

Working with Incarcerated Parents

Questions to Think About

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Looking for Missing Parents in the Child Welfare System

- Basic Obligation of the Agency
- “Diligent Search”
- Should be an actual process
- Should be ongoing inquiry by court
- Could be a placement resource
- Right of the child
- Affects ICWA status and need to locate relatives
- Reluctant Present Parent

Finding an Incarcerated Parent

- What is status
- Where is location
- What is crime
- Is crime connected to child or other parent
- When is estimated out date
- What is facilities visitation/ contact policy
- Letting parent know of child's status
- Counsel for the parent

The Incarcerated Parent and Your Role

- DSS staff
- GAL
- County Attorney
- CASA
- Other Parent's Attorney
- Incarcerated Parent's Attorney
- The Judge

Can the parent participate in the court proceedings?

- Is the incarcerated parent alleged to have maltreated the child or is it just the other parent?
- Does the parent have a right to be present in a civil proceeding?
- Can they be brought to the court house?
Procedure for that
- Telephone/Skype
- Process for a hearing with counsel

Should there be any contact with the child?

- Is there any question he is the parent?
- Constitutional rights of parents
- Does the crime matter?
- Are there any orders prohibiting contact?
- How does the parent feel?
- How does the child feel?
- What is the length of the sentence?

What/How is there contact with child?

- Letters – are they monitored or not?
- Phone Calls – payment, monitored?
- Video conference/Skype
- Court presence
- Visits:

Is it traumatic for the child? Or is it more traumatic for child to not see the parent?

The child

The case

Visit Thoughts

- Travel options for the child

How far

With who

Cost paid or partially paid by

- Visit itself

Who is present – who is the visit really about

Circumstances of the visit area

Supervised/Monitored

Caseworker and Contact

- Contact – in person, by phone or letter
- How does parent contact caseworker?
- Keeping parent informed of case process:

How much is parent entitled to know about case, about other parent's progress or lack there of? How involved in the case planning?

- Keeping Parent informed of the child:

Photos, report cards, drawings, keep parent in the child's life and aware of child's well being

Caseworker Services to Incarcerated Parent

- How long until out date, how far away is parent?
- Services brought to the facility
- Finding out/impacting services available in the facility (Bonus: no transportation issues!)
- KEY – If serving more than “ASFA time”, what is the parent’s non-foster care PLAN? Other parent? Relatives? How does caseworker help with that? What if the plan is not safe/feasible /timely?

The incarcerated parent and permanency issues

- Will parent be out on a timely basis?
- Does parent understand need for child to have permanency?
- If will not be caring for the child, what permanency plans are best –

Other parent is caretaker

Other relative is caretaker

Surrender, termination and adoption

What is long term plan for contact/relationship?