Quality Mentoring in Amachi

David DuBois
Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago
School of Public Health
Division of Community Health Sciences

Ann Adalist-Estrin
Director, National Resource Center on Children
and Families of the Incarcerated
Family and Corrections Network

Our Story
2000: Idea
2001: 1st Intentional Match
2002: 9 more cities
2003: Feds Jump In
2007: AIM Enhancement
2007: Achievement with Which Children
2009: Amachi Children are 14.6%
2009: Retention

Amachi Littles
Demographics
More likely to be, but not exclusively
- African-American
- Low-income Family
- Woman (mom or grand mom) Leading the Home

12 Month Retention
- CB: Equivalent to Other Matches (60%)
- SB: Higher than Other Matches (41% vs. 33%)

Strength of Relationships
- Little SoR
  - CB: Less feelings of safety & more disappointment than other Littles at 3 months, 1 year, but not at 2 years
  - SB: More favorable ratings in most areas than other Littles
- Big SoR
  - CB: Greater frustration at 1 & 2 years than Bigs whose Littles do not have an incarcerated parent
  - SB: No differences

Prediction of 1 Year Retention for Amachi Matches from 3 Month SoR
- Community-based
  - Little SoR: More favorable ratings, especially coping and closeness, predict retention
  - Big SoR: More favorable ratings, especially confidence and lower frustration, predict retention
- School-based
  - Weaker associations with retention for Little or Big SoR ratings
All Findings Preliminary

For Further Details
contact
David DuBois
dldubois@uic.edu

Quality Mentoring in Amachi
Five Key Strategies

• Acknowledge Perspectives
• Plan Purposeful Match Support
• Include the Caregiver
• Involve the Incarcerated Parent
• Collaborate with Other Agencies

Acknowledge Perspectives

• Perspective is 9/10 of reality—is the glass 1/2 empty or 1/2 full?

• What are the best and worst things that can happen to a child with incarcerated parents?
• Is mentoring a life line or tennis lessons?

Plan Purposeful Match Support

• Children of incarcerated parents struggle with feelings of loss, anger, shame and loyalty conflicts—different from other life circumstances.
• Children of incarcerated parents are not one monolithic group. Their needs fall on a continuum.
• Selected and trained mentors can provide support for children when they are well matched to the needs.
• Effective match support requires an infrastructure for assessing needs, providing relevant and reflective supervision.

Involve the Caregiver

Caregivers Feel

• Blamed and judged
• A need to hide from the judgment
• A different sense of time and priorities
• Often angry at the incarcerated parent, the system and you

"I can’t believe that he sits up there in that prison and told the mentoring people to call me. When he’s out here he can decide what Sabrina needs. And now he told Sabrina she’s getting a mentor and I have to deal with it." Dominique mother of 10 year old (Adalist-Estrin 2007)

Involve the Caregiver

Caregivers Need

• Awareness and respect for their perspectives
• Meaningful involvement in agency policy and program
• Support based on their needs and the needs of the program
• Connection to other services and caregivers
### Include the Incarcerated Parent

“When a parent feels involved in – as opposed to feeling shut out by – the process that brings another adult into the child’s life, the parent is more likely to reinforce the mentor’s influences.”

Rhodes, J., *Stand By Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today’s Youth*

Honoring the Parent-Child Relationships/Supporting Connections: Benefits to the Match

- Children feel more trust in the match.
- Incarcerated parents feel less competitive and jealous.
- Mentors feel better able to talk with the child about the realities of the child’s life.

### Collaborate With Other Agencies

“Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodiles won’t eat you.” *African Proverb*

- Join coalitions
- Organizations that serve children and families of the incarcerated can help you with more than getting children. Ask for input and feedback.
- Acknowledge differences in perspectives

### Helpful Resource

**National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated**

**Family and Corrections Network**

[www.fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcnetwork.org)

- New web site coming June 1, 2009
- The Children of Prisoners Library
- Mentoring policy and practice page
- Directory of Programs
- Reading Room
- FAQs for families and practitioners
- Web Announcements
Recommended Book List

• *All Alone in the World* by Nell Bernstein
• *Doing Time on the Outside* by Donald Bramen
• *Families Shamed* by Rachel Condry
• *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* by Joy DeGruy Leary
• *Healing Tammy* by Jody Raphael
• *Stand By Me* by Jean Rhodes

Ann Adalist-Estrin
National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated
Family and Corrections Network
www.fcnetwork.org
adalist@fcnetwork.org