

# IACP

## Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents



**BJA**  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

*Serving the Leaders of Today, Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow*





# Training Objectives

- Explain how children of arrested parents are at greater risk for negative physical and emotional health consequences
- Outline the key components of the IACP/BJA Model Policy
- Describe recommended practices for officers when parents are arrested, both when children are present and not present
- Identify what additional resources officers should seek to safeguard children of arrested parents.





# Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents

Section I: The Why

Section II: The What

Section III: The How



# Section I: The Why





# Scope of the Problem

- 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

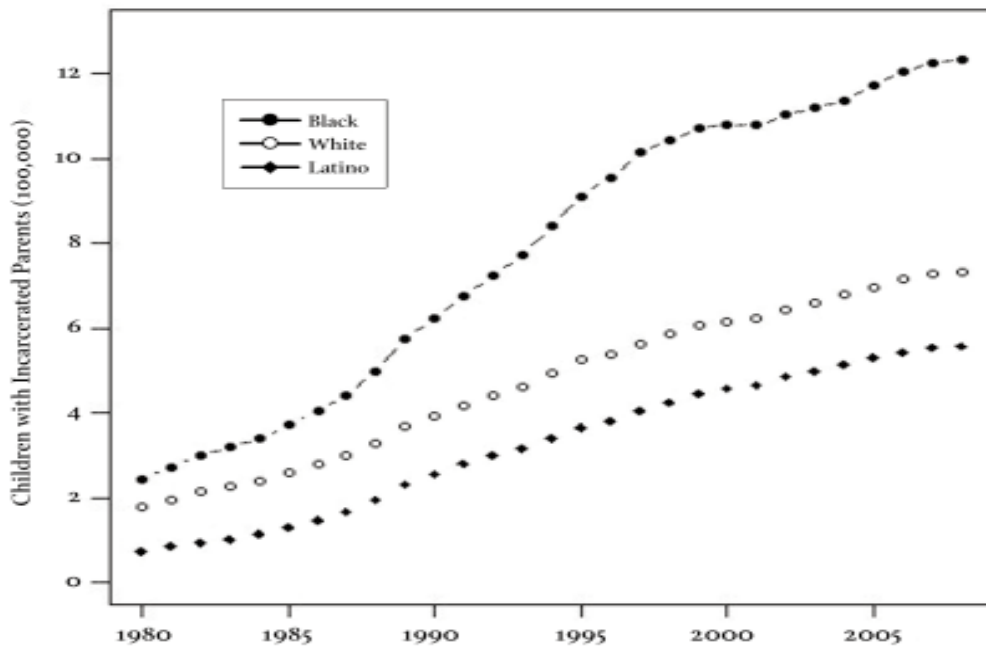




# Scope of the Problem

*Incarceration & social inequality*

Figure 4  
Number of Children under Eighteen with a Parent in Prison or Jail, 1980 to 2008



Source: Becky Pettit, Bryan Sykes, and Bruce Western, "Technical Report on Revised Population Estimates and NLSY79 Analysis Tables for the Pew Public Safety and Mobility Project" (Harvard University, 2009).



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# Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACEs = ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

*The three types of ACEs include*

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse



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# Psychological Trauma is an Injury

It is an individual's response to an event or series of events that causes psychological, physiological and brain injury.





# Arrested Parent $\neq$ Trauma

The arrest of a parent is an event.

Trauma is the potential reaction to  
an event.



# What contributes to a child experiencing the arrest of a parent as potentially traumatic?

- Seeing a parent arrested by police
- Seeing a parent upset
- Being separated from a parent
  - Sense of chaos and disorder
    - Loss of control
    - Feelings of helplessness
- Not knowing what will happen next





# Parental Arrest: Risks to Children

## Video Scenario 1 Part 1





# Parental Arrest: Risks to Children

## Video Scenario 1 Part 2







# Challenges for Responding Officers

- Competing demands for your 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 issues
- Finding appropriate placements for children, in cases of child abuse or neglect or when no caregiver is available





## Section II: The What





# IACP/BJA Model Policy: Purpose

- Minimize trauma experienced by children from a parent's arrest and separation from the parents
- Establish new and enhance existing collaborations with key partner organizations
- When possible, divert children from official custody and place them with a responsible caregiver
- Maintain integrity of the arrest and safety of officers, suspects, and other involved individuals



# IACP Model Policy

- Policy
- Coordination and Training
- Pre-Arrest Planning
- Making an Arrest
- Appropriate Placement of a Child
- Booking
- Follow-up
- Documentation



## Section III: The How





# Implementing the Model Policy: Agency Level Changes

## Changes Within Agency

- Routine follow up on well- being of child(ren)
- 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 child(ren)**

## Post-Arrest

**Follow up with child and caregiver**

**Documentation and recordkeeping**





# Pre-Arrest

- Know what you are going to find in the house
- Decide when it is best to make the arrest given the situation with children
- Go in prepared with the right resources





# “Know Before You Go” Activity

- How can you know if there are children involved in any particular arrest situation?
- If you learn that there are children, how can you gather the information you need to prepare to help them?



# Timing for Parental Arrest

- If possible, when children are not present
- If children will need to be removed from the scene quickly, arrange for Child Welfare Services (CWS) to join you
- During a time when parent-child separation will be shortest
- During a time when interpreters are available







# Resources to Bring

- Child Welfare Services (CWS)
- Child mental health community partner
- Interpreters
- Checklist
- Resource list





# Arrest and Booking

- Where are the children?
- Who will take care of them?
- Will the child be allowed to speak with the parent?
- Sight/sound separation
- Do not leave until the child is taken care of
- Follow-up if child is not home





# Arrest and Booking, Cont'd

## Placement Options

- With the other parent
- Friend, family suggested by arrestee
- Child Welfare Services (CWS)



# The Big Question

Who is looking after the  
children?





# Documentation and Follow-Up

- Identity/biographical information
- Any special needs (medical, developmental)
- Contact information for potential caregivers
- School information
- Final placement determination
- Full list in arrest checklist





# Put it All Together Activity

## Video Case Scenario





# Put it All Together Activity

## Video





# For More Information, Contact:

International Association of Chiefs of Police  
Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents Project

1-800-THE-IACP x 831

[www.theiacp.org/CAP](http://www.theiacp.org/CAP)

[www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP-SafeguardingChildren.pdf](http://www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP-SafeguardingChildren.pdf)