Collaboration Between Criminal Justice & Child Welfare Systems:

Rhode Island’s Effort at Reform
Workshop Goals

- Understand RI’s roots & motivation for embracing collaboration across its Child Welfare & Correction’s Systems

- Explore Child Welfare & Correction’s responses for reform & changing attitudes

- Track the evolution of RI’s reform efforts to its current work to organize & insure service delivery to individuals & families impacted by incarceration through a unified systemic response

- Engage in idea sharing to enhance our mutual efforts to serve children & families impacted by incarceration
Learning From the Realities: The Importance of Collaboration

- 2002 collaborative endeavor across Corrections, Child Welfare & higher education - RI begins to explore the impact of incarceration on children and families

- Findings suggest barriers related to the mission & practices of Corrections & Child Welfare Systems are core areas for reform

  - Inherent conflict between missions was a set-up for both systems & their shared clients
    - Corrections - safety and control
    - Child Welfare - safety, permanency & well-being of children through partnerships with family
Motivation for Further Exploration: Perspectives from Child Welfare & Corrections

- Benefits to systems serving individuals and families impacted by incarceration…
  - **Child Welfare** – the exodus from conventional child welfare practice to family centered practices under the Adoption & Safe Families Act of 1997 requires cross-system collaboration
    - Enhancing the ability to uphold the outcomes of safety, permanency & well-being for children and families
    - Better use of *time* & access to other service systems to achieve ASFA goals for vulnerable children & families
  - **Corrections** – recognize that traditional Correction’s practice was not achieving the outcomes of public safety through rehabilitation & decreased recidivism, which lead to true efforts at change
    - Moved away from unsafe prison to correction environments that were safe for all
    - Acknowledged the need for balance between safety-control & holding accountability for rehabilitation by incarcerated persons & the system
Motivation for Further Exploration: Perspectives from Child Welfare & Corrections

- Benefits to those directly impacted by incarceration…
  - **Children** - the extent to which a child will be affected by parental incarceration depends on a large number of variables including: length of separation, health of family, disruptiveness of incarceration, strength of parent-child relationship, length of parent’s sentence (Seymour, 2001; Dixson-Haskett, 2000)
  - **Incarcerated Parent** - strong family ties can result in several benefits: decreased recidivism, improved mental health of incarcerated person & connection to family members, & increased probability of reunification post incarceration (Fuller, 1993; LaVigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2008)
    - Assists with decreasing institutional misconduct
    - Maintains family relationships in support of reentry
    - It’s just the right thing to do

Begs the question regarding the extent to which child welfare & corrections have adversely impacted this population through policies & practices…

Curricula

- **Coping with Prison Visitation for the Child, Parent, & Worker**
  - 18-hour advanced training for line staff with direct family involvement

- **Tours & Introduction to Corrections - New Worker Training**
  - Two 3-hour guided tours & discussion with staff from RI’s Department of Corrections & its Training School

- **Where’s Daddy: Engaging Hard to Reach Fathers**
  - 18-hour introductory fatherhood training focusing on incarcerated fathers & utilizing presentations by professionals from RI’s DOC & Family Life Center who help to reframe issues of serving families impacted by incarceration

  - 18-hour advanced fatherhood training for Child Welfare, Corrections & Community Staff. The training focuses on fathers impacted by incarceration as one of four vulnerable groups of fathers
Reforming Systems & Changing Attitudes: Child Welfare’s Response Cont’d…

- **Access to Information**
  - Creation & distribution of guidelines for visiting each DOC facility
  - Identification of **DOC-DCYF Liaison** as contact & support for coordination of visitation and communication across Child Welfare, Corrections & Incarcerated Parent

- **Shared Participation in State-Wide Efforts to Better Serve Children & Families Impacted by Incarceration**
  - Utilizing *Fathered to Fathering Maps*, a life map tool developed by the Child Welfare Institute, as a resource for correction staff to help connect incarcerated fathers to their children & other supports (supported by research of LaVigne, Naser, Brooks, & Castro, 2008)
  - Supporting & directly participating in RI’s *Rhode to Reentry Initiative*
Reforming Systems & Changing Attitudes: Correction’s Response

- Exploring & Reinforcing Innovative Practices
  - Levels of Response to Traumatize Events (L.O.R.T.E.)
    - Joyce Dixson-Haskett developed this intervention-prevention tool for use in defining & responding to the experiences of children of incarcerated parents
    - RI Department of Corrections purchased the model with intentions of adapting the tool as a resource for program development & unified response across systems
      - Caregiver’s guide to working with children of incarcerated parents
      - Inmate parenting program
      - Program curricula for elementary & middle school children
Reforming Systems & Changing Attitudes: Correction’s Response

- Exploring & Reinforcing Innovative Practices
  - Levels of Service Inventory-R (L.S.I.-R) (Andrews & Bonta 1995)
    - A statistically reliable & validated method of collecting risk & needs information important to offender treatment planning, where assessment scores correspond to appropriate service/treatment recommendations (Petersilia 2003)
  - The LSI-R can be used in a variety of ways:
    - Security Level Classification
    - Programming / Treatment Decisions
    - Probation / Supervision Decisions
    - Assessing the Likelihood of Recidivism
Organizing & Insuring Service Delivery: Unified Systems’ Response

- RI’s Rhode to Reentry Initiative – Governor Carcieri
  - Statewide collaboration to create safer neighborhoods & better citizens by delivering a seamless plan of services, programming, support, & supervision starting at the onset of entrance into the Correctional system

  - **Local Reentry Councils** - Integrated Approach to Service through data & asset sharing made possible through partnerships within state agencies, faith communities & community-based organizations

  - **Reductions in Crime & Costs** – institutional programming, expansion of mentoring, increased attention to Corrections & mobilization of collaboration across state, community, faith & family systems

For more information go to: [http://www.doc.ri.gov/reentry/index.php](http://www.doc.ri.gov/reentry/index.php)
RI’s Governor Reentry Initiative

Collaborative Partners
- Department of Administration
- Department of Children, Youth & Families
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Education
- Governor’s Office
- Department of Health
- Higher Education
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Labor & Training
- Mental Health, Retardation & Hospitals
- Parole Board
- Police Chief’s Association
- Public Defender’s Office
- Public Transit Authority
- Rhode Island Housing
- State Police
- U.S. Attorney General

Tier One
Governor’s Office & Cabinet
Make possible policy changes that will support effective reentry efforts

Tier Two
Policy Level Representatives
Define change strategies and oversee their implementation

Tier Three
“Ground Level” Representatives
Embraces operationalization of effective reentry strategies.
Organizing & Insuring Service Delivery: Unified Systems’ Response Cont’d…

- Linking Children & Families Impacted by Incarceration to the Systems Serving Them

  **Transition from Prison to Community Data System (TPDCS)** - creating shared data collection mechanism to link children of incarcerated parents with necessary service systems

  - Governor’s Reentry Initiative’s *Collaborative Partners* are contributing to the development & use of this new tool

  - *TPDCS* is used in conjunction with the L.S.I.-R - administered post sentencing
    - All women sentenced to 6 months or more are entered into the TPDCS
    - All men sentenced to 1 year or more are entered into the TPDCS

  - *TPDCS* is currently in use with a newly formed *Data Sharing Sub-Committee* working on the creation of a multi-agency data link across systems
    - Provide service coordination & access for incarcerated individuals
    - Provide support to the children & families of incarcerated individuals
Linking Children, Families Impacted By Incarceration & the Systems Serving Them

- Child & Caregiver Data Collection

```
Last Name: S
First Name: SF
Other Parent Name: 
Sex: FEMALE
Relationship Origin: Adopted Child
DOB: 

Address: 
City: 
State: 
Zip: 

*C Custody Contact: 
Phone: 
*C Custody Status: 
```
Future Goals

*Incarceration effects the whole family but until recently Corrections did not include the family...this is changing to benefit not only the family but also the incarcerated person*

~Joyce Dixson-Haskett~

- Establish a multi-agency data identifier
  - Resource for identifying the location of incarcerated individual
  - Resource for beginning to reach out to the children & families of incarcerated individuals

- Expand Correction’s efforts at rehabilitation to include the incarcerate person as well as the family

- Equip all service systems with the tools to understand & respond to individuals & families impacted by incarceration
Thank you!

Tonya Glantz, MSW
Clinical Training Specialist
RI Child Welfare Institute
Rhode Island College – School of Social Work #9
600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.
Providence, RI 02908
(401)456-4623
tglantz@ric.edu  www.cwi.org

Ken Findlay, M.P.A.
Professional Services Coordinator
Institutional Programs
RI Department of Corrections - Dix Bldg
P.O. Box 8312
Cranston, RI 02920
(401)462-0185
Ken.findlay@doc.ri.gov  www.doc.ri.gov/index.php