
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

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

Reforming Systems & Changing Attitudes: Child Welfare's Response

■ 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
- ***Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare: A Life Map & Cross-System Collaboration Approach***
 - 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>

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:	<input type="text" value="S"/>	First Name:	<input type="text" value="SF"/>
Other Parent Name:	<input type="text"/>	Sex:	<input type="text" value="FEMALE"/>
Relationship Origin:	<input type="text" value="Adopted Child"/>	DOB:	<input type="text"/>
Address: <input type="text"/>			
City:	<input type="text"/>	State:	<input type="text"/>
		Zip:	<input type="text"/>
* Custody Contact:	<input type="text"/>		
Phone:	<input type="text"/>		
* Custody Status:	<input type="text"/>		

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 incarcerated 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