & incarceration

Source: K. Gabel and D. Johnston, 1995, Children of incarcerated parents, New York: Lexington Books

It is generally agreed that the effects of parental incarceration on children may manifest themselves in varying degrees due to the age and gender of the child. The following list illustrates the behaviors that children display upon the removal of a parent from the child's life due to incarceration.⁸

1. Emotional

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • Depression | Developmental Aggression | Suicidal |
| • Illness | Cutting | Shame |
| • Fear | Unable to concentrate | Feel like a victim |
| • Powerless | Self-Blame | Guilt |
| • Lack of self-worth | Low self-esteem | Hopeless |
| • Feeling of abandonment | Feeling unloved | Resentment |
| • Confusion | Separation Anxiety | Anger at other family |
| • Increased sensitivity | Hypervigilance | Emotionally unbalanced |

⁸ Children of Incarcerated Parents: Hawaii County workgroups: West Hawaii-Sept. 10, 2007; East Hawaii-Sept. 18, 2007; County of Hawaii-Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Juvenile Justice

2. Interpersonal Skills and Bonding:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Loss of ability to bond | Lack of stability | Lack of trust |
| • Inability to communicate | Negative attitude | Sibling separation |
| • Become parentified-take
On role of absent parent | Take frustrations out on
caregivers | Isolation from lack of
communication with parent |
| • Enter "poor parenting-
Skills" cycle | Abusive to people who
love them | Disconnect-culturally,
spiritually |

3. At-Risk Behaviors

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| • Prone to high-risk behaviors | Truancy | Drinking |
| • Substance Abuse | Curfew violations | Self-medication |
| • Delinquency | School failure | Teen pregnancy |
| • Negative attitude | Promiscuity | Negative peer associations |
| • Belief "that's how life is" | "us" vs "them" mindset | Early sex experimentation |
| • Use incarceration of parent
as an excuse for problem
behavior | Parental incarceration
becomes a badge of honor | |

4. Welfare of Child

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Lack of role models | Lack of positive environment | Lack of edification |
| • Teased | Harassed | Ostracized |
| • At risk for victimization | Unmet healthcare needs | Shifting caregivers |
| • Lack of continuity of care | Misdiagnosis of mental illness | Impact of medication |
| • Lack of access to services in rural areas | | |

Parental incarceration poses many dilemmas for the caregivers of their children. One issue that was unique to caregivers living in West Hawaii, North Hawaii, and South Hawaii, was the potential for geographical and economic limitations to impede efforts to visit correctional facilities which are located in East Hawaii. Furthermore, when a parent from a Neighbor Island is incarcerated at a facility on Oahu or on the North American continent, these geographic and economic limitations are present in greater proportions and felt equally by caregivers living throughout the Neighbor Islands.

The following items illustrate other challenges faced by caregivers:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| • Financial Burden | Resentment | Anger at incarcerated
parent |
| • Cultural obligation | Guilt and uncertainty | Torn allegiance |
| • Increased stress | Legal issues: confusion | Denial (allows the
cycle to continue) |
| • Must give up role as
caretaker once parent
returns | between "guardian" and
adoption terminology &
requirements | |
| • Children used as pawn"
between" parent/caregiver | | |

5) Recommendations: (as to whether the Task Force should be further extended.)

Extend Children of Incarcerated Parents Task Force

The Task Force was unable to complete its work in the five months of meetings. Much of the work that remains requires participation of the Department of Public Safety since they can collect much of the needed data at Intake Services. The Task Force also recognizes the importance of inter-agency cooperation in this area and, therefore, suggests that there be a collaborative agreement among the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Education, and the Department of Human Services to share this confidential data for the express purpose of providing appropriate services to these children and youth (as well as Public Safety and not-for-profit agencies). We, therefore, recommend extending the work of the Task Force at least another year.

6) The Task Force presents these additional recommendations:

Recommend adopting a definition of “parent” as including one or more of the following:

- Primary caregiver
- Person present in child’s life prior to incarceration
- Emotional, psychological connection to the child
- May not be biologically related, but performed role of the caregiver
- Self-reported by child
- Child has a reasonable expectation of having a relationship to the person or
- One whose incarceration affects the child economically, emotionally, psychologically

Recommend creating a “rights of children of incarcerated parents” policy as follows:

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 struggle with my parent’s incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of my parent’s incarceration.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

Recommend amending mandatory reporting statutes to include: report of arrest of parent.

Recommend that at the time of arrest:

- Police could provide a list of resources to relatives/friends with whom the child is placed.
- Officer should arrive with a social worker as part of the protocol of arrest of parents with children present.

Recommend that the Department of Public Safety be required to:

- Fully implement the provisions in Act 250 (SKIP Law) and Act 8, Special Session of 2007 (Community Safety Act) relating to children of incarcerated parents.
- Create a “family liaison” position to work with families of incarcerated parents or assign a staffer to the task
- Consider that parents with a close relationship to their children be incarcerated as close to home as possible
- Provide parenting classes in jail or in prison
- Conduct a “post-sentencing questionnaire” within six months of sentencing to assess family needs
- Require completion of questionnaire by inmates assessing their needs and send to area service providers to assure appropriate and timely services.
- Require added lines in the intake form to identify information on children such as: who is the primary caregiver, ages of children, schools they attend, etc.

Recommend that the Department of Education create a child advocate position within the complex to assist with referrals, linkages with helping agencies for caregivers of children of incarcerated parents.

Recommend that the Department of Human Services be required to:

- Ensure better coordination in placement of children of arrested or incarcerated parents.
- Add a requirement in contracts with service providers to collect information about children of incarcerated parents, their caregivers, and their incarcerated parent to ensure data for development of services, programs.

Recommend that Service Providers:

All agencies should assess early in the intake process if the client is caring for a child of an incarcerated parent, or if the person is a parent just released from prison, by providing a choice on the intake form: “Parent in Jail”

Create one form for all caretakers of children of incarcerated parents to systemize data collection and development of programs to assist them

Social service agencies can coordinate dissemination of information, training, services on the issue of “Children of Incarcerated Parents”

- 7) Multiple theoretical models for improving the welfare and general well-being of children of incarcerated parents.

Work not completed due to lack of time and access to data.

Conclusion:

What has been presented in this report is only a snap shot of the needs in dealing with the issue of children of incarcerated parents. The Task Force has been challenged by the lack of time, coordination of effort, and complex needs of all parties involved. The Task Force understands and agrees that the child welfare community must engage in sensitive planning and support of children of incarcerated parents. This requires that children are cared for and informed, have access to services and are able to have contact with their incarcerated parent (if it is determined to be in their best interest).

Parent-child contact/interaction is necessary for a child to successfully bond with a parent and such contact/interaction leads to forging positive relationships later in life. Consideration must be given to facilitating contact between children even if their parent is incarcerated.

Caregivers must be supported. Caregivers can assist the children in knowing their parents' whereabouts, status, current situation...to allay the fears that children have of the unknown. Caregivers must know where to turn in the community for issues that arise, such as mental health needs, medical needs, respite care and counseling.

Collaborative planning is needed among the health, education, and social service agencies to support families and/or caregivers of incarcerated parents. School officials should be alerted to the child's situation, as it might help explain behavior, academic performance or acting out.

Submitted by:

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