

Children in the child-welfare system with incarcerated parents

San Francisco Family and Children Services (SF FCS) estimates that 15% of its caseload involves children with incarcerated parents.

This population tends to be disproportionately of color and faces a significantly higher risk of not reunifying or finding permanence.

PRESENTATION BY

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SF FCS is working with partners to serve this population:

- San Francisco Police Department around arrest protocol.
- San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership (SFCIPP) under the auspices of the Zellerbach Family Foundation: a coalition of public/private partners including Child Welfare, Sheriff, Public Defender, Community Works, Community Mental Health, Friends Outside, A Home Within, SF Court, SF Child Support, Five Keys Charter School, CASA and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.
- One Family: an initiative led by Community Works, in collaboration with SFCIPP, San Francisco Sheriff's Department and SF Family and Children's Services, funded by the Zellerbach Family Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Sills Foundation.
- Family to Family, an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- San Francisco Dependency Drug Court around expanding services to incarcerated parents.

SF FCS is investing in the needs of this population.

- ***Contract with Friends Outside.*** With one position inside the SF County Jails and one position travelling between State Prisons, SF FCS is able to improve worker/parent communication as well as parent/child communication and contact.
- ***Hiring of a Project Manager.*** Through a grant obtained from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a managerial level coordinator is able to devote 65% of her time to improving policies and practices to meet the unique needs of this population and to create effective, systematized processes for handling cases where a parent is incarcerated as well as disseminating information and participating in partnerships and working groups about the needs of this population.

SF FCS is concentrating on improving outcomes in 4 areas

1. Time of Parental Arrest

- Decreasing trauma at the time of parental arrest
- Decreasing Child Protective Center or stranger placements when parents are arrested

2. Contact Visitation between Parents and Children

- Increasing and improving contact visits between children and parents who are in county jail; increasing and improving communication between children and parents in prison
- Increasing communication between workers and incarcerated parents

3. Services for Parents, Children and Caregivers

- Offering incarcerated parents access to an evidence based parenting class within the jail that is designed specifically for incarcerated parents and that satisfies parenting requirements within the child welfare system.

4. Knowledge Management and Information Sharing

- Improving internal and external data collection in order to plan more effective services.
- Increasing awareness within the department about the special needs of this population.
- Creating and sharing a toolkit nationally for changing practices and policies

Area 1: Time of Parental Arrest

- Gather information on the use of the joint protocol by interviewing supervisors
- Improve practices by
 - facilitating the re-issue of the Police Department Bulletin
 - drafting an agreement with the PD
 - participating in roll call trainings to clarify the CPS role and to inform officers about dealing with children in age-appropriate ways
- Next steps: Monitor progress and do additional trainings at unit meetings



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CHILDREN OF ARRESTED PARENTS (Supersedes Department Bulletin 07-001)

Numerous studies have documented the negative effect of children witnessing violence and witnessing parental arrests. There have been a number of situations nationally and locally in which young children were left without adult care in the aftermath of parental arrests. The goal of responding officers and the Child Protective Service worker shall be to minimize the disruption to children by providing the most supportive environment possible after an arrest, to minimize unnecessary trauma to the children of arrestees, and to determine the best alternative care for the children. The purpose of this protocol is to determine the best methods of working with CPS and first responding officers.

Nothing in this protocol negates parental rights to choose appropriate placement for their children. Unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary (obvious drug use, weapons or other indicators of an unsafe environment) parental discretion shall be respected. CPS maintains the ultimate responsibility for determining placement in the event the parent does not designate placement.

For the purposes of this directive, a Child is defined as a person under the age of 18.

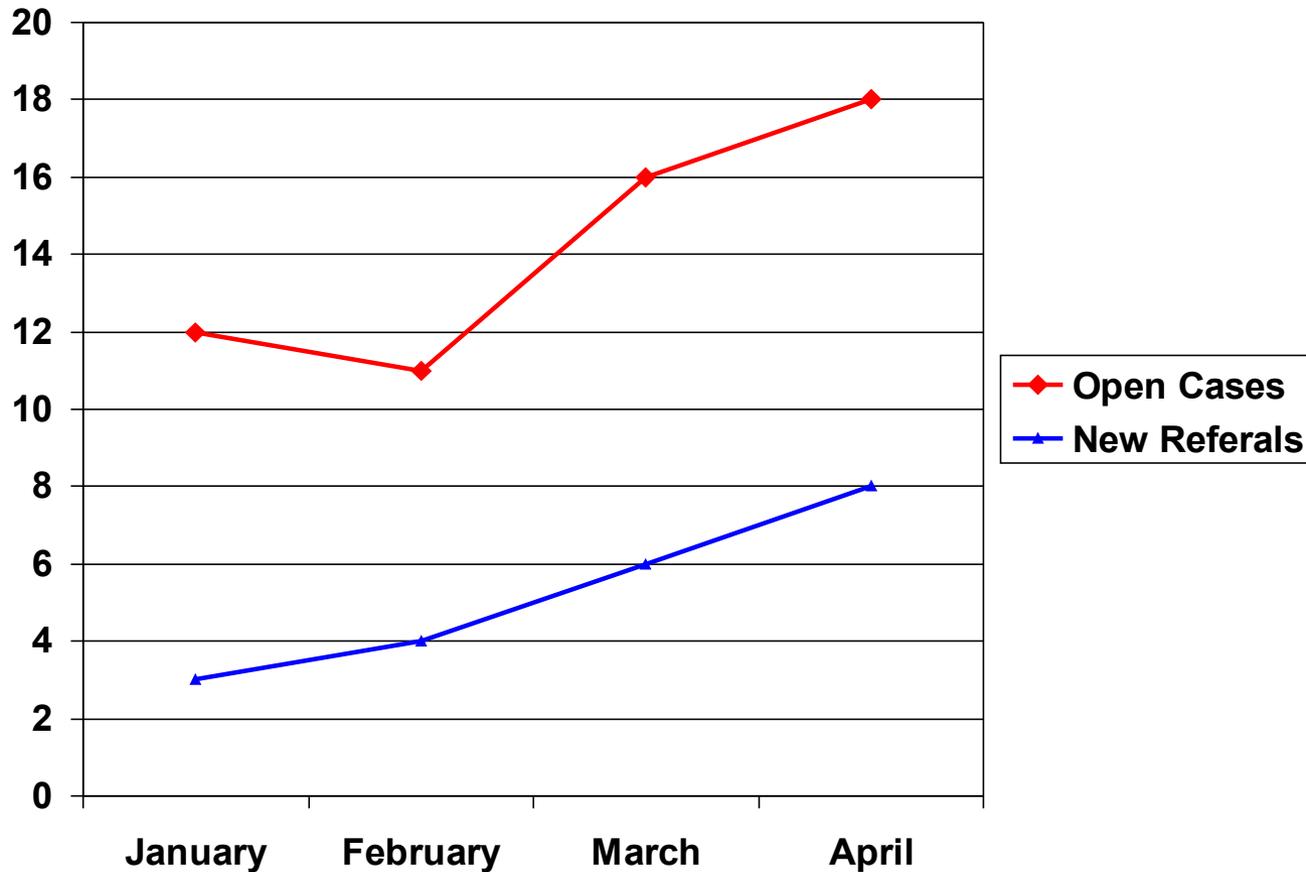
Responding officers shall assist CPS by adhering to the following procedures:

1. When officers make an arrest, they shall inquire about the presence of a child or children for whom the arrested adult has responsibility. If the arrest is made in a home environment, the officer should be aware of items which suggest the presence of children such as toys, clothing, formula, bunk bed, diapers, etc.
2. Whenever it is safe to do so, attempt to make the arrest away from the child or children at a time when the children are not present.
3. Whenever it is safe to do so, allow the parent to assure the child or children that they will all be okay and the child or children will be provided care. If this is not safe or if the demeanor of the in-custody parent suggests this conversation would be non-productive, the officer at the scene should explain the reason for the arrest in age-appropriate language and offer reassurances to the child or children that both parent and child or children will be taken care of.

Area 2: Parent – Child Visitation

- Gathering information
 - Through worker and supervisor interviews about Friends Outside Services
 - Through observational visits to Friends Outside visitation and to Parenting Inside-Out
- Improving practices by
 - revising the referral packets so they are simpler
 - drafting handbook language in the visitation section
 - drafting a handbook section on incarcerated parents
 - monitoring Friends Outside Contract
 - sharing information about Get on the Bus
 - individual conferences with supervisors and workers
 - Including information about incarcerated parents in all visitation training
- Next steps: Monitor progress and do additional presentations, improve tracking ability

Friends Outside Services show an upward trend



Area 3: Services for Parents, Children and Caregivers

- Gathering and sharing information about services that might be useful for this population including
 - Friends Outside
 - One Family
 - Get on the Bus
 - SF HSA Visitation Program
 - Dependency Drug Court
 - SFCIPP
 - ILSP
 - Edgewood
 - Office of the Public Defender
- Approval for Parenting Inside-Out to count toward case plan requirements
- Partnering with Drug Dependency Court on a grant application for services
- Ongoing contract with Friends Outside
- Next steps: Connect services with population more effectively and consistently

Area 4: Knowledge Management and Information Sharing

- Gathering accurate data through
 - Monthly data run of incarcerated parents in CWS/CMS
 - Friends Outside Monthly reports
- Improving practices and spreading knowledge by
 - Creation of quick guide to data entry
 - Individual emails to workers following up on incarcerated parent visitation compliance
 - Ongoing presentations and trainings at Division Meetings, Unit meetings, Supervisor meetings, Management meetings
 - Presenting information to the court and attorneys
 - Participation in visitation working group and permanency working group
 - Drafting handbook policy on arrested parents
 - Creation of a Toolkit documenting work for replication of the program
 - Working with BASSC intern on production of report to be shared with other counties
- Next step: comparing data with Drug Dependency Court, collecting and comparing data from Sherriff's Department

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**DRAFT – Child
Welfare Worker
Handbook Policy**

**SA/FCS Policy
Statement**

Date of Approval

Debby Jeter

Deputy Director, FCS

The following protocol is for Protective Services Workers (PSWs) communicating with and providing services to parents who are arrested and incarcerated. This policy is designed to provide Protective Services Workers with guidelines and procedures for providing appropriate services to arrested and incarcerated parents.

An arrest of a parent in itself is not grounds for an allegation of child abuse or neglect. Incarceration of a parent may be an additional risk factor and, in all cases, decisions regarding an incarcerated parent should follow laws and Child Welfare regulations.

The Human Services Agency (HSA), Family and Children’s Services (FCS) has contracted with a national organizational, Friends Outside, local chapter to provide services to incarcerated parents.

QUICK GUIDE TO DOCUMENT INCARCERATION OF A PARENT IN CWS/CMS

CLIENT NOTEBOOK

1. In the *CLIENT MANAGEMENT* Section (a), click on Open Existing Client Notebook (b); select parent notebook and click OK.
2. Click on the Address Page Tab.
3. If there is an existing address, you need to end date it.
4. Click on the Plus in the Address Grid
5. Select Penal Institution in the Address Type.
6. Complete all the fields thoroughly.
7. Enter a Start Date.
8. Enter a Booking /Inmate Number.

* Arrest information can be entered on the Demographic Page in the Arrests Grid.

Demog.

Client has been Arrested for:

+ Arrests



Summary | ID | Demog. | Address | Names | Related Clients | ID Num | s

Address

	Type	Number	Street Name
+			
1	Residence	2222	1st Street

Start Date: 08/02/2005 | End Date: | Comment: 3

Booking/Inmate Number:

Address

	Type	Number	Street Name
+			
1			
2	Residence	2222	1st Street

Address Type: Penal Institution | City: | State: California

Start Date: | End Date: | Comment:

Booking/Inmate Number: 8

CASE PLAN NOTEBOOK

1. Click on the CASE MANAGEMENT SECTION (a) and create or update the Case Plan Notebook (b).
2. In the Case Management Services Page Tab(a), under the Staff/Parent Contact (b) enter the Contact/Visitation waiver: **Parent Incarcerated** (c).



Case Mgmt Svcs

2a

2b

Contacts/Visits

Contact Party: Staff Person/Parent-Guardian

Contact Method: In Person

Schedule for Service

Verify your Start and End Dates

Start Date: 09/04/2007 | End Date: 03/04/2008

Occurrences: 1

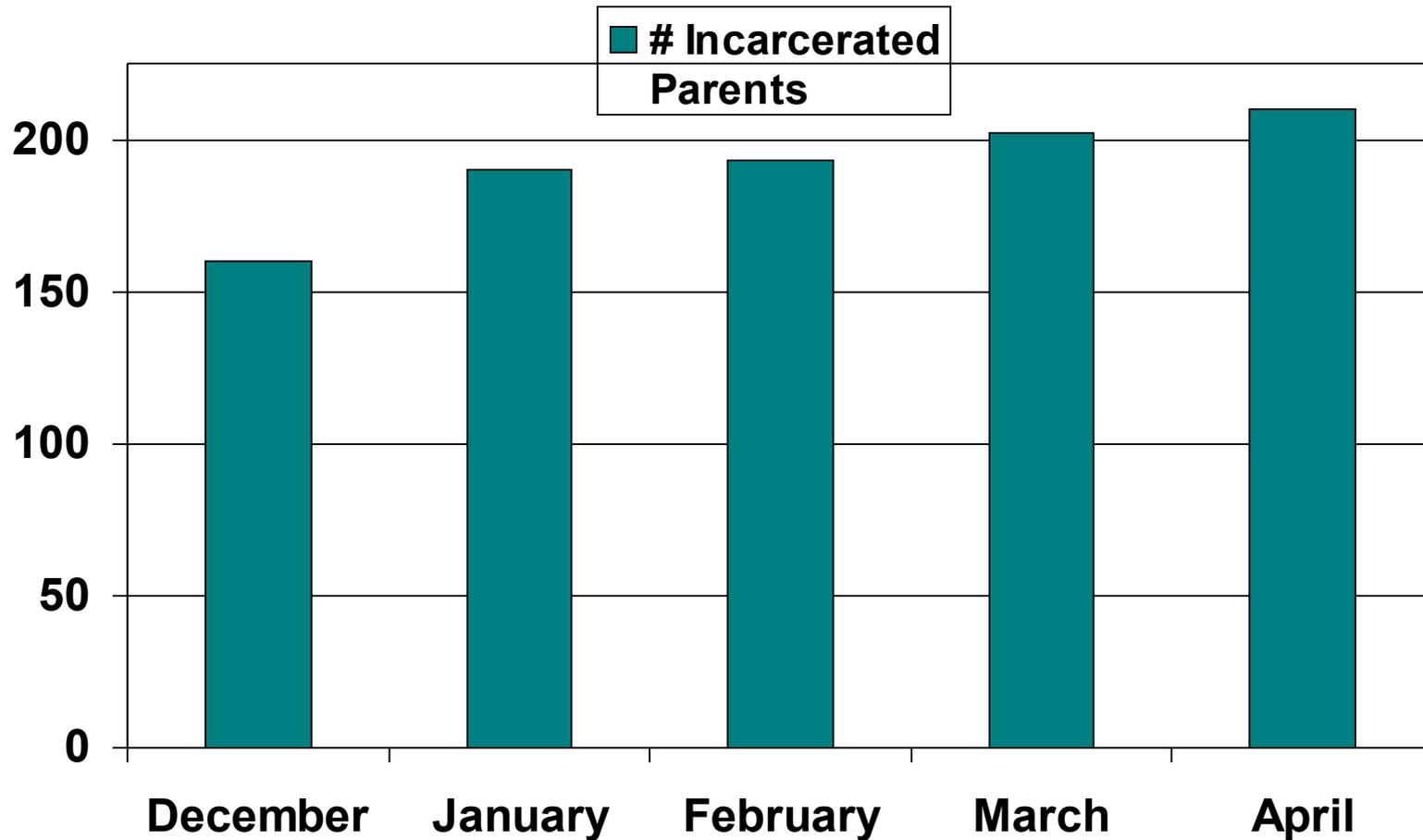
Frequency: Monthly

Contact/Visitation Waivers: Parent Incarcerated/Lives Out of C

2c

Quick Guide to Worker Entry in the CMS/CWS Database

The number of incarcerated parents entered into CWS/CMS is increasing



Upcoming Activities

1. Integrating the work of the various departments, leveraging successes and cooperating to overcome obstacles.
 - Arranging a series of brown bag lunches with staff around incarcerated parents
 - Increased coordination of kin support programs for caregivers of children with incarcerated parents.

2. Enhanced data collection and sharing
 - The dissemination of a social worker toolkit in order to replicate successes nationally.
 - Enhanced data collection and sharing between the Police Department and SFHSA to evaluate the success of the joint agreement in reducing children entering care or being placed with strangers or at CPC
 - Enhanced data collection and sharing between the Sheriff's Department and SFHSA to more accurately capture the number of incarcerated parents with a child in the dependency system in order to increase visitation compliance.

10. Continued training of child welfare workers and partnering agencies in addressing the needs of this population and in an effort to increase reunifications and permanency.
 - The continued integration of and focus on the needs of this population into the significant, large-scale child welfare reform efforts at San Francisco HSA.