

IACP

Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents

Executive Briefing



Serving the Leaders of Today, Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow





Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents

Section I: Purpose

Section II: Model Policy

Section III: Implementation





Section I: Purpose





Arresting Parents: Risks to Children

- 50-60% of inmates have children
- 2.7 million children have a parent in prison or jail
- Parental incarceration rates are rising (122% in mothers)
- Nearly 50% of children exposed to family violence witnessed an arrest
- Link of parental arrest to trauma
- Significantly worse life outcomes



Arresting Parents: Risks to Agencies

- Officers and agencies may have a legal obligation to children's safety
- Harmful outcomes for children = officers or agencies held accountable for negligence
- Agency liability for failure to train



Improving Outcomes for Children and Your Agency

- Swift placement
- Responsible adults, known to the child
- Ideally outside of official custody



Challenges for Responding Officers

- Competing demands for attention and efforts
- Time constraints
- Unpredictability
- Lack of training
- Don't understand or believe it's part of the job
- Partners may not be available, appropriate to involve, or aware of law enforcement practices
- Finding appropriate placements for children, in cases of child abuse or neglect or when no caregiver is available



Section II: Model Policy



IACP/BJA Model Policy: Purpose

- Agency collaboration with key partners to minimize potential trauma to children of arrested parents
- Train officers to identify and respond effectively to a child who is present, or not present, at the time of his/her parent's arrest
- When possible, divert children from official custody and place them with a responsible caregiver



IACP Model Policy

- Chief Executive Responsibilities (Agency Coordination and Training)
- Pre-Arrest Planning
- Making an Arrest
- Determining Appropriate Placement of a Child
- Interacting with a Child
- Booking
- Follow-up
- Documentation



Section III: Implementation

Implementing the Model Policy: Agency Level Changes



Changes Within Agency

- Routine follow up on well-being of children
- Resource directory for officers

Training

- Agency training-- safeguarding children pre, during and post-parental arrest
- Agency training - child development and age-appropriate language
- Agency training--trauma and its effects on children
- Training for partners on police protocols

Interagency Agreements/Practices

- Agreements with Child Welfare Services and/or childhood mental health partner for onsite help
- Routine multidisciplinary evaluation of impact and coordination





Implementing the Model Policy: SOP Changes

Pre-Arrest

Dispatcher inquiries

Officer inquiry

Arrest timing

Resource prep

Arrest & Booking

Officer inquiries & observations about children

Treatment of arrestee

Placement options

Interacting with children

Post-Arrest

Follow up with child and caregiver

Documentation and recordkeeping





More Information and Resources:

International Association of Chiefs of Police
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