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Quality Mentoring in Amachi

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Big Brothers Big Sisters | National Conference 2009

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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




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Amachi Littles Demographics

More likely to be, but not exclusively


- African-American
- Low-income Family
- Woman (mom or grand mom) Leading the Home



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Amachi Littles 12 Month Retention


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



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Amachi Littles 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



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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
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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?

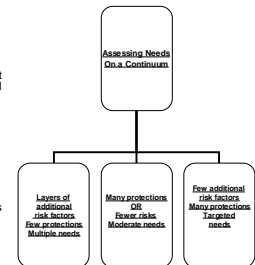


- What are the best and worst things that can happen to a child with incarcerated parents?
- Is mentoring a life line or tennis lessons?



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 have varied needs fall on a continuum.
- Selected and trained mentors can provide support for children when they are well matched to the specific needs.
- Effective match support requires an infrastructure for assessing risks and protections, coping with extreme situations and unexpected emergencies and 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




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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.

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Include the Incarcerated Parent

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




- Caregivers can feel relieved of the duty of maintaining connection with the incarcerated parent.
- Mentors feel less threatened by the incarcerated parent.
- Minimizes "testing" behavior in the match
- Enables mentor to respond appropriately to the aftermath of visits and phone calls
- Prepares the match for the parents release

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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

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Collaborate With Other Agencies


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- Recognize the benefits and limitations of mentoring
- Coordinate assessment of the other services and programs needed by the families
- Share ideas, information and resources

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The most important skill you need in order to implement the 5 strategies is self awareness. Choose an image from below that best describes you and talk to your table mates about why you chose it.




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Helpful Resource

National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated
 Family and Corrections Network
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 DeGruey Leary
- Healing Tammy by Jody Raphael
- Stand By Me by Jean Rhodes



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