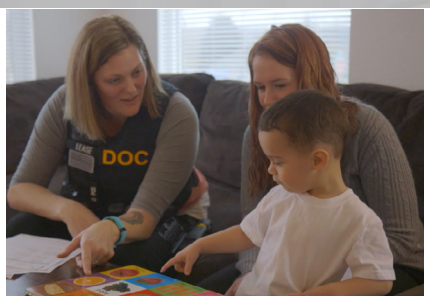
An Unlikely Partnership

ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



Based on the
Building Community, Building Hope film
An Unlikely Partnership

Children's Bureau

CANTASD is a service of the Children's Bureau

CANTASD

An Unlikely Partnership
ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

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Children's Bureau

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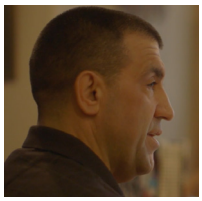

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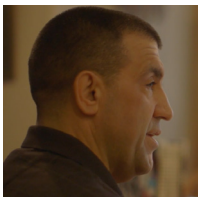
INTRODUCTION

An Unlikely Partnership is a film about the impact of incarceration on children and families, and an innovative partnership between Department of Corrections and the Department of Early Learning in Washington State. It is a film about how investment in strong, nurturing parent-child relationships can be a powerful motivator to reduce recidivism and keep parents from re-offending. Intriguingly, it is also a story about how the most unlikely of partners can come together around a shared agenda for the safety and well-being of children, and create remarkable results.



The film follows the partnership of the Washington State Department of Corrections and different community organizations in providing an alternative path for the families impacted by incarceration.

INDEX OF AVAILABLE TOOLS

We've created a full complement of tools to help you use this film in your work. All these tools and more are available at http://www.cantasd.org/bcbh/

Building Community, Building Hope User's Guide—A comprehensive guide to incorporating film into your work and enhancing your ability to engage others in your mission

An Unlikely Partnership Engagement-Toolkit—This document offers:

- Context to frame the content of this particular film
- Ideas for building successful partnerships
- Discussion Guides to use with different stakeholders
- Agency checklists

Resources and Factsheets—More information about the impact of incarceration on families

Video—*An Unlikely Partnership* (full film) that you can download and save to a DVD

All of the films and tools have been developed by the Children's Bureau's Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (CB/OCAN) for you to use freely as if they were your own. Post them, share them, screen them, and adapt them. Make them work for your needs.

Approximately 10 million children under the age of 18 have experienced parental incarceration in their lifetimes.

As you watch the film, keep these thoughts in your mind:

- **Who are the "unlikely partners" in your community? How might you be successful in partnering together to help improve the lives of these children?**
- **Do you know how to reach the children of incarcerated parents in your community?**
- **Who are the individuals in your community that you'd most like to share this film with in order to have a conversation about this population and how you might be able to reach them?**
- **What other systems that involve children and families could leverage innovations from the child development field to help families thrive? (For example, Strengthening Families framework, ACES, and others.)**
- **How could your agency help train other systems to work differently with families and children?**

WHY THIS POPULATION MATTERS

The United States has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world.[1] Recent estimates suggest that over 50% of the U.S. prison population is comprised of parents, meaning that about 2.7 million children under the age of 18 in America have a parent behind bars.[2] Approximately 10 million children under the age of 18 have experienced parental incarceration in their lifetimes, and parental incarceration is now considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) compounded by trauma, stigma, and shame.[3]

Over 50% of the U.S. prison population is comprised of parents…about 2.7 million children…have a parent behind bars.

Research has helped us to understand the impact that parental incarceration has on children. A 2011 report by Justice Strategies[4] finds that the most significant impacts include:

- **An undermined sense of stability and safety**
  - Compromised educational experience
  - Threatened stability at home
  - Separation from siblings
- **Threats to economic security**
  - Loss of parental support
  - Increased poverty
  - Caregiver strain and accompanying child strain
  - Risk of getting involved with drugs to earn money
- **A compromised sense of connectedness and worthiness**
  - Susceptibility to peer pressure and risky behavior
  - Social stigma and shame
  - Risk of involvement with the criminal justice system
- **Loss of attachments and ability to trust**
  - Diminished ability to establish stable lives as adults
  - Strained relationships with caregivers
  - Loss of contact with parent
  - Not knowing the truth about a parent's incarceration
- **No sense of having a place in the world**
  - A pervasive sense of apathy
  - Struggling to become adults before their time
  - Anxiety about aging grandparents
  - Challenges related to having to start over
  - Yearning for mother and father figures

1 http://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2016.html

2 http://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf

3 https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/files/nrccfi-fact-sheet-2014.pdf

4 Justice Strategies: Children on the Outside: Voicing the Pain and Human Costs of Parental Incarceration

Research also shows that release from prison and reconnecting with families poses its own set of challenges. Lost years of parenting experience, along with dependence on family members, potential resentments, and change in household dynamics, can make renewing family relationships more difficult than expected.

Supporting this population of children and families can help to reduce the impact of traumatic experience. Community solutions that rally around children and families, schools that are aware and compassionate, and tangible supports in times of need, including at arrest, at sentencing, and at release/re-entry, all have a critical role to play.

We encourage you to think about how you can reach families and children at the time of incarceration, invest in strategies to keep parental bonds strong during incarceration, and plan to ease the difficulties of family reunification after incarceration. We hope that the tools and discussion guides on the following pages will help inspire you to get started on this work.

THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS—WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

As much as the film *An Unlikely Partnership* is specifically about reaching the population of children of incarcerated parents, it is also about the groundbreaking shifts that can occur when unlikely partners come together, finding a point of intersection—a common interest or challenge—where they can bolster each other's access and knowledge to enhance the services they provide to children and families in their community.

Every film in the *Building Community, Building Hope* series has partnership as its core theme. Partnerships that focus on families have proven to be an effective way to enhance service to children and families. While the idea of working across silos is not new, it remains a challenge for many. How can organizations and people build strong, authentic partnerships that work for everyone involved?

EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Use these questions and tips to begin exploring opportunities for partnerships in your community:

1. **What other public or private agencies in your community serve at-risk children you would not otherwise be able to reach? What knowledge and resources are available and accessible to them?**

From the film: The partnership profiled in *An Unlikely Partnership* adds value because the Department of Corrections did not have the knowledge about children that they needed to design the parenting component of their alternative sentencing program. The Department of Early Learning had that knowledge, but without a relationship with the Department of Corrections, they could not reach children with incarcerated parents.

What we learned: When approaching potential partners, ask for their help, and identify ways that you can help them address challenges that they may be facing.

We create opportunities for offenders to become present parents …establishing routines, finding things that will reconnect them in ways that support the child's development.

2. **With which agencies do you have families in common? How can you start a conversation to collaborate more efficiently for children and families?**

From the film: As a result of this partnership, the agencies involved in the Screening Committee improved the mutual transfer of knowledge and services. By sharing cases, each agency was able to understand what the other was doing, enabling them to avoid duplicating services while working within each agency's limitations. This coordination also made it easier for incarcerated parents in the program to navigate systems, increasing their opportunities for success.
What we learned: A simple one-on-one conversation can begin the discussion to determine how to enhance collaboration. Look for areas of overlap or gaps in service that could be addressed by increasing the sharing of knowledge among agencies.

3. **What other agencies have programs or best practices that are working effectively with families impacted by incarceration? What effective practices or programs would you like to share with others?**

From the film: The Protective Factors Framework provided an important common language that grounds the relationship between the Department of Corrections and Department of Early Learning in Washington State. This was new language and concepts for the DOC but provided important scaffolding to help them support a strengths-based approach to families.
What we learned: Partnerships can create a powerful learning community. Each participant can learn new information, resources, and best practices from partners to bring back to their own agencies. By engaging in an ongoing dialogue, partners can develop shared knowledge about what works.

4. **How can you promote a partnership to management?**

From the film: The Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA) and Community Sentencing Alternative (CSA) efforts described in the film are actually part of a cost saving effort by the Department of Corrections. Costs to maintain the program, including staffing and services, are less than the cost of keeping the parent in prison.
What we learned: Partnerships with other agencies can be rewarding for all involved. When proposing a partnership to managers, explain how an investment of time in pursuing collaborative partnerships can result not only in more effective, efficient, and informed delivery of services, but a more supported staff. In addition, partnerships broaden your agency's network of people to call upon when you face an issue or case that crosses jurisdictional boundaries.

5. **Make a list of the systems, agencies, and resources in your community that could be powerful partners. What hasn't been tried yet? Who are the invisible populations you can reach by working together?**

From the film: While the Departments of Corrections and Early Learning have been leading the partnership, many others are at the table, including Economic Services, Behavior Health and Recovery, and Family Services.
What we learned: At their core, partnerships that thrive are relationships. They take time and effort to nurture. Strong relationships require flexibility—a desire to learn along the way, and a willingness to make changes as you grow. Empowering yourself or your team to work differently can create remarkable unexpected results.

FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT AROUND THIS FILM

Download the *Building Community, Building Hope* Film Series User's Guide, which is full of ideas on how to use the film in your practice to engage others and start meaningful conversations. Find the guide at www.cantasd.org/bcbh-unlikely-partnership.html.

On the following pages, you'll find **a series of discussion guides** specific to the *An Unlikely Partnership* film, which are intended to prompt conversations with different sets of stakeholders. Feel free to use these questions as they are written, or as inspiration for a conversation that is tailored to the unique interests of your group.

We believe that engagement begins

from within, so the very first set of questions are intended for **you**, to take time for some personal reflection. From there, you'll find guides for facilitating conversations with ever increasing circles of allies who can join you in your efforts.

At the end of the discussion guides, you'll find a few **agency checklists** to get you thinking about areas of improvement in your program. Feel free to add items and otherwise adapt them as needed.

We recognize that you are very busy in your daily work, and we want you to experience success, so we encourage you to keep moving the ball forward in small increments. Be consistent about sharing notes and following each round of conversations with concrete next steps. Wherever possible, encourage team members to "own" pieces of the work so that you are all invested in a successful outcome.

To get the ball rolling, here are four things you can do after watching the film:

1. **Take a moment and think through the personal reflection questions in the *Discussion Guide*.**
2. **Share this film with at least three other people who you think might be interested in this work. Invite them to discuss it with you.**
3. **Organize a team meeting of your peers to share this work and identify gaps in your agency's current ability to serve the children of incarcerated parents.**
4. **Think of at least one unlikely partner who works extensively with parents or children you would like to reach. Organize an inter-agency screening to understand each other's challenges and discuss how you can work together to meet the needs of families.**

DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR USE AFTER SCREENING THE FILM

GUIDE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

How does knowing about the ripple effect of incarceration on children and families affect your feelings and sense of responsibility towards this population?

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How well are you doing at reaching out to children of incarcerated parents?

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In what ways can you connect with this population in your community?

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What role could you play in reaching these children?

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Now that you watched the film, what 3–5 people would you like to share the film with?

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What biases, if any, do you hold about parents who are incarcerated? Do you feel differently about incarcerated mothers versus incarcerated fathers? In what ways might these biases affect how you approach the importance of this work?

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Who are the Unlikely Partners in your community that can help you access new populations of children under stress?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR USE WITH YOUR TEAM

What resonated with you most about the film *An Unlikely Partnership*?

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Why do good partnerships work? What are the critical elements?

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How do we view this population within our agency?

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Do we have concerns about working with a population of parents who have been incarcerated or are returning to the community? What are some of our concerns? ***Discuss as a group.***

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What at-risk behaviors or negative feelings have we seen children affected by incarceration manifest?
(For example, feeling shame, or experiencing bullying at school, or wondering, "Am I going to be like my dad/mom and end up in prison?")

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What role could we play in reaching out to these children?

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What can we do to support kinship care while parents are incarcerated?

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Do we currently have cross-agency partnerships into which we could introduce a focus on the children of incarcerated parents?

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What other populations of children should we reach where other systems/networks might help?

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Identify 5-8 partners outside of your current agency with whom you have not traditionally worked and who may be interested in children of incarcerated parents. Invite them to watch the film and use the discussion guide to start a conversation.

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In general, do we feel supported to create partnerships outside the agency in order to do our best work? If not, what needs to change?

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What are the barriers to "thinking outside the box" in our agency?

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Brainstorm a list of concrete changes that would help to facilitate/nurture important partnerships.

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What steps will we take to follow up on this discussion?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR USE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY/PARENT COMMUNITY

What part(s) of the film *An Unlikely Partnership* made the biggest impression on you? Did anything surprise you?

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_____

Do you feel that having parents serve their sentences in the home, as shown in the film, is a fair balance between ensuring justice and reducing the negative impact of parental incarceration on children and families?

_____

_____

As a community, how do we prepare for people returning home after incarceration or through alternative sentencing? What are our concerns?

_____

_____

As a community, what are our responsibilities toward parents returning home from incarceration?

_____

_____

What supports do we already have in our community that might be resources for this population? (For example, non-profit and faith-based communities, parent groups.)

_____

_____

How do we feel about the children of incarcerated parents? Do we feel differently from how we feel about their parents?

_____

_____

What systems do we have at the community level that could focus on this population of children?

_____

_____

How might we engage our schools to pay special attention to children who may have incarcerated parents? How can we support schools in doing this work?

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How can we utilize park or recreation programs in the community to provide supports for these children and families?

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_____

How can we reach and rally support for families who are taking care of kin while parents are incarcerated? What kinds of supports might be useful to them?

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_____

How can we help families prepare for and navigate the many transitions that occur when an incarcerated parent re-enters the community?

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For parents in the community, what fears, concerns, and biases might you have about your children playing with children who have incarcerated parents?

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_____

How do systemic injustices against people of color, who are incarcerated at a disproportionate rate, influence perceptions, biases, and fears that may negatively impact children in our community?[5]

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Is there an existing community café model in our community? If so, is this film something we'd like to share and discuss in that venue? If there is no community café model, would we be interested in starting one?[6]

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When we think about the Protective Factors[7], how can we be responsible for making sure these are abundant in our community? How can we be part of the process?

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5 You may wish to refer to this chart that illustrates the difference in incarceration rates: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/18/chart-of-the-week-the-black-white-gap-in-incarceration-rates/

6 More information about community cafés can be found at https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/communities/building/

7 More information about Protective Factors can be found at https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR USE WITH POTENTIAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND CROSS-SYSTEMS PARTNERS

Do we agree that working with children of incarcerated parents is important?

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_____

_____

How do you feel about balancing the need for justice and accountability with the impacts of parental incarceration on children through alternative sentencing methods like the program shown in the film, where parents serve their sentence at home?

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How does having rich, collaborative relationships enhance your ability to do your job or meet mandates?

_____

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What are the critical elements that make good partnerships work?

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Brainstorm ways that systems could collaborate and exchange information to increase efficiency and compassion for this population.

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- **Are there ideas that meet the needs/goals of both systems?**

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- **What positive supports could collaborations create for children of incarcerated parents?**

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  _____

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- **What positive supports could collaborations create for families of incarcerated parents who may be taking care of the children while their parent is gone?**

_____

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- **What supports could be created for parents who are returning home or re-entering their community, with a focus on the parent-child relationship?**

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Develop a local resource list that could provide key community-based supports for returning parents and their children. What other supportive groups are in your community?

Some examples to get you thinking: faith-based communities, home visiting programs, law enforcement, educational institutions, behavioral health treatment facilities (mental health and substance abuse treatment), job placement and training agencies; parent and sobriety support groups; children support groups; children programs (e.g., Boy Scouts/ Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs).

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Arrange a meeting or series of meetings to share the film and the research around children of incarcerated parents. Start a conversation about whether these local resources want to join you in focusing on this community.

What are some other needs of children and families in your community? What other "unlikely partnerships" could be created to help meet these needs?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR USE WITH FUNDERS

What part of the film *An Unlikely Partnership* made the biggest impression on you? Did anything surprise you?

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How does knowing about the ripple effect of incarceration on children and families affect your feelings and sense of responsibility towards this population?

_____

_____

What are your specific funding interests in this arena?

_____

_____

How can you support us in exploring work that would benefit this population of children in our community?

_____

_____

What support can be provided to obtain data in our state on the issue of children of incarcerated parents? What data do you feel is missing that could inform more of this type of work?

_____

_____

What funding opportunities are available that will promote or encourage cross-system partnerships?

_____

_____

What funding opportunities may be available to research alternative sentencing strategies?

_____

_____

How can we develop better insights into cost savings that could result from keeping adults and children out of public systems in the future?

_____

_____

From your perspective, what are the challenges to funding this type of work? How might they be addressed?

_____

_____

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR USE WITH POLICYMAKERS

What part of the film *An Unlikely Partnership* made the biggest impression on you? Did anything surprise you?

_____

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How does knowing about the ripple effect of incarceration on children and families affect your feelings and sense of responsibility towards this population?

_____

_____

How do you feel about balancing the need for justice and accountability with the impact of parental incarceration on children by using methods like alternative sentencing?

_____

_____

How can you support us in getting the important data to measure how we are doing around this issue of children of incarcerated parents? What policies can help us locate these children in our local communities?

_____

_____

How can you support research into alternative sentencing strategies to create an evidence base that demonstrates their effectiveness?

_____

_____

How can we develop clearer insights into costs savings that coincide with keeping adults and children out of the systems (i.e., child welfare, corrections) in the future?

_____

_____

Could you help convene a group of prevention partners, community stakeholders, corrections and probation partners, and law enforcement partners to discuss our state's progress in meeting the needs of this population?

_____

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What additional information do you think you need to take action on this issue?

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_____

HOW TO INITIATE A CONVERSATION WITH A DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

One of the questions that people who work in the field of prevention often ask after seeing *An Unlikely Partnership* is, "How can I start a conversation with the Department of Corrections?" We decided to gather some tips from our friends at the State of Washington Department of Corrections. The most important lesson of the film is that amazing things can come from building these relationships; any steps you take to start a relationship will be fruitful. Remember that the best way to work together with a new partner is to offer them some help in solving their own problems, rather than just asking them to help you solve yours. Think about what resources or ideas you may have to offer.

If you have been incarcerated and see yourself as an offender, it is powerful to be with your family and see yourself as a parent first and foremost.

- **Think about people you know who may have interacted with the Department of Corrections and might be able to make an introduction.**
- **Does the Department of Corrections have a family services unit? If so, make a connection to share the film and ask that they join a discussion on how to collaborate.**
- **Food is always appreciated! If you can, bring snacks to the meeting.**
- **Offer resources such as parent education and parent-child interaction activities to help enhance parent-child relationships. Are there ways in which you can offer your support to start a dialogue?**
- **If there is a women's correctional facility in your area, reach out to its leaders to start a program.**

As a traditional community corrections officer, my interactions with families would be limited. You are not there to build support with the family first, you are there to work with the offender first. In this program, we reverse that. We work with the family, and in their house, first—because if that's not going well, they are not going to succeed

- Start with a simple, actionable project to help build the relationship. For example, if you have a work plan where children visit their parents, ask, "Can you help me with this?" and use that as a foothold to nurture a deeper relationship and conversation.
- Ask whether the Department of Corrections has transportation funds to help bring children to visit their parents. Use this to start a conversation.
- Identify a non-profit or elected official who could convene a group of prevention partners, community stakeholders, corrections and probation partners, and law enforcement partners to have a conversation about how your state or jurisdiction is meeting the needs of this population. Learn from each other about where work crosses over.

CHECKLIST FOR THOSE WORKING IN PREVENTION

Are we meeting the needs of the children of incarcerated parents in our community? Here is a checklist to think about how your agency organization is doing around the issue of children of incarcerated parents. What might you add?

Do you have good literature and factsheets about:

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure **Impacts on children when parents are incarcerated**

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure **How families can visit offenders inside**

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure ***Bill of rights for children of incarcerated parents***
http://media.wix.com/ugd/73a5ec_83e372f34c154ffb99d9725a95ec1918.pdf

Is the research on impacts of parental incarceration on children widely understood and shared within your organization? Is the research included in your staff training opportunities?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Does your agency have cultural competency training to help identify and address bias against parents who may have been incarcerated?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you raise this issue/population in your work, communications, and social media?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Are you in contact with some of the national non-profitss that specialize in this work?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you know how many of the children with whom you work have an incarcerated parent?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you facilitate school conferencing opportunities for incarcerated parents to remain involved with teachers?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you have support programs for kinship care families who are caring for children when their parents are incarcerated?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

_____

Do you facilitate the dependency court order visitation when the parent is incarcerated?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

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_____

Do you actively develop and nurture a network of relationships with community partners who can provide specific supports for families reuniting after incarceration?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

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_____

Do you have relationships with family services units within your correctional institutions?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

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_____

CHECKLIST FOR DEPARTMENTS OF CORRECTIONS AND PROBATION

If you work in the field of corrections or probation, these simple questions may help you think about how your agency is meeting the needs of children of incarcerated parents and what you can do to help the parent-child relationship remain strong during incarceration.

At the risk assessment or intake stage, do you ask for current information about whether offenders have children?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you ask how far the children live from the facility and whether they will need transportation to the facility to visit their parents?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Are you able to connect offenders to available programs and services for parents within the institution?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Are there any funds available to help with family visitation?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you have a family services professional who works with parent offenders and tries to help them maintain contacts with the family and connect with resources? If not, how else might these supports be provided?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Have you created a resource in print or online that can help answer questions for incarcerated parents and their families? ***Washington State has developed a document that you can use as a guide or a template. For more information go to: https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/publications/documents/22-1288.pdf***

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

If offenders incur minor infractions, are you taking away child visitation time as a punishment? Is this in the best interests of the child?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

Do you offer school conferencing opportunities to help parents remain involved with a child's education?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do you offer online video conferencing to help offenders read to their kids or have homework time with them?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

Do your rules allow for inmates to have physical contact with their kids when visiting? Can they sit on their laps or get hugs? If not, is this something you could institute?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

_____

_____

_____

Do you host family-friendly events?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

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_____

Does your staff receive training in trauma-informed care?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

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_____

Do you work with your staff to help them shift to focusing on a family's strengths rather than on their problems?

❍ Yes ❍ No ❍ Not sure

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Have your team brainstorm on this question: "What practices do we need to put in place to support the family bond?"

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USING THE FILM IN YOUR OWN COMMUNICATIONS

We encourage you to use this film in your own communications to help raise awareness of the impact of the work you do and to help build a growing dialogue about innovative ways to work on behalf of children and families.

When considering effective communications, remember that everyone is overwhelmed by messages. To increase the chances that people will read your message, the subject line or the content of your social media post has to resonate with your intended audience.

As a rule of thumb, it's a good idea to keep your subject lines/headlines short, concise, and intriguing. Is there a question you can pose that will resonate with your audience? Can you address a "*pain point*" they may be experiencing day to day that your message will help them address?

Here are some ideas for using the film on your communications channels, with suggested messages you could use or adapt, based on your audience.

SHARE IN AN EMAIL

If your agency has decided to work with children of incarcerated parents, is funding new programs on the topic, or has new resources to share, consider using An Unlikely Partnership in an email as a new point of entry into reading your message.

Suggested subject lines:

- Thinking outside the box: reducing prisoner recidivism by focusing on parent-child relationships
- An Unlikely Partnership: Corrections, Early Learning working together to strengthen families
- How the WA State Dept of Corrections is using Protective Factors to reduce recidivism
- Radically changing the odds of prison re-entry by focusing on the parent-child relationship
- The parent-child relationship: the missing ingredient for successful re-entry after incarceration?
- Children of incarcerated parents: 'invisible' children and who can help us find them
- How can we build a village of unlikely partners to protect our children?
- How a little cross-training went a long way to ease prisoner re-entry

BLOG/HOST A WEBINAR

Does your website have a blog, newsletter, or other system for sharing news? Do you host regular webinars to share learning with your community? Websites with content that is frequently updated rank higher in online search results and tend to draw more traffic than websites that never change. With the number of free or low-cost platforms available, setting up a blog or hosting a webinar is easier now than ever before. The more you post or talk about your work, the more you define yourself as a credible expert for others seeking knowledge.

Using *An Unlikely Partnership* in an original blog post or a focused webinar is an effective way to direct people to your website to read more. Consider posting or embedding the video with an original piece that ties it back to

your work. Topics might include:

- Innovative applications of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework
- New information about communities dealing with re-entry issues
- A primer on successful partnerships for your agency
- New research about the effects of adverse childhood experiences or trauma on children

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: We suggest you follow the **CANTASD page** on Facebook, where all of the films in the *Building Community, Building Hope* series are posted. Our videos will auto-play on scrolling, increasing the chances that people will watch them. The videos are also captioned so people can watch them without speakers if needed. Feel free to share our messages, or simply share the video and add your own message to the post. Follow CANTASD at *https://www.facebook.com/cantasd/*

You may find the 30-second video clips especially effective to post on your social media because they are short enough for people to watch quickly and a powerful way to encourage them to visit your page and watch the whole film. If feasible, think about purchasing a small, targeted Facebook ad or sponsored post using a 30-second video to capture attention and draw viewers to your page or site to learn about your work. Facebook's ad tools can help pinpoint your audience.

We are saving money phenomenally around social costs, foster care, incarceration costs—but, honestly, I think the biggest benefit is maintaining that parental bond.

Twitter: As above, consider posting a 30-second teaser on Twitter, with a URL (web link) directing your readers back to your blog or website. Because of Twitter's character limits, your tweets (Twitter posts) need to be concise and engaging. Tweets can also be light-hearted and fun.

Here are some suggested tweets (leaving space to add your URL):

- 2.7 million US kids have a parent behind bars. How can we make sure they don't slip through the cracks?
- 10 million U.S. children have had a parent incarcerated in their lifetime. How can we build protective factors for them?
- What happens when we see prisoners as parents first? Recidivism drops and families grow stronger.
- Every community is dealing with prisoner re-entry. Can something as simple as seeing prisoners as parents be a key to success?
- Parental incarceration is an adverse childhood experience with long-ranging impacts on children. How can we intervene?
- A winning recipe to radically reduce prisoner recidivism? Think children and families and add an unlikely partner to the mix!
- How did WA State Dept. of Early Learning @DEL_wa help reduce recidivism? Through an Unlikely Partnership. #moreofthis
- What did Washington State Dept. of Corrections @WACorrections learn about the link between recidivism and parenting? A lot.
- With new training, probation officers in WA shifted their role with powerful results for children. @WACorrections
- A groundbreaking idea to help re-entry go smoothly from a set of unlikely partners in WA. @WACorrections @DEL_wa #moreofthis

FINAL THOUGHTS

THINK EVERGREEN

It is important to remember that you don't have just one chance to use a film. The films in this series have been designed to be "evergreen," so the content remains relevant and stays fresh for audiences over the long term. Tackling the issues addressed in these films and sharing innovations with new audiences is a long-term project. Sharing this film is an especially effective way to get new audiences engaged and up to speed quickly to take part in critical conversations.

As you encounter new prospective partners, develop new supporters, or unearth new opportunities within your communities, the films will remain a vital tool for creating a common understanding around the issues they address. You can post or email the content whenever a current event related to the issue occurs or when your organization has new initiatives or information to share. The key to using the film multiple times is to providing different viewpoints or topics that are associated with the film.

Over time, we hope you'll come to rely on the films in the *Building Community, Building Hope* series as one more effective tool in your arsenal whenever you need to quickly open a door for a conversation around a specific prevention topic, population, or family service innovation.

SPREAD THE WORD

The films' powerful message is that there is hope for families under stress. The films were designed to foster a learning community around solutions. Once you begin to use the films to engage others in the work of prevention, you can empower them to use the films as well. This series is for everyone who wants to improve the well-being of children by strengthening families. Let them know that they, too, can use the films to reach out to others, access the discussion tools on the website to facilitate conversations, and explore links to learn more about the issue.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We would love to hear your stories of how the films and tools worked for you, tips you may want to share with others using the films, or feedback you may have for how these tools were adapted to meet your needs. Send us a message at **hello@cantasd.org** to share your thoughts. We look forward to hearing from you!

When offenders are successful parents, they stay out of prison. When parents are engaged with their kids, we see healthy young adults.