

Working with Incarcerated Parents

Background Notes

Some of the parents with whom DHS works are incarcerated in jails or prisons. It is important to recognize that DHS is required to engage parents in planning for their children and provide services to parents regardless of their incarceration, unless their rights have been terminated. It is also important to have an understanding of how children of incarcerated parents are affected socially and emotionally.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Find out the names of the local penal institutions in your area. Who do you contact in each institution to set up a visit with a parent?
- Is there a liaison in your office for the local penal institutions?
- How are parent/child visits handled at the local institutions?
- What services do the local penal institutions offer to individuals?
- What services can you provide to parents who are incarcerated? Talk with your Supervisor about how to engage incarcerated parents in services. How can they demonstrate change? What is your legal mandate in working with them?
- How do you work with parents who are in penal institutions in other states or outside your local area?

Discoveries:

- *Think of ways you can help children talk about and deal with their emotions.*
- *How can you help children maintain attachments to their parents who are incarcerated?*
- *What are your values, concerns, beliefs about children and incarcerated parents?*