

Federal Probation

Choosing the Future of American Corrections: Punishment or Reform? *James Byrne*
Mary Brewster

The Impact of Critical Incident Stress: Is Your Office Prepared to Respond? *Mark Maggio*
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turing Justice in Russia: A New Era of Challenges *G. Frederick Allen*

'the Future—Carving Out New Territory for American actions *J. Michael Quinlan*

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This Issue in Brief

ACQUISITIONS

Choosing the Future of American Corrections: Punishment or Reform?—What does the future hold for criminal justice and corrections in this country? Authors James Byrne and Mary Brewster examine the four most important predictions of John DiIulio, Princeton University professor and author of *No Escape—The Future of American Corrections*, and offer some suggestions to those state and local corrections policy-makers who believe the United States is moving in the wrong direction.

The Impact of Critical Incident Stress: Is Your Office Prepared to Respond?—Physical assault of an officer while on duty, unexpected death of a co-worker, a natural disaster—all can be considered critical incidents which affect not only the individuals involved but the organization as a whole. Authors Mark Maggio and Elaine Terenzi define critical incidents, explain the importance of providing stress education before such crises occur, and offer suggestions as to what administrator and managers can do to respond effectively and maintain a healthy and productive workforce.

Probation Officer Safety and Mental Conditioning.—Author Paul W. Brown discusses mental conditioning as a component of officer safety that is all too often overlooked or minimized in training programs. He focuses on five areas of mental conditioning: the color code of awareness, crisis rehearsal, the continuum of force, kinesics, and positive self-talk.

Federal Detention: The United States Marshals Service's Management of a Challenging Program.—Focusing on the detention of Federal prisoners, author Linda S. Caudell-Feagan discusses the work of the United States Marshals Service. She explains how detention beds are acquired, how the Marshals Service administers funds to pay the costs of housing Federal detainees, what the ramifications of increased detention costs are, and what actions the Marshals Service has taken to address detention problems.

Total Quality Management: Can It Work in Federal Probation?—Author Richard W. Janes outlines the principles of total quality management and their

application to Federal probation work. The article is based not only on a review of the literature but also on the author's experience in a Federal probation agency where these concepts are being implemented.

College Education in Prisons: The Inmates' Perspectives.—Author Ahmad Tootoonchi reports on a study to determine the impact of college education on the attitudes of inmates toward life and their future. The results reveal that a significant number of the inmates surveyed believe that their behavior can change for the better through college education.

Visitors to Women's Prisons in California: An Exploratory Study.—Author Lisa G. Fuller describes a study which focuses on visitors to California's three state women's prisons. The study, designed to

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Visitors to Women's Prisons in California: An Exploratory Study

BY LISA G. FULLER*

THE STATISTICS describing female involvement in the criminal justice system have staggering consequences for families and society as a whole. Women accounted for 12 percent of the nearly 4.1 million adults in the care or custody of corrections agencies at the end of 1989 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). The total growth of the female prison population between 1980 and 1989 was 27,136, an increase of 202 percent. Because more than 76 percent of women in prison are mothers (BJS, 1991), the devastating impact on families and particularly children must be of immediate concern to policymakers in the criminal justice and social welfare fields.

Literature on families of offenders points to the significant and unique role that the family can play in the rehabilitation of the offender. A review of empirical findings on the subject suggests that strong family ties can result in several benefits including decreased recidivism rates, improved mental health of inmates and other family members, and an increased probability that families will reunite following the inmates' release (Hairston, 1988; Kiser, 1991; Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986; Holt & Miller, 1972). As Hairston states:

Families provide concrete resources such as money and clothing to the prisoner, influence his or her help-seeking behavior . . . and provide him or her with information about life outside the walls and family activities. The ongoing maintenance of these networks mitigates the effects of the institution, sustains the prisoner during imprisonment, and supports the transition from prison to community . . . (1988, p. 50).

While acting as a crucial source of support for the prisoner, the family member suffers the physical and emotional loss of the prisoner, once present partner, sibling, daughter, or friend. One study documenting family hardships found that, "[f]or most inmates who face a prison term, their families will also begin a sentence of physical, social and psychological hardship" (Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986, p. 42). In addition, prisoners' families are often penalized by society, perceived as having brought the problem on themselves. The personal loss in conjunction with the stigma attached to having a relative in prison is a burden many of these families bear.

Children who lose a parent to prison suffer multiple problems associated with that loss. Disruption of at-

tachment bonds is particularly dangerous between the ages of 6 months and 4 years (Black, 1992). McGowan and Blumenthal (1978) found that children of female prisoners have emotional, psychological, and physical problems. Behavioral problems include a decline in school performance and aggressive and antisocial acting out (Black, 1992; Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986). According to Dr. Denise Johnston at the Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, these "problems" are actually adaptive and normative behavior responses to the trauma sustained by these children (Johnston, 1992). The trauma is magnified when a child loses his or her mother to prison because disruptions are more likely to occur in all aspects of the child's life. These changes jolt the foundations of the child's life: the child's primary caretaker, place of residence, and school (Black, 1992).

"Why Punish the Children," a national study that was originally conducted in 1978 and recently duplicated in 1992, looked specifically at the impact of the child welfare and criminal justice systems on children of incarcerated women. Both studies found that because the mother is the target of the systems' "efforts," the children are ignored and inadvertently punished. With regard to corrections, one major systemic problem is aptly summarized: "Every component of the correctional system is oriented toward the punishment, correction, and rehabilitation of offenders as individuals, not as persons with familial roles and responsibilities" (McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978, p. 2). This narrow approach to corrections minimizes and in some cases extinguishes the role of children in the imprisoned women's lives. For various reasons including budget constraints, child welfare agencies have not helped this population and have, at times, penalized children through multiple placements and sibling separation (McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Bloom & Steinhart, 1992).

The breach created by a mother's incarceration is difficult to cross considering the multiple obstacles that a potential visitor must contend with in his or her effort to bring a child for a visit. Most prisons are located in remote areas that are inaccessible by public transportation (Jorgensen, Hernandez, & Warren, 1986). The distance makes it impossible for many low income families to afford the trip's cost in both time and financial expense. Because adults rightly hesitate to take children on long trips, the mother/child relationship is particularly affected by proximity of home

*Ms. Fuller is a human services consultant. She wishes to thank Peter Breen and the staff of Centerforce, Inc., and Eileen Gambrill of the University of California at Berkeley for their support in this project. She also wishes to acknowledge that this study was completed with the cooperation of the California Department of Corrections.

to prison. Furthermore, budgetary constraints, in concert with corrections' priorities other than visitation, have prompted some prisons to reduce visiting days. For example, in the past 4 years, some prisons in California have decreased visiting days from 5 to 2 days per week (Breen, 1992). Lastly, the poor conditions of visiting rooms and the abundance of rules and regulations make visiting incompatible with the needs of children and thus decrease the likelihood that children will visit.

Study

Before 1972, visitation services for persons who visited California state prisons did not exist. This meant that rain or shine, visitors would wait outside in anticipation of prison clearance to visit with their fathers, mothers, relatives, spouses, or friends. In 1972, Catholic Social Services of Marin opened The House at San Quentin, the first visitor center in California. In 1983, Assembly Bill No. 1512 was passed, requiring that the Department of Corrections establish and operate through a non-profit agency a visitor center outside each adult state prison in California. Centerforce, a nonprofit agency founded in 1972, has been contracted by the California Department of Corrections to operate these centers. Each center provides:

- (a) assistance to visitors with transportation between public transit terminals and prisons;
- (b) child care for visitors' children;
- (c) emergency clothing;
- (d) information on visiting regulations and processes;
- (e) referral to other agencies and services; and
- (f) a sheltered area, which is outside of the security perimeter, for visitors who are waiting before or after visits.

In addition to providing services, Centerforce advocates for the needs of children and families of prisoners.

The study described here focuses on visitors to California's three state women's prisons. It has two goals: to assess the needs of persons visiting prison and to develop a general profile of the population who visit women in prison in California. The general population description will be useful in future programs and studies, while the needs assessment will be used to inform and improve the current Centerforce visitor center programs. The study also provides a profile of the children who visit women in prison.

Method

Visitors to California's three women's prisons—California Institution for Women (CIW) (n=37), Northern California Women's Facility (NCWF) (n=34), and Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) (n=28)—were invited to participate in the study. There were no selection requirements. Two visitors declined to participate. The influence of these seems unlikely to have introduced any particular bias. The total number of respondents was 99.

Interviews were conducted on 6 days during February and March 1993. Upon entrance to the visiting room, visitors were informed about the study and invited to participate. The interviews were conducted after the visitor completed his or her request to see the prisoner. The process of visitation requires that visitors wait approximately 10 to 60 minutes for prisoners to be found in the facility and to come to the visiting room. All interviews were conducted during this waiting period and most lasted between 10 and 20 minutes. The interviewer informed each participant that if the women they were visiting should arrive before the conclusion of the interview, the interview would be terminated. Termination occurred in two instances for this reason. The interviews were face-to-face and guided by a closed questionnaire instrument designed by the researcher. At each facility, interviews were conducted in the attorney booth adjacent to the visiting rooms to ensure relative privacy and quiet. Exceptions were made when respondents had children and expressed the desire to remain at their assigned tables in the main visiting room.

The interview schedule consisted of 45 pre-coded, closed questions. The variables that were measured included: visitor knowledge about and use of the visitor center, general demographic information about the visitor, visiting child profile, barriers to visiting, and the strength of the visitor/inmate tie. Information regarding visitor knowledge about and use of the prison visitor center was gathered through questions regarding awareness of the center and frequency of use of specific services. Information was also obtained regarding desired additional services. Demographic information included gender, age, ethnicity, proximity of home to prison, and number of children accompanying visitor. Specific information was collected on up to two children per visitor. The child profile consisted of the child's gender, age, ethnicity, the child's relationship to the inmate and to the visitor, and the frequency of the child's prison visits.

Information regarding barriers to visiting included cost, transportation, distance from prison, child care, health concerns, employment hours conflicting with prison visiting hours, and obstacles caused by internal prison issues. Visitors' subjective opinions were gath-

ered about travel. The strength of the visitor/inmate tie was gauged through questions regarding the frequency of visits and phone and mail contact as well as a question regarding residential moves to be closer to the inmate. These variables helped in assembling a profile of the population and assessing the populations' needs regarding visiting services.

Results

Service Knowledge, Use, and Need

Seventy-six percent of the visitors had knowledge of the visitor center, while 24 percent did not know that services were available to them. Of those with knowledge of the center, 68 percent reported they used the services offered. Clothing exchange, information and referral, and use of the center as a place to relax were the most popular services with approximately 30 percent of respondents affirming their use of each service. Although food was a service rarely used by the total sample of visitors, 22 percent of visitors who brought a child to visit the child's incarcerated mother did report use of food. The greatest use of services was by nonwhite visitors.

Requests for additional services varied substantially from site to site. Support group services were requested by 20 percent of respondents at CIW and day care by 15 percent of respondents at NCWF. In response to the question regarding desire for more information regarding prison rules on correspondence and visitation, 73 percent of the CIW sample, 49 percent of the NCWF sample, and 43 percent of the CCWF sample requested more information.

Demographic Information

Basic demographic information, including information on gender, ethnicity, relationship with inmate, and distance traveled from home to prison, was collected on 99 visitors. The majority of visitors were white and female (see table 1). Friends and parents were the most common relationships with other relatives and spouses second most common (see table 2). Fifty-eight percent of the visitors were related to the female inmate. The distance traveled from home to prison ranged from 47 percent coming from within 50 miles to 3 percent traveling a thousand miles or more (see figure 1).

Child Profile

Fifty-two children were brought to the prison by 32 visitors, 32 percent of the sample. Data were collected on 47 children as the instrument allowed for two children per respondent. Nineteen female and 28 male children visited. The ethnicity of the visiting children was 18 white, 13 Hispanic, 12 African American, 3 Native American, and 1 Polynesian. Seventy-four per-

cent of the children came to visit their mothers, 14.9 percent to visit their aunts, 6.4 percent to visit grandmothers, and 4.2 percent to visit others. The ages of the children varied greatly. Twenty-two children were under 3 years of age, 13 children ranged from 3 to 8, and 14 children were between the ages of 13 and 18. The children were accompanied to the prison by their grandmothers (42 percent), parents (25 percent), other relatives (14 percent), foster parents (14 percent), and social workers and others (6 percent). Fifty-two percent of the children visited at least twice a month.

Barriers to Visiting

Barriers to visiting were costs (22 percent), job (14 percent), prison issues (13 percent), transportation (8 percent), distance (6 percent), child care (4 percent), and an individual's health (1 percent). Forty-five percent of all respondents stated they experienced no barriers to visiting. Among females and those bringing children, slightly higher rates of obstacles were reported.

Strength of Visitor-Inmate Tie

Eighty-two percent of visitors came to the prison at least once a month and 5 percent visited only once or twice a year. Twelve percent of the sample were on their first visit to the prison. Contact through the mail was several times a month for 47 percent of the respondents. Forty percent of visitors had telephone contact with inmates several times a week and 27 percent more, at least several times a month. Eight percent (8) of respondents moved as a result of inmates' incarceration. Six of those eight visitors moved to be physically closer to the prison facility.

Variation in visitor profile was found with regard to ethnicity of visitor, relationship of visitor to inmate, distance traveled to the prison, and frequency of visits. The impact of gender, ethnicity, and child of inmate status on these variables was analyzed.

Gender Differences

The 38 male visitors in the sample represented multiple ethnic groups, while 70 percent of the women were white. As expected, gender differences were found with regard to the variable visitor relationship with prisoner. Male visitors were 42 percent friends and 36.8 percent spouses, while females were 31 percent parents and 32.8 percent other relatives (including siblings, aunts, and daughters). It is notable that volunteers represented a significant portion of the female visitors (13 percent). This group in conjunction with foster parents of prisoners' children made up the 28 percent of visiting females who were unacquainted with the female inmate prior to her incarceration.

Proximity of home to prison was an important variable related to gender. Twenty-four percent of male

visitors traveled over 200 miles to the prison, while only 8 percent of females came from such distance. Frequency of visits differed somewhat between male and female visitors with the former visiting at a rate of 50 percent and the latter at 30 percent every week.

Ethnic Differences

Differences between ethnic groups were found in areas of relationship with inmate, frequency of visits, distance traveled, and age of visitor. Relationship of visitor to inmate varied among ethnic groups such that 84.6 percent, 62.5 percent, and 54 percent of Hispanic, African American, and white visitors respectively were visiting a female relative in prison. Frequency of visits ranged with 61.9 percent of whites, 46.2 percent of Hispanics and 37.5 percent of African Americans visiting at least twice a month.

Differences existed in the distance traveled to the prison. African American visitors traveled significantly further than visitors in the other two groups with 25 percent of African Americans coming over 300 miles. By contrast, 8 percent of white visitors and 0 percent of Hispanic visitors traveled as far. The white population accounted for the older portion of visitors with 63 percent over 46 years old. Only 30 percent of the Hispanic and of the African American visitors were over 46.

Child Visiting Incarcerated Mother

The study considered three groups: "mother," "other," and "no children." The first was made up of visitors who brought a child to visit the child's mother in prison; the second, visitors with other children; and the third, visitors without children. The characteristics of the group of visitors who brought children to visit their mothers in prison are important for they illuminate the growing trend of substitute care and point to factors that affect visiting for children. Variables of particular interest were the child's caretaker, the ethnicity of the child, caretaker supports, obstacles to visiting, frequency of the child's visits, and the number of years the mother has been incarcerated. The 39 children who came to visit their mothers were brought by 23 caretakers. (Demographic information was collected on 34 of these children.) Seventy-eight percent of these caretakers were female. Sixty-one percent of children coming to see their mothers came at least twice a month.

More than half (57 percent) of the "mother" group was visiting inmates who had been in prison for less than 1 year. Generally, members of the "other" and "no children" groups were visiting women who had been incarcerated for longer periods. Thirty percent of the "mother" group relied on relatives for general support and child care as compared to 75 percent of the "other"

group. In addition, 22 percent of the "mother" group reported use of social services for support as compared to 13 percent of the "other" group. Obstacles to visiting were transportation and job conflicts at 13 percent both. In addition, 35 percent of "mother" respondents stated that costs limit their trips as compared to 13 percent of the "no children" group. "Mother" and "other" groups used visitor services at a higher rate than the "no children" sample.

Discussion

This study corroborates findings of previous work in this field, yet from a unique perspective, inside the prison walls. It is important to reiterate that these data reflect the characteristics of persons who are able to visit women in prison. This sample does not represent the entire population of persons who want to visit or, in some cases, whose best interest would be served by visitation.

The characteristics of this population point to essential conditions of visiting. It is clear that proximity is a significant precondition to prison visitation. Seventy-one percent of the sample lived within 100 miles of the prison facility and 80 percent described the trip to the prison as easy or very easy. Though obstacles were cited by 48 percent of the sample, visiting was such a priority that sacrifices were consistently made by this group. Regular monthly visits were the norm for 82 percent of the respondents.

The majority of visitors used the Centerforce Visitor Center's services. Visitors with children and minority visitors were more consistent service users, indicating that their needs may be greater. Clothing exchange, information and referral, and use of the center as a place to relax were the most commonly used services.

The majority of visitors requested more information on prison rules regarding visiting and correspondence. Approximately three out of four respondents at CIW requested more information. Their requests reflect confusion regarding the institution's policies and procedures and/or actual inconsistent policies and procedures regarding visitation and inmate correspondence.

The visitors in the sample represented multiple ethnic groups with a predominance of white female visitors. Although there was a range of relationships, most visiting males were "friends" and visiting females were the "mothers" of the inmate. Approximately 70 percent of visitors consistently visited, wrote, and maintained contact with inmates by phone.

One of the goals of this study was to gain a profile of the children who visit women in prison. All of the visiting children came to see a relative, most frequently their incarcerated mothers. Of particular interest is this latter group of children, given that over 68 percent of the children represented in the National

VISITORS TO WOMEN'S PRISONS

TABLE 1. ETHNICITY AND GENDER OF VISITORS

	Number (99 visitors)	Percent	Female	Male
White	63	64%	43	20
African American	16	16%	8	8
Hispanic	13	13%	9	4
Native American	3	3%	0	3
Asian	2	2%	1	1
Other	2	2%	0	2

TABLE 2. RELATIONSHIP OF VISITOR TO INMATE

	Number (99 visitors)	Percent	Female	Male
Friend	25	25%	9	16
Parent	21	21%	19	2
Other relative	17	17%	20	2
Spouse	14	14%	0	14
Volunteer	8	8%	8	0
Unrelated Child Guardian	4	4%	3	1
Other	4	4%	2	2

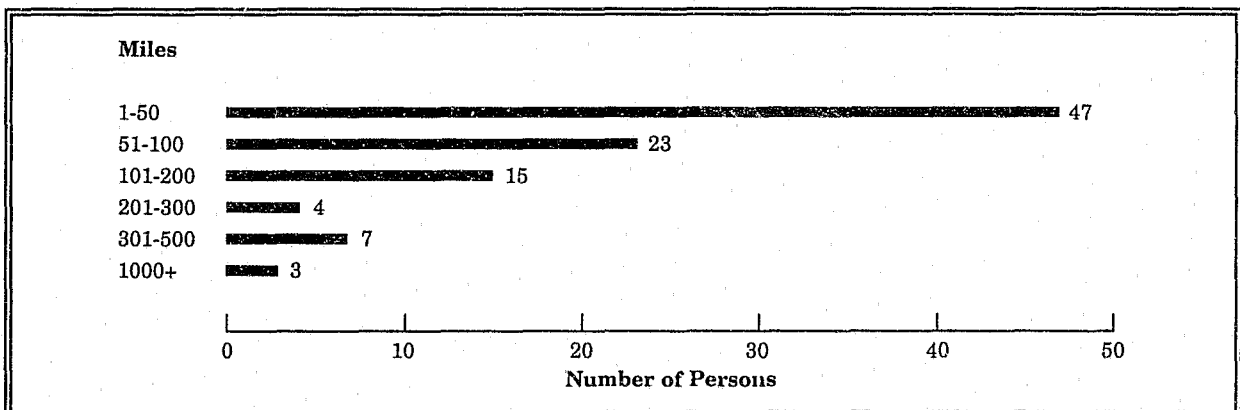


FIGURE 1. MILES VISITORS TRAVELED FROM HOME TO PRISON

Council on Crime and Delinquency's California survey had never visited their mothers in jail or prison (Bloom, 1993). This sample of children yields an informed impression of children who do visit their mothers in prison.

The findings suggest that children may be more likely to visit their mothers during the first year of incarceration. Fifty-seven percent of the mothers visited by children had been in prison for less than 1 year. An alternate reason for this pattern of visitation is that these mothers have shorter sentences, have committed "lesser crimes," and thus are in better standing with their families and children than the mothers serving longer sentences. The age of the children visiting their mothers ranged from 6 weeks to 18 years. The inclusion of six youth between 13 and 18 years of age suggests that children visit their mothers on their own volition in an effort to maintain that bond.

The importance of proximity in child visitation is confirmed as 70 percent of the visitors with children lived within 100 miles of the prison. This finding has implications for the social welfare agencies responsible for placing children in foster care while their mothers are in prison. As most mothers expect to continue caring for their children upon their release, the opportunity to keep connected during the interim must be of primary consideration in child placement decisions (Bloom & Steinhart, 1992).

One African American woman interviewed had two grandchildren and was visibly exasperated by what she described as a "long, expensive, and very difficult journey." Her description was atypical of visitors with children and illustrates distance as a possible cause for the low rate of visitation among African American caretakers.

Data on caretakers confirm previous findings on the significant role of grandmothers, other relatives, and foster care placements in the care of the children of incarcerated women (Bloom & Steinhart, 1992; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). Consistent with the literature, 34.8 percent of children were accompanied by their maternal grandmothers to visit their mothers. Bloom and Steinhart (1992) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1991) both cite grandparents as the primary source of substitute care for these children. Only 13 percent of children in our study were brought to visit their mothers by their fathers. Because spouses were only 14 percent of the sample, the lack of support in the area of child rearing and child visitation is consistent with the overall underrepresentation of spouses.

In Bloom and Steinhart's sample of 846 children, only 17 percent visited their mothers in prison or jail once a month. Since 61.5 percent of their sample lived over 100 miles away as compared to 35 percent of this

sample, proximity of prison to home could be a factor influencing these differences.

Interestingly, an analysis of cost revealed that only 13 percent of visitors without children, 35 percent of visitors with children of incarcerated females, and 50 percent of visitors with other children stated that cost did indeed limit their visiting. Presumably the visitors with children bear a substantial financial burden, but the difference in the "mother" and "other" groups indicates the importance these caretakers place on mother/child visitation. Though other studies emphasize the dearth of child visitation, this population highlights a select and dedicated group of caretakers. A male foster parent revealed his dedication in his description of the monthly, one-way, 200-mile journey to provide the 14-year-old girl in his care the opportunity to see her mother in prison. He emphasized that both mother and child had high expectations of their life together that would begin upon the mother's release from prison. He believed that their relationship needed the visitation time in order to help them bond and to gain a realistic sense of each other.

Closing Thoughts

Revealed in this study's findings are the characteristics of visitation. Because the population of females incarcerated is growing so rapidly, the potential visitor population will similarly grow. The escalation of female incarceration is in no way being matched by programs to ameliorate the familial consequences of the loss. More children are destined to be caught in the cycle of frustration and shame connected with visitation or will lose contact with their mothers altogether.

Children need their parents to care for them, regardless of their parents' incarceration. The role and responsibility of parenthood should be encouraged among female inmates. Institutions need to meet the need of mother/child visitation through the creation of facilities that encourage and enhance the visitation experience. Listed below are recommendations for corrections departments to make visiting more suitable for children:

- provide physical space conducive to quality and peaceful visiting;
- provide separate mother/child areas in which the mother role can be fostered;
- create and implement programs to enhance family interaction during visits; and
- improve visitor processing to keep visitors sheltered and comfortable.

Areas for further study include:

- an examination of the geographic placement of children in relation to their sentenced mothers;

- an exploration into male roles in incarcerated females' lives; what factors are related to the maintenance of the marital relationship;
- a look at adolescent child visitation, comparing social factors associated with adolescents who visit their mothers and those who do not;
- a qualitative study of children who do visit their mothers in prison; a needs assessment; and
- a comparison of physical facilities at various institutions; the effect of environs on children.

Parents and children should not be needlessly separated. Children of prisoners need to be considered during sentencing, incarceration, and prerelease. More research directed specifically toward this extremely vulnerable population of children is needed to better understand and more responsibly address their needs.

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