ENSURING CHILD SAFETY UPON PARENTAL ARREST
TRAINING OVERVIEW

• Introductions
• Task Force & The Law
• Childhood Trauma: The Impact of Parental Arrest
• Role of Law Enforcement
• Role of CYFD
• Discussion
• Evaluation
• Since 1991, the number of children with parents in prison has increased by more than 50%.

• 1.1 million incarcerated person are parents to an estimated 2.3 million children.

• More than 7 million children have a parent under some form of correctional supervision.
In a recent study in California, 70% of children who were present at a parental arrest saw their parents being handcuffed.

30% of children who witnessed an arrest were confronted with drawn weapons.
Children's Bill of Rights

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.
The Law: History and Context of HB 271
The Blue Ribbon Commission on the Welfare of Children of Jailed and Incarcerated Parents was established in May 2006
Goals

1. Identifying children at time of parental arrest
   - Linking children and their caregivers to services and resources
   - Ensuring children have access to incarcerated parents through visitation
Recommendations

• Enact legislation directing that children will be identified upon parental arrest.

• Establish community-based Child Resource Advocates.

• Visitation between jailed and incarcerated parents and their children demonstration sites.
HB 271

An Act requiring law enforcement to identify minor or dependent children upon an arrest; providing for guidelines and a training program for ensuring child safety upon the arrest of a parent or guardian.
State or Local Law Enforcement Shall

• Inquire at the time of arrest whether the person is a parent or guardian of minor or dependent children who may be at risk as a result of arrest.

• Make reasonable efforts to ensure safety in accordance with guidelines established by DPS.
1) Procedures to ensure law enforcement officers inquire about minor or dependent children.

3) Procedures for the proper arrangement of temporary care of children to ensure their safety and well-being.

5) Education on the effects trauma and how law enforcement can mitigate the long-term effects.
The Impact of Parental Arrest on Children

Why Kids Need Cops
Parental arrest by definition is a traumatic event for children.
Separation from a parent is also a traumatic event for children.
Separation Impact

• Anger
• Rejection
• Depression
• Low self-esteem
• Poor school performance
• Developmental delays
• Inadequate social skills
Trauma

- Lasting effect!

- Children of incarcerated parents spend an average of 6 years 8 months separated from them.

- 10% of children with incarcerated mothers will be placed in foster care.

- More than 60% of parents in prison are held more than 100 miles from home.
The Impact of Trauma

Developmental trauma sets the course and direction of a person’s life.

Traumatized children are more likely to be substance abusers.
Children of incarcerated parents are 6 to 10 times more likely to end up in prison
Stress-Trauma Continuum
• Identify a trauma that you have experienced. Think about what your body’s reaction was.

• Can you still describe the details of the trauma today?

• How old were you?

• Does the memory of this trauma ever “pop” into your mind?

• Has the trauma changed your life in any way?
Childhood trauma has a profound impact on the emotional, behavioral, cognitive, social, and physical functioning of children.

Acute adaptive states, when they persist, can become maladaptive traits.

Bruce Perry, et. al.; Childhood Trauma, the Neurobiology of Adaptation, and “Use-dependent” Development of the Brain: How “States” become “Traits”; Infant Mental Health Journal, Vol 16, No. 4, Winter 1995
Immediate Biological Response Associated with Trauma

Exposure to violence or stress resulting in trauma alters the developing brain and activates threat responses in the child

(Perry, 1995)
When kids go through something frightening, stressful, or life altering, their personality can be permanently affected.
Biology at Play

• Hyperarousal is the body’s active way of taking on the threat.

• Dissociative behavior is “numbing” out.
• Males tend to “externalize”
• ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder
• More likely to be perpetrators

• Females tend to “internalize”
• Depression, Anxiety, and Dissociative disorders
• More likely to be victims
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
Child Traumatic Stress
Trauma Affects Behavior

Children exposed to violence within the family and/or community exhibited symptoms such as:

Van der Kolk, et.al., Dissociation, Somatization, and Affect Dysregulation: The Complexity of Adaptation to Trauma; American Journal of Psychiatry 153:7, July 1996
● An inability to manage emotions
● Aggressive behavior
● Destructive behavior
● Suicidal behavior
● PTSD
● Developmental challenges
● Isolation and loneliness
● Problems at school, home, in the community
● Violent behavior
The Resulting Emotional Response

- Fear
- Confusion
- Helplessness
- Embarrassment and/or shame
- Disempowerment
- Anger
- Vulnerable
The Resulting Physical Response

- Sleep Disturbances
- Hyperactivity
- Nervousness
- Appetite Changes
- Changes in Play
- Destructive
- Clumsiness
- Skin Changes
A child’s age and developmental level affects their response to witnessing parental arrest
Infants and Toddlers

- React to being separated from the caregiver
- React to the sounds associated with the arrest
- React to the abruptness of the event
3-6 Year Olds

• Think the arrest may have something to do with them
• Learn that gender roles are associated with violence
• Exhibit regressive behaviors and feel less independent
6-11 Year Olds

• Concern for the safety of the parent

• Awareness of the violence in the world and how it can affect them

• Develop an ability to mistrust the “good people,” because of comments made by adult caregivers

• May imitate hostile aggression

• Exhibit regressive behavior
Adolescents

• May try to stop the arrest
• Embarrassed by the arrest
• Use maladaptive behavior to cope with the arrest and loss of parent
• May develop an unhealthy attitude toward law enforcement
In a national survey of 9-16 year olds, 25% had experienced at least one traumatic event.
Incarcerated Youth

• 90% of juvenile detainees have experienced at least one traumatic event

• Incarcerated youth have experienced more 4-8 times more physical trauma than other youth

• PTSD- 8x higher

McNally, 1999; National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 07
Reducing Child Trauma

Ultimately

Reduces Crime
The Role of Law Enforcement
Mitigating the Trauma
It is considered best practice not to arrest parents in front of children.
General Guidelines

• Avoid sirens and lights in a non-emergency situation and where the use is discretionary

• If the arrestee is cooperative and the situation is deemed safe, allow the arrestee to talk with the child about what is happening, prior to being handcuffed
• When it is **not** possible to have the parent talk with the child, have the police officer talk with the child, separately, in a developmentally appropriate manner.
Communication with the Child
Tips

- Use the child's name
- Use simple language
- Sit at the child's physical level
- Explain your role as a police officer is to keep the child safe
- Acknowledge the child's right to remain silent
• Recognize the child’s loyalty to the parent
• Answer any questions the child may have
• Ask one question at a time
• Avoid “why” questions
• Ensure that the child understands the question
• Ask open ended questions and use simple reflection to make sure there is clarity
• Make no assumptions about the child’s abilities based on age
• Allow the child to hold onto a stuffed animal or other object for comfort
• Avoid rushing the child; let them have time to process thoughts and feelings
• Observe non-verbal communication
REMEMBER

• The child’s body is responding and this may effect his/her ability to listen, reason and retain information.

• This may also effect the child’s emotional and physical responses to what is happening.

• The way this incident is handled will impact this child’s future.
WHAT MIGHT YOU SEE?
WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?
Intervention by police authorities may create immense relief and/or additional worries or distress for children
Arresting Adults with Minor or Dependent Children: Protocol
Determining if there are minor or dependent children
If No Children Present, Ask the Arrestee

- Are there any children in your home that depend on your care?
- How many children, their ages and current location(s)?
- Is there another custodial parent available?
- Who might be available to locate the children and explain what has happened?
If Children Are Present, Also Ask

▪ Are there other children you are responsible for?
▪ Were the child(ren) present during the incident that prompted police involvement?
▪ Have the child(ren) been intentionally or accidentally injured?
▪ Are they able to explain the situation to their child(ren)?
In addition:

• If the arrestee is unable or does not respond to a question about the children, the officer should consider whether to look for them.

• Officers should observe for physical evidence that may indicate children: toys, clothes, baby gear, car seats, etc.
The officer should mention:

The parent may risk being charged with abuse and neglect, if information is withheld regarding their children.
Identifying and Communicating with an Alternate Caregiver
• Is there another parent?

• Can the arrestee identify an alternate caregiver?
  – Adult relative
  – Fictive kin
  – Child care provider
  – Temp shelter IF parent signs child in

• Can someone else identify an alternate caregiver?
MUST CONDUCT

• Abuse/Neglect background check
  (505) 841-6100 Albuquerque
  1-800-797-3260 Statewide

• Criminal background check
When contacting SCI

• SCI Intake Worker will ask for badge # and superior officer’s phone number

• Worker searches FACTS & gives officer info about possible caretaker

• SCI can provide info on shelters in area if needed
What does the alternate caregiver need to know?

As long as investigation isn’t compromised, tell caregiver what happened to the parent, how long they may be in jail and if/how they may be reached.

Be sure caregiver knows as much as possible about children – bedtime, medical issues, school info, special needs.
The Role of CYFD
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

- High risk for physical health problems
- High risk for mental health problems
- High risk for behavioral problems
- Lower educational achievement
- High risk to enter the juvenile justice system
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

- High risk for extended foster care
- Placement with strangers
- Sibling splits
- Loss connections to school, church & family
When all options are exhausted and no safe alternate caregiver can be found, refer to CYFD/SCI
CYFD Statewide Central Intake (SCI) receives ALL reports of suspected child abuse or neglect
SCI Protocol

• SCI Intake Worker asks for badge # and superior officer’s phone number
• Officer reports possible abuse/neglect to SCI; SCI may assign for investigation
• Protective custody given to CYFD only after reasonable efforts to find alternative
Statement of Reasonable Grounds

• CYFD worker will present to law enforcement

• Law enforcement must complete in order for child(ren) to be placed in protective custody with CYFD
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Immediate danger to the alleged victim

Report staffed immediately with supervisor

Referred to appropriate county office

Response within 0-3 hours

Extreme effort made to respond as quickly as possible
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIME

- SCI to field could be 30 minutes
- Rural versus urban areas
- Worker response depends on distance During workday (8-5), workers respond from office or field
- After hours, workers respond from home
• PRIORITY 1
  – 24-Hour response time
  – No immediate danger to the child, but response within 24 hours is warranted.

• PRIORITY 2
  – Five (5) calendar days response time
  – Alleged victim not in any immediate danger.
Once LE Gives Custody, CYFD

- Places the child
  - Meet licensing guidelines
- Cannot release the child from custody
- Interviews parents
- Obtains permission before entering residence
- Conducts investigation
- Determines safety plan
PRACTICE

• Case scenario
• Take a role
• Apply protocol
• 20 minutes
DEBRIEF

• How did your group handle the scenario?

• How did you come to this conclusion?

• Questions about the protocol?
Recommendations

• Work collaboratively with local law enforcement agencies and CYFD.

• Have written procedures consistent with the Protocol.