



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

PROGRAM STATEMENT

OPI: RSD/WASPB

NUMBER: 5355.04

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Parenting, Children, and Families

/s/

Approved: M.D. Carvajal

Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To ensure the Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) provides programs, services, and policies that meet the needs of incarcerated parents and those who serve as caregivers to inmate families in the community. This policy also sets standards for institution events involving children and for services related to family engagement.

Definitions:

- *Child* – includes any person, who identifies as an inmate’s offspring or is verified as being a biological, adoptive, foster, or stepchild of an inmate. In limited circumstances, and only based on sufficient evidence, the Warden may acknowledge under this definition persons other than biological, adoptive, foster, or stepchildren.
- *Parent* –biological, adoptive, foster, step-parent, caregiver, or legal guardian. In limited circumstances, and only based on sufficient evidence, the Warden may acknowledge under this definition persons other than a biological parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, step-parent, caregiver, or legal guardian.

a. Summary of Changes

Policy Rescinded

P5355.03 Parenting Program Standards (1/20/1995)

This policy has been extensively updated and expanded to reference child and family services.

b. Program Objectives. Expected results of this program are:

- Sufficient resources/staffing are allocated to deliver appropriate programs and services to incarcerated parents.
- Inmates have knowledge of strategies to remain involved with their children while incarcerated.
- Staff will receive appropriate relevant training on the importance of maintaining family ties and the needs of children of incarcerated parents.
- The basic parenting program is standardized, allowing for it to operate consistently across institutions and reach the maximum number of inmates.
- Inmates with enhanced needs for family support (e.g., inmates with mental illness or with disabilities) have access to specialized programs that facilitate healthy connections, especially as they transition to the community.

c. **Institution Supplement.** None required. Should local facilities make any changes outside changes required in national policy or establish any additional local procedures to implement national policy, the local Union may invoke to negotiate procedures or appropriate arrangements.

Section 1. POLICIES AND APPLICABILITY

1. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Bureau institutions. Guidance that does not apply or differs for pretrial, holdover, or detainee inmates or units that have special security concerns is noted. Activities and services outlined in this policy refer to those who are under 18 years of age, unless otherwise noted.

2. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The following Bureau components are responsible for ensuring consistent establishment of the programs, services, and resource allocations necessary for parenting and family services.

a. Central Office

(1) The **Women and Special Populations Branch (WASPB)** oversees the agency's national parenting program and services related to children and families. The Branch is responsible for the following functions:

- Ensuring the Bureau offers appropriate services to inmates who are parents or require assistance with maintaining parent-child connections. This includes overseeing, reviewing, or approving any new agency proposals for parent or family programs or events.
- Preparing budgetary requests to deliver national and pilot programs or services affecting parents, children, and families and providing national oversight of any pilot or initiative on these populations/topics.
- Providing guidance and direction to Regional staff and institution leadership related to parent, children, or family programs and services.
- Developing and implementing staff training related to family engagement.
- Monitoring institutional events focused on families and developing reports on these programs.
- Issuing an annual report on parent and family services within the agency.
- Advising agency leadership on the needs of incarcerated parents and families.
- Engaging with stakeholders and serving as the primary point of contact on issues related to parenting and children of incarcerated parents.
- Developing resources for staff on parenting, children and families, and making them available on the WASPB intranet page.

(2) The **Psychology Services Branch, Chaplaincy Services Branch, and Health Services Division** provide feedback to the WASPB, at least annually, on service needs within their areas of responsibility.

b. Regions

- Ensure resources and funding are allocated to institutions for the purposes of parenting and family engagement.

c. Institutions

- Offer established programs and services for parents, children, and families. Seek review from the WASPB prior to implementing new programs on this topic.
- Document participation in programs by updating SENTRY and other databases as appropriate.
- Make and document efforts to secure institution volunteers to assist with family engagement events in accordance with guidelines provided by the WASPB.
- Seek guidance from the WASPB prior to implementing children and family events.
- Discuss family issues with inmates and document this discussion during team meetings.

3. STAFF TRAINING

Healthy family ties benefit both inmates and their children. Staff are provided information on this topic through the “Children of Incarcerated Parents” course. All institution staff are required to complete this course within one year of the issuance of this policy, or one year of hire, whichever is later. Staff will be provided adequate time to complete the training during duty hours. Staff will be provided proper relief to complete the training.

4. PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The Bureau relies on a broad definition of parents and families as outlined in the Program Statement **Visiting Regulations**. This may include immediate family members such as mother, father, step-parents, foster parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, and children; other relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, in-laws, and cousins; and friends and associates of the inmate if a relationship existed prior to incarceration. All information in this policy is based on this definition unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Section 2. COMMUNICATION

Positive family relationships may reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, inmates are provided opportunities to establish, maintain, and enhance prosocial ties with their families through visitation, letters, email, and telephone. Inmates may be precluded from participating in programs due to disciplinary infractions as outlined in the Program Statements **Visiting Regulations** and **Inmate Discipline Program**.

When an inmate is disciplined for an infraction, staff will ensure at least one method of contacting minor children remains available. When all methods of contact with minor children are removed for visiting related infractions, documentation is provided by the staff removing it, to the Unit Team for notation in progress notes. When inmates receive sanctions impacting contact with minor children, they can appeal to the CEO or Region as outlined in the Program Statement **Administrative Remedy Program** on a case-by-case basis to further promote family relationships.

As resources and local policies allow, mementos such as family photographs and arts and crafts, made during visitation with materials provided by the institution, may be shared among the inmate and family members. In particular, it is strongly encouraged that children be allowed to keep these items when there is no discernible threat to security. Items allowed to be taken from the Visiting Room are considered personal property of the visitor and may be searched according to the Program Statement **Searching, Detaining, or Arresting Visitors to Bureau Grounds and Facilities**.

Institution Admission and Orientation Handbooks include information about the importance of family connections and ongoing communication during incarceration. Information related to local opportunities for positive parent-child engagement, such as Children's Day and other family events, should also be referenced.

Section 3. PARENTING AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

1. NATIONAL PARENTING PROGRAM

All institutions are required to offer programming from the FSA Approved Programs Guide that meets the family/parenting need. Parenting programs are delivered via a two-phase model. The National Parenting Program is the first phase of this model; it consists of a standardized four-session course. This phase must be offered quarterly to inmates, with the exception of pretrial inmates, holdover inmates, and detainees. For pretrial inmates, this phase must be offered at least once every six months; and for holdover and detainee inmates, this phase may be offered, although it is not required.

Any inmate who is identified as having the family/parenting need is considered for class enrollment. Program wait lists, enrollments, and completions are tracked locally utilizing standardized SENTRY codes.

Wardens assign the delivery of the program to Special Populations Coordinators. If the facility does not have a Special Populations Coordinator, the Warden assigns the delivery of this program to Reentry Affairs Coordinators or Social Workers. In the event the Special Populations Coordinator, Reentry Affairs Coordinator, and/or Social Workers positions are vacant, Correctional Counselors may facilitate this program until the position is filled. During these circumstances, Correctional Counselors' caseloads and institution staffing will be taken into consideration when assigning this duty. The standardized material is delivered by this person, who also completes tracking and enrollment functions.

2. SPECIALTY PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The second phase of parenting programming includes a series of specialized programs for targeted segments of the parenting population, such as programs for parents of adolescent children or those for inmates raising their grandchild. All institutions must offer phase two programs from the FSA Approved Programs Guide to meet the individual needs of the local population.

A list of approved programs is available on the WASPB intranet page. New programs are added as they become available.

Wardens assign the delivery of the program to Special Populations Coordinators. If the facility does not have a Special Populations Coordinator, the Warden assigns the delivery of this program to Reentry Affairs Coordinators or Social Workers. In the event the Special Populations Coordinator, Reentry Affairs Coordinator, and/or Social Workers positions are vacant, Correctional Counselors may facilitate this program until the position is filled. During these circumstances, Correctional Counselors' caseloads and institution staffing will be taken

into consideration when assigning this duty. The Warden may elect to have specialty programs delivered by a community volunteer, but Bureau staff must provide oversight, tracking, and enrollment functions. The facilitator must have experience with conducting groups. This experience can include guiding support, self-help, or treatment groups in the community or professional setting. Volunteers are not permitted to alter the programs in any way or share the content outside of the agency.

Program wait lists, enrollments, and completions are monitored locally using standardized SENTRY codes. Inmates who have completed the National Parenting Program are given priority for enrollment in a phase two parenting program.

If an institution identifies a need for a parenting program that does not currently exist, the Associate Warden of Programs contacts the WASPB for consultation. Local parenting programs are not offered without prior consultation. Special parenting or family events are addressed via different standards presented in the next section of this policy.

3. CHILDREN'S DAY AND OTHER FAMILY EVENTS

Annually, every institution must offer at least one event focused on children and family engagement. Wardens assign the coordination of the event to Special Populations Coordinators. If the facility does not have a Special Populations Coordinator, the Warden assigns the coordination of this event to Reentry Affairs Coordinators or Social Workers. In the event the Special Populations Coordinator, Reentry Affairs Coordinator, and/or Social Workers positions are vacant, Correctional Counselors may coordinate this event until the position is filled. During these circumstances, Correctional Counselors' caseloads and institution staffing will be taken into consideration when assigning this duty. The assigned staff member's duties will also include tracking functions. Events are inclusive of all inmates who are parents; however, local facilities may set specific guidelines and participation criteria to meet the needs of their population and/or to enhance the safety of inmates, visitors, and staff. Staff will consider institutional conduct, such as positive program participation and lack of or reduced number of incident reports, not just an inmate's criminal history (as long as the safety of others is not compromised), when allowing inmates to participate in such programs. Wardens may use these events to incentivize inmates to participate in and complete other parenting-related courses. The goal of these events is to promote healthy family relationships that support institutional adjustment, successful reentry, and positive child development. While fun activities may take place, the institution is not to be represented as anything other than a correctional setting. Inmate and visitor dress codes, as well as safety and security regulations must be adhered to at all times.

For events that include activities other than arts and crafts, reading books, and educational activities/games, a written justification must be available for resources used that explains costs, including staff time. This justification must be consistent with relevant appropriation and ethics authorities, and will be submitted to the WASPB for review at least one month prior to the

scheduled event. Should there be costs associated with these events, the amount will be minimal and will not include the purchase of food items. The Warden will determine an appropriate cost center to cover expenses.

Some measure of event impact must also be included in the written justification. This will include feedback from inmates, families, or staff.

Unstructured time is important for family bonding; however, children's events must also include some type of structured activity that encourages positive interaction between parent and child(ren). Examples include creating joint art projects, reading books, or completing some sort of lesson or workshop. All materials for these events will be provided by the institution. Items allowed to be taken from the Visiting Room are considered personal property of the visitor and may be searched according to the Program Statement **Searching, Detaining, or Arresting Visitors to Bureau Grounds and Facilities**.

Documentation must be maintained that shows at least two community agencies were asked to participate in the event.

Ideally, events are able to accommodate all interested and qualified inmates and families. When space limits event capacity, priority for participation is linked to parenting program completion or wait list status.

Transportation to family engagement events is sometimes a challenge for inmate families. Institutions wishing to partner with non-profit organizations for this purpose should contact the WASPB for guidance.

4. PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

The Bureau offers two programs for pregnant women, Mothers and Infants Together (MINT) and the Residential Parenting Program. Information about these programs and associated referral processes is available in the Program Statement **Female Offender Manual**.

Women who participate in one of these programs and return to prison, or who give birth while incarcerated and immediately relinquish custody of the child, may be at risk for post-partum depression. Psychologists meet with any woman who gives birth in Bureau custody to screen for this condition and provide services accordingly.

5. FAMILY SERVICES

Family services are designed to assist inmates in maintaining healthy connections with the community, which can promote prosocial behavior during incarceration and upon reentry.

Family connections are particularly important for individuals with mental illness. Psychologists may provide family psychoeducation to inmates and their families. When this occurs, the inmate is always the identified patient and must sign a Release of Information Consent (BP-A0192) indicating a Bureau staff member is allowed to release information about his/her mental health status to family members. Bureau staff members do not provide mental health treatment to inmate family members.

Inmates in Residential Reentry Centers (RRC) and/or on home confinement may participate in family therapy through Community Treatment Services (CTS). Inmates who are interested may inquire about these services through RRC staff or by contacting the CTS office that oversees treatment in their respective location.

Section 4. ADMINISTRATION

1. TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

If an incarcerated parent has a child in foster care, it is possible that she/he could lose her/his parental rights. Federal child welfare law requires child welfare agencies to initiate Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) if a child is in foster care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months. The child welfare agency can also decide to initiate TPR sooner, if they determine it is in the best interest of the child. Agencies sometimes initiate TPR sooner, if they are unable to get in contact with the child's parents.

Every system and case is different, but demonstration of contact with the child can be very important. As a result, appropriate staff are encouraged to collaborate with state and federal agencies to assist the inmate with locating and maintaining contact with his/her child. If an inmate provides documentation showing TPR proceedings have begun, staff assist the inmate in the coordination of the proceedings (i.e., arrange a call or obtain institution records).

2. FAMILY-FRIENDLY VISITING

Basic procedures for visiting practices are contained in Program Statements **Visiting Regulations** and **Searching, Detaining, or Arresting Visiting to Bureau Grounds and Facilities**. Special considerations may be warranted for family and child visits.

All institutions must have a designated Children's Center to accommodate children from infancy through age 12. Any institution not capable of creating this space due to structural limitations may request a waiver through the Regional Director to the Assistant Director, Reentry Services Division. Children are also allowed to visit in other areas of the Visiting Room outside the Children's Center. Children are to be supervised at all times in accordance with the Program Statement **Visiting Regulations**. At a minimum, Children's Centers should contain the following for children from infancy through age 12: toys (soft and plastic figurines), board

games, books (hardcover and softcover), and building blocks (small and large). All items will be sanitized on a regular basis, at least as often as the Visiting Room is cleaned, and kept in workable, safe condition. First Step Act funds will be used to cover any other expenses associated with replacing items and maintaining the Children's Center.

All institutions must provide some type of child-friendly materials in the lobby or other areas where visitors wait to visit inmates. These should include, at a minimum, a small selection of books or magazines. Although families may choose to wait outside, child visitors should not be required to wait outside during inclement weather, and the institution will post a statement to this effect.

As described in the Program Statement **Female Offender Manual**, inmates who have given birth while incarcerated have the option to pump breast milk for as long as desired. Nursing infants is permitted in the Visiting Room. Facilities do not prohibit access to formula, bottles, diapers, and wipes during visitation. Items may be searched in accordance with the Program Statement **Searching, Detaining, or Arresting Visitors to Bureau Grounds and Facilities**.

A safe, hygienic diapering area should be available in the waiting area and Visiting Room.

3. **VOLUNTEER EXPERTS**

Volunteers are encouraged by the First Step Act and fulfill many purposes; some bring a specific skill set. Child development experts have some sort of credential that identifies their specific specialties. Some examples include a college degree in social work, psychology, pediatrics, or education. Reentry Affairs Coordinators will work with program managers to recruit qualified volunteers, as described in the Program Statement **Volunteer Services**.

Ongoing child development volunteers are useful to lead an approved program, assist in the Children's Center of the Visiting Room, or provide specialized training to staff.

Documentation of annual efforts to contact child development expert volunteers is maintained by the Reentry Affairs Coordinator.

4. **RESOURCES**

All institutions will provide self-help and educational materials during Children's Days and other parenting events as well as through the National Parenting Program. At a minimum, these materials will include information about working with caregivers, effective strategies to stay connected while incarcerated, and safe housing options for children. If available, First Step Act appropriated funds are used for this purpose.

REFERENCES

Program Statements

- P1210.23 Management Control and Program Review Manual (8/21/2002)
- P1221.66 Directives Management Manual (7/21/1998)
- P1330.18 Administrative Remedy Program (1/6/14)
- P5200.07 Female Offender Manual (5/13/2021)
- P5267.09 Visiting Regulations (12/10/2015)
- P5270.09 Inmate Discipline Program (11/18/2020)
- P5300.22 Volunteer Services (11/7/2016)
- P5510.15 Searching, Detaining, or Arresting Visitors to Bureau Grounds and Facilities (7/17/2013)
- P7310.04 Community Corrections Center (CCC) Utilization and Transfer Procedure (12/16/1998)

ACA Standards

- American Correctional Association Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5Th Edition: 5-ACI-6A-10(M), 5-ACI-6A-11, 5-ACI-5E-01, 5-ACI-5E-02, 5-ACI-5E-03, 5-ACI-5E-04, 5-ACI-5E-06, 5-ACI-5E-07, 5-ACI-5E-08, 5-ACI-5E-09, 5-ACI-5E-10, 5-ACI-5F-01, 5-ACI-7B-13, 5-ACI-7B-14, 5-ACI-7B-15.
- American Correctional Association Performance Based Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities, 4th Edition: 4-ALDF-4C-13M, 4-ALDF-5A-01, 4-ALDF-5A-02, 4-ALDF-5A-03, 4-ALDF-5B-13, 4-ALDF-6B-05
- American Correctional Association Standards for Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition: 2-CO-4F-01, 2-CO-4G-01

BOP Forms

- BP-A0192 Release of Information Consent

Records Retention

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on Sallyport.