Preparing for Arrest

☐ Ask dispatchers from the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) if they have information on whether or not a child will be present, and if so, how many.

☐ Ask officers and other colleagues who work in that area if they are familiar with the arrestee, and if so, if they know if there are children in the home.

☐ Consider driving by the house to see if there are signs of children visible in the yard or nearby (toys, swing sets, etc.).

☐ Before proceeding with arrest, consider:
  ☐ Is it possible to arrest the parent when the child is not home?
  ☐ Does the parent speak English?
  ☐ If not, get an interpreter. Children should not be asked to interpret.

Arresting a Parent with a Child Present

☐ Look for signs of a child (toys, coloring books, etc.) even if the parent denies presence of children.

☐ Task one adult with being ‘assigned’ to a child during arrest.

☐ Allow parent to explain/reassure the child, if safe and appropriate. If this is not possible, the assigned officer should provide an explanation to the child, in an age- and developmentally-appropriate manner.
  ☐ If the child is small, kneel down to her/him eye level.
  ☐ Explain and emphasize that s/he has done nothing wrong.
  ☐ Reassure her/him that s/he will be safe.

☐ Inform parent as to whether s/he will be allowed to speak to child post-arrest.

☐ Conduct arrest out of sight/earshot of children.

☐ Discuss placement options with the parent and identify top three choices (i.e. other parent, trusted friends/family/caregiver/Child Welfare Services - CWS). A child’s special needs may limit placement options.

☐ Get background from agencies (National Crime Information Center—NCIC and CWS) on selected caregivers. If the parent insists on caregivers who may be unsuitable/do not pass checks, contact your supervisor.

☐ Ask the parent or child about objects that may provide comfort to the child in placement (photos, books, stuffed animals, toys, clothing, food).

☐ Ask the parent and/or procure objects/items the child will need in placement (medications, hygiene items).

☐ Ask the parent about psychological, medical, or behavioral conditions, allergies, or any other information that would be important for a caregiver to know.

☐ Take custody of the child in accordance with state law if you reasonably believe there is a threat of imminent danger to the child.

☐ Do not leave the scene of the arrest until the child is in the care of an appropriate caregiver.
Arresting a Parent when a Child is Not Present

□ Be prepared to discuss with the arrested parent how the child will be picked up and by whom.
□ Ensure that appropriate arrangements are made, either through your department, CWS or a partner organization, to place the child with a caregiver.
□ Discuss placement options with the parent
   □ Identify their top three choices (other parent, trusted friends/family/caregiver/CWS).
   □ Get background information (from NCIC and CWS) on selected caregivers.
   □ If the parent insists on caregivers who may be unsuitable/do not pass checks, contact your supervisor.
□ Ask the parent about objects that may provide comfort to the child in placement (photos, books, stuffed animals, toys, clothing, food).
□ Ask the parent and/or procure objects/items the child will need in placement (medications, hygiene items).
□ Ask the parent about psychological, medical, or behavioral conditions, allergies, or any other information that would be important for a caregiver to know.
□ Give assigned caregiver as much information as possible regarding the arrest, the timeline/steps to release, and what to expect.

Documentation

Document the following information:

□ The identity and biographical information of the child involved and whether or not he or she was present at the arrest.
□ Any of the child’s special needs such as medical or mental health conditions, physical impairments or limitations, allergies, or developmental disorders.
□ The identities, addresses, and contact information for any actual or potential caregivers.
□ Names and contact information of any representatives from partner organizations involved.
□ Names and contact information of any adult contacted for notification purposes, such as school officials.
□ The final placement determination for the child.
□ Any information or observations that suggest the need for further investigation into the child’s living conditions and general well-being, such as an indications of a household in crisis.