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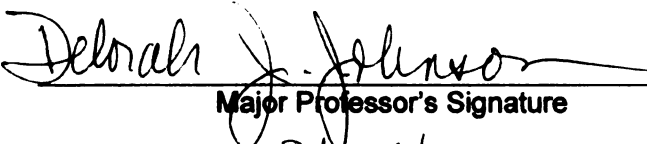
Human service professionals: Assessing the needs of children
of incarcerated parents.

Presented by

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**HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONALS:
ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED
PARENTS**

By

Toiia L. Rukuni

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONALS: ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

By

Toiia L.Rukuni

This study describes the needs of children of incarcerated parents as perceived by the human service professionals. Sixteen human service professionals (in social work, foster care, juvenile probation) were asked to describe the needs of children of incarcerated parents. The findings indicate that children of incarcerated parents need programs that involve stability in the family context, and that field staff should be educated for systemic change. Also the findings imply that more collaboration between the criminal justice and child welfare systems is needed for children of incarcerated parents. According to the research, African American and European human service professionals perceived the needs of children differently, suggesting implications for future development of policies and practices. It is hoped that this study will assist human service professionals who serve children of incarcerated parents in the future.

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**For my parents
David and Barbara Brown who encouraged the value of education**

**For the human service professionals who continue to work towards building a better
quality of life for children of incarcerated parents.**

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TABLES OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER I	
SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
CHAPTER II	
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
Racial Disparities and Incarcerated Parents.....	5
Effects of Parental Incarceration.....	7
Psychological Effects of Parental Incarceration.....	11
Programs Working with Children of Incarcerated Parents.....	17
Gaps and Conclusions.....	20
Theoretical Framework.....	21
Significance of the Study.....	22
CHAPTER III	
METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	24
Overview.....	24
Concept Mapping.....	24
Southern Michigan Human Service Professionals (Q sort).....	29
CHAPTER IV	
RESULTS.....	33
Descriptive Findings and Data Reduction.....	44
Ethnicity/Education/Length in Profession Analysis.....	44
Description of Concept Map.....	50
CHAPTER V	
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	53
Overview.....	53
Concept Map.....	55
Strengths and Weaknesses.....	57
Summary.....	59
Concept Mapping.....	60
Current Federal and State Policies.....	61
Policy Recommendations.....	62
Future Research.....	64
APPENDIX A: Human Service Professionals: Assessing the Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents Consent to Participate.....	
	67

APPENDIX B: Human Service Professional Questionnaire.....	71
APPENDIX C: Human Service Professional Flyer to Participate.....	.74
APPENDIX D: Instructions for Southern Michigan Human Service Professionals...	76
REFERENCES.....	79

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1: Distribution of Participant Characteristics.....	30
TABLE 4.1: Mean Rating for each Cluster.....	34
TABLE 4.2: Data Reduction of Brainstormed Statements.....	35
TABLE 4.3: Cluster Items for Concept Map.....	41
TABLE 4.4: Mean Rating for each Cluster by Ethnicity.....	47
TABLE 4.5: Mean Rating for each Cluster by Education.....	48
TABLE 4.6: Mean Rating for each Cluster by Length in Profession.....	49

LIST OF FIGURES

**FIGURE 1: Concept map of children of incarcerated parents needs as perceived by
human service professionals.....52**

CHAPTER I

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Children of incarcerated parents are the “hidden victims” of the criminal justice system. Of the nation’s 72.3 million minor children in 1999, 2.1% had a parent in state or federal prison. Black children were nearly 9 times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Children who experience loss of their parents due to incarceration suffer physically, emotionally, psychologically, and developmentally. A stigma is also attached to children and other family members when parents are incarcerated.

These children experience fear, anxiety, grief, and sadness; without help many children use verbal or physical aggression, withdrawal, hyper vigilance, or sexualized behavior to cope with these emotions (Johnston, 1996). Human service professionals struggle to serve this marginalized population of children. A majority of the research is focused on the parents and not the children.

In 1999 state and federal prisons in the U.S. held an estimated 721,500 parents of minor children. A majority of state and federal prisoners reported having a child under the age of 18 (Mumola, 2000).

Of particular concern are the parents and spouses who serving lengthy sentences, for nonviolent offenses, the majority involving illegal drugs, and the likelihood of their becoming estranged from their families over time (Arditti, 2003). Incarcerated parents reported average sentences of more than 12 years in state prison and 10 years in federal prison (Mumola, 2000). The use of mandatory minimums has caused parents to be away

from their children for longer periods of time. Black women, many of whom have children, are being tried for drug trafficking more than any other group in federal or state prison. Further, the disproportionate involvement of African American men and women in the criminal justice system leaves their children disproportionately in need of adequate care.

Children of incarcerated parents have a greater chance of being involved in a variety of public systems including the juvenile justice system. After the incarceration of a parent, children who are not transferred into the care of relatives often become a part of the child welfare system. The foster care system and other related services also help children through the housing process after losing a parent to incarceration. The care and placement vary for children of incarcerated fathers and imprisoned mothers (Satyanathan, 2002). Many mothers are the primary caregivers to children prior to incarceration (72%) and children of incarcerated mothers are more likely to be displaced from the home than children of incarcerated fathers (Johnston 1991; Mumola 2000). Perhaps more importantly, however, is that jailing this group of women places emotional, psychological, and social burdens on both the children and on those entrusted with their care (Baskette, 2000).

The children affected rely upon human service professionals and institutions to provide care and support. Collaborative efforts from service providers, programs, and policies are needed to address these unique circumstances and ensure the children's well being. Beckerman (1998) stated that counseling and support services should be incorporated into case plans to assist children with the impact of their mother's incarceration. Unfortunately, human service professionals are overwhelmed by heavy

caseloads, documentation on the children is often missing, and contact with the parent is difficult as a result of the incarceration.

Children are often uprooted from their homes and placed with relatives or in foster care (Child Welfare League of America, 1998). The children who had their father as the primary caregiver live with their mother; in fact 90% of all children with incarcerated fathers live with their mother (Morton, & Williams, 1998). Other children not fortunate enough to live with kin caregivers become a part of the child welfare system.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to further the connection between research and practice in the area of children of incarcerated parents. The study gives voice to practice through the perspective of human service professionals with the goal of improving the services given to children with parents in prison or jail. Listening to the views of the human service professionals may help to identify important areas of need and flaws in the system with regard to this population of children.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human service professionals involved in working to aid children with parents in prison or jail are affected by the numbers of children on their caseloads on a daily basis. Children with parents in prison or jail depend on professionals in a range of organizations, agencies, and court offices to help organize services for their individual cases. Professionals are overburdened with low pay and heavy documentation requirements, resulting in high turnover rates among child welfare social workers. This has a negative impact on families and the children in the child welfare system (Moye & Rinker, 2002). The special issues of children of incarcerated parents may become invisible in the human service system due to the issues surrounding the quality of care that they receive each day and, in fact, most research on the effects of incarceration focuses on the prisoners and not on their families and children.

Service providers working with children who have parents in prison should receive more training about the unique circumstances that these children encounter in the social service system, and about the linkages among human service systems. There is a transitional stage between the time of parent's arrest and when the children are placed with kinship caregivers or into foster care. During that high-risk time some children may become runaways or live on their own on the street.

Social workers serve at-risk children and youth in all the primary public service sectors (that is child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and mental health; Jonson-Reid & Barth, 2003). Workers receive little or no practical guidance from agencies on relating

to incarcerated fathers; the topic is covered only in formal orientation materials, advanced training or administrative manuals, or the social work literature (Hairston, 1998). The increasing rate of incarceration¹ requires professionals to increase their training and knowledge of children who require particular consideration given that their parents are detained. Children's experiences also vary according to their age, and available supports and services for each child may vary (Wright & Seymour, 2002).

Racial disparities and incarcerated parents

As noted previously, African American children are disproportionately a part of the child welfare system. Blacks (44%) are the largest racial group/ethnic group among parents in federal prison, followed by Hispanics (30%) and Whites (22%) (Mumola, 2000). In addition, African American children encounter many challenges dealing with their race and ethnicity that other children of incarcerated parents bypass.

The family structure of African American children is more depleted by the incarceration of parents. According to the Child Welfare League of America (2000), for every 1,000 African American/Black children in the U.S. population there are 21 in foster care. While African American /Black children represent 15% of the total population under the age of 18, they are 40% of the foster care population. African American/Black children also experience longer stays in care.

Further, children of color are disproportionately subjected to the breakup of the family structure. For example, among single-parent households post-foster care reunification of Black children's families is less likely than for White and Hispanic

¹ The rate of incarceration in prison at year/end 2001 was 470 sentenced inmates per 100,000 U. S. residents—up from 411 in 1995 (Mumola, 2000).

children's families (Child Welfare League America, 2000). Roberts (2002) reported that Black children not only enter the system in disproportionate numbers and for longer periods of time; they also receive lower-quality services in the foster care system.

It is important for the human service professional to become more observant of the link between parent and child. Most fathers in prison seldom see their children (Hairston, 1998). Many African American children and their families are torn apart by the parent's incarceration; the children who do not receive kinship care are in the foster care system. Black children are less likely than children of other races/ethnic groups to get adopted (Child Welfare League of America, 2000).

The number of children in foster care is greater for Blacks than for Whites, over 3 times higher for American Indians, and 2.28 times higher for Latinos (Sigmund, & Wan, 2001). Studies show that children's experience in the child welfare system affects their arrest rates. Poor Black teens who have spent time in foster care often turn out to be the same ones who are sent to juvenile detention (Roberts, 2002). For this reason it is important for professionals to work toward solutions to the various problems that these children enter on a daily basis. They are often bombarded by probation officers, lawyers, social workers, and caseworkers from the time of their parent's arrest until their release (Roberts, 2002).

Effects of parental incarceration

Although children's circumstances vary, each child experiences some combination of risk factors. The lack of research about the effects of parental incarceration on children makes it difficult to determine the overall effects. Wright &

Seymour (2002) reported children may also react differently to their experiences, and available services and supports for each child may vary. Some of the risk factors occurring before and during incarceration are poverty, alcohol and other drugs, crime, child maltreatment, family violence, previous separations, parent's history of abuse, enduring trauma, arrest and incarceration. Mothers and fathers have a different view on who is the caregiver of their children during parental incarceration. Fathers identify the children's mother as the primary caregiver. However, mothers identify a grandparent or other relative as the caregiver.

Seymour (2002) stated that to understand children's difficulties, we must look at their experiences both before and during the incarceration to get an accurate picture of the child's behavior. Most importantly we must understand that prior to the incarceration a child may have already experienced considerable instability, and possibly maltreatment, in life (Seymour, 2002).

Developmental concerns and parental incarceration

The effects of parental incarceration for children begin at infancy. A large number of children are born to mothers while they are in prison. Martin (1997) examined the effect of incarceration during pregnancy on infant birth weight. The results suggest that aspects of the prison environment such as shelter and regular meals may actually enhance pregnancy outcomes among very high-risk women.

Other studies reveal that having children in prison can be a positive experience for mothers and children. The mothers are not using illegal substances while they are pregnant (Martin, 1997). Most women are low income before entering the criminal justice system and may not have received proper prenatal care prior to arrest. However,

Johnston (1995) explained that during the first two years of life the development of attachment behaviors is important to the child. Infants whose attachment needs go unmet may become difficult to manage when stressed; they may experience a narrower range of emotions when they do not receive emotionally nurturing care. Johnston (1995) stated that parent-child separation might slow or alter the normal development of autonomy, causing children to become excessively dependent and fail to develop appropriate self-confidence.

Early Childhood

Johnston (1995) reported that the first experience of parental crime, arrest, or incarceration that many children can recall usually occurs in early childhood when children are learning about the world. In addition the nature and timing of parental crime, and the extent to which it removes the parent from the home, influences the child's development (Johnston, 1995). Although developmentally they are relatively advantaged with respect to coping, just like infants, young children's skills are challenged by frightening experiences. Young children are also particularly vulnerable to the traumatic effects of parental arrest and incarceration for several other reasons, including identification with the parent, survivor guilt, and forced silence.

Middle Childhood

Johnston & Gabel (1995) observed that middle childhood is a time to form self-identity and relationships with others. However for children with incarcerated parents the lack of primary caregivers involved in their lives at this time can be disruptive. They may have difficulty concentrating or in controlling anxiety (Seymour 2002). Adolescents may experience mental health problems, lack of finances, stigma, parent caregiver stress, and depression.

Early Adolescence

Johnston (1995) stated that a major developmental task of children in this age group is the organization or patterning of behavior in pursuit of distant goals for the future. Children at this age experience the normal increase in physical aggression that occurs at adolescence. They are also learning to act within peer groups that foster increasing independence from adults in the areas of self-control, emotional support, and information sharing. Little research attention has been paid to adolescent children of incarcerated parents.

Adolescent children of prisoners typically have had multiple experiences with parental crime, arrest, and incarceration. However, at adolescence the normal developmental tasks and the life experiences of prisoners' children are more compatible than at any previous age (Johnston 1995). Adolescents in this age group may begin experiencing problems in school, substance abuse, truancy, legal socialization, and gang involvement.

Late Adolescence

Seymour (2002) explained that it is typical for adolescents to develop maladaptive coping patterns as a response to a parent's incarceration, and many manifest delinquency, poor school performance, dropping out, substance abuse, and other inappropriate behaviors. Others face family responsibilities, including the care of younger siblings, when they are ill-equipped to be caregivers. Johnston & Gabel (1995) reported that the later teenage years are a time of crisis and confusion, in which children must resolve conflicts within themselves, in their relationships, and between themselves and society. Teenage children of prisoners usually have experienced a lifetime of disruptions related to their parents' criminal activities, arrests, and incarcerations. Youths in later adolescence may also be parents themselves.

Human service professionals can work toward positive outcomes for children by viewing each child developmentally.

Additionally, if human service professionals are to be able to give appropriate services to these children, any plan of action must have the goal of making it possible for them to develop into productive adults. Current social service, legal, and foster care systems are unable to prepare teens to go out into the world and become independent. Throughout the foster care system, teenagers are often viewed as delinquents, victims, or mental health patients, rather than as students, sons, and daughters (Harvard Women's law Journal, 2004).

Psychological effects of parental incarceration

The disruption of the family unit is a critical barrier to the development of children. Arditti (2003) argued that the context of single parenting due to incarceration rather than other contexts, such as divorce or death, presents additional challenges that may have a negative impact on children. Children may begin to feel that it is their fault that their parents are in prison, a persistent feeling of guilt and despair that is continuous throughout the parent's incarceration. Children may experience a feeling of loss. As mentioned earlier, they also experience shame and social stigma as a result of having parents who are imprisoned.

Children of first time offenders are unfamiliar with the criminal justice system. Johnston (1995) discussed how no families feel the shame and stigma more than those of first time prisoners. They have to learn how to protect the children and be their primary caregivers. Incarcerated parents usually have very limited access to contact with their children.

At the same time the limitations that caregivers struggle with include transportation to the prison, the expense of phone calls, and the frequency of letters and visits to the incarcerated parent. Primary caregivers would like children to visit their mothers and fathers more often. If these resources are not available, negative effects will occur for the child. All of these attempts at communication indicate that the family is struggling to maintain a relationship with the person who is incarcerated (Mendez, 2000).

The care and placement of children is also important in their development. Children going from home to home, or place to place, are vulnerable to negative outcomes in the future.

Poverty

Children who start poor may be cast into even more dire circumstances by parental incarceration. The foster care system is already overtaxed, with few resources remaining for these high risk children. Under the welfare act there is an incentive for states to place children in foster care if their parents cannot economically support them, since foster care benefits are guaranteed for each child, so they often lose the primary caregiver(s) in their lives. Even if the family manages to stay together, when the breadwinner for the family is lost due to incarceration, the children may be left to live with grandparents or other caregivers whose work histories are out of date or who may be out of the work force temporarily or permanently.

Relative Caregivers

Many African American children live temporarily in the homes of relative caregivers as a result of their parent's incarceration. Unlike non-relative foster parents, who make the proactive choice to take responsibility for someone else's children, relative caregivers often enter into the caring for family children in the midst of a family crisis (e.g., an adult child abusing drugs, the arrest of an adult child, or a grandchild being abused or neglected (Phillips & Bloom, 1998). The relative caregivers may consist of grandparents, uncles, aunts, or other relatives.

Primarily the care of children tends to remain with the grandparents, especially the grandmothers. The most common living arrangement for mothers who are incarcerated is grandparent caregivers (Barnhill, 1996). The majority of mothers in state prison identified the child's grandparent (53%) or other relatives (26%) as the current caregiver (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

Kinship care providers encounter various challenges in raising children of incarcerated parents. The challenges that kinship caregivers face include financial instability as well as the emotional, physical, and psychological difficulties of raising young children. As the number of grandmothers raising grandchildren increases, service providers in the area of aging have increasingly come into contact with older adults who are struggling with the difficulties of raising children in later life stages (Young & Smith, 2000). Both the grandparents and children are living a new lifestyle, one that is very different from their previous one before the parent's incarceration. Raising children after one's own offspring are adults is incongruent with the lifecycle plans of many adults (Young & Smith, 2000).

Despite these challenges children do cope with separation from their parents. Kinship care improves children's life chances, as opposed to living in foster care (Young & Smith, 2000). Moreover, kinship care placements are often preferred to foster care because they are recognized as providing a number of benefits over traditional foster care homes. Among these are perceived lack of disruptions in family connections and the belief that children make better adjustments in kinship homes (Young & Smith, 2000).

Foster care

Children who enter the foster care system are children who have experienced abuse, neglect, maltreatment, mental illness, and/or parents in the criminal justice system. The child welfare system has a large number of children whose parents are incarcerated. There are approximately 588,000 children in the foster care system in the United States (Child Welfare League, 2001). Children of color are the largest group of this population and their disproportionate representation is growing. In 1980, 47% of children in foster

care were children of color; by 2000, 66% of children in foster care were children of color (Child Welfare League of America, 2001).

Professionals play a vital role in the foster child's growth and development while they are in the system. According to the literature children who receive these services have several issues, including developmental problems, multiple placements, identity development, attachment, and overall family reunification. Mapp (2002) argued that the foster child commonly experiences many separations and losses due to both changes in placement and changes in caseworkers. Miller, Gorsk, Borchers, & Jenesta (2000) noted that children are placed in foster care because of society's concern for their well-being. Ideally, any time spent by a child in temporary care should be therapeutic, but in fact may be harmful to child's growth, development, and well-being. These are the children who are most likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

Despite the fact that a great number of children are subjected to these human service systems, the children's complex situations are not always addressed. It is important for practitioners and other service providers to acknowledge their unique needs. Social workers and foster parents should accurately assess behavior, particularly negative behavior, as the child may be either illustrating healthy attachment or exhibiting signs of distress or trauma bonds (Mapp, 2002). Family visiting is important not only to children but also to the parents who are in prison. Children who do not find permanent placement exit the foster care system when they are of age. Jonson-Reid & Barth (2003) noted that little research exists on children after they exit the foster care system.

Adoption and the role of the Human Service Professional

The children who receive guidance from human service professionals are likely candidates for adoption. The professionals who work with them may be overwhelmed by heavy caseloads and unable to acknowledge the unique needs of children separated from parents in the criminal justice system. Stein (2000) discussed the high turnover of child welfare workers for foster care and adoption, and noted that caseloads are often too high to permit anything but superficial contact with clients. Beckerman (1998) discussed the challenges facing caseworkers who manage cases in which the mother is incarcerated, and the need for child welfare agencies to develop practice guidelines and resources for implementing them.

Permanency planning issues are central for many children of incarcerated parents. Beckerman (1998) reported that children experience traumatic flashbacks from the mother's arrest, sadness, anger, problems in school, and a "conspiracy of silence" in which children and their caregivers do not discuss where the mother is, her criminal behavior, or her future return to the community. Caseworkers are important to children in these times of family separation. Stein (2000) stated that attaining permanency for children requires a variety of skills associated with the kind of professional training that social workers receive—for example, skills in assessing families strengths and weaknesses, identifying and implementing problem solving strategies, and monitoring client progress toward goal attainment. The caseworkers are responsible for assessing the child's progress before the incarceration.

Human service professionals are involved greatly in the adoption process of children. Therefore it is imperative that they receive adequate education, training, and

support for children with parents in prison or jail. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 terminates the parent's rights after a certain period of time, sometimes in as little as 12 months (previously 18 months) depending on the length of the sentence (Beckerman, 1998). The passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act shortens the timeline within which assessment and establishment of a permanency plan can be accomplished and forces of initiation of termination proceedings in specified cases. At the same time, the expectation that "reasonable efforts" be made to facilitate family reunification is excused if a court has found that there are aggravated circumstances such as abandonment. However maintaining contact with the parent, determining the date of release from prison, and developing documentation can be difficult for the caseworker (Beckerman, 1998).

Additionally, these obstacles are put in place for both the children and the parents. It is unreasonable to think that children can remain in contact with the parent without help from the social worker involved in the child's case. Beckerman (1998) explains that case workers must be able to determine what is in the child's "best interests," assess the strengths and capabilities of each mother, and develop and monitor plans that move each child into a home that promises permanence. Those children who only achieve permanency in out-of-home care are destined for the streets or runaway.

Various programs and professionals with social service and other governmental state agencies work with street children. These are the children who are truly "left behind" by the criminal justice, child welfare, and educational systems. Runaway youths encounter a number of issues after leaving home; they may have problems meeting even their most basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. In 1999 an estimated 1,682,900

youth had a runaway/throwaway episode (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrown away Children; NISMART, 2002). Runaway youth continue to leave their caretakers homes. Of these youth, 37 percent were missing from their caretakers and 21 percent were reported to authorities for purposes of locating the youth (NISMART, 2002).

The various characteristics of runaway youth follow the pattern of children of incarcerated parents. Baker (2003) suggested that shelters should collaborate with mental health professionals in the community and require staff to receive mental health training. Multiple intervention strategies are most likely to be effective.

Programs working with children of incarcerated parents

Children in sequential placement and no placement situations may encounter human service professionals in many programs. They may need services related to visitation, transportation, healthcare, and family support counseling during the time that their parents are in prison (Hairston, 1998).

In recent years a variety of programs have been put in place for children of incarcerated parents. Block & Pottastt (1998) discussed the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Program (GSBB), which comprises unique features, partnerships, program sources, funding sources, and program services. Block addressed how distant prison locations, inconvenient visiting schedules, and the negative effects of a mother's imprisonment on her children often complicate the child welfare professional's work with children of incarcerated mothers. Enhanced prison visiting programs offer a mechanism to support

the mother-child relationship, facilitate reunification efforts, and assist with permanency planning.

Seymour & Kreishner (2002) discussed the Families in Crisis (FIC) agency in Connecticut, one of a very few national programs dedicated to meeting the needs of offenders and their families. Through a range of programs FIC works to address the needs of parents and children during incarceration and at the time of release. FIC has two programs devoted to young children and school-age children. The Sesame Street program serves the needs of children under 12 who are visiting their parents in prison. Program staff try to help the children express their fears and concerns, and the group setting allows the children to interact with one another. FIC's Youth Enrichment Services (YES) offers after school enrichment programs. The program picks up the children after school and brings them to the center where they receive counseling, educational support, recreational opportunities and therapy. YES also refers families to other services.

Beckerman (1998) described the Reading Family Ties: Face to Face program which allows incarcerated mothers in two rural central Florida institutions to have weekly family visits with their children using high speed video conferencing technology. The program has proven to be successful for the inmate mothers.

Other programs include the FDC's family development programs which teach offenders how to become more effective parents. The Osborne Association in New York City works diligently to help support children of incarcerated parents. The CLAIM program in Chicago also works to provide children with supports and services. The ability of human service professionals to serve well may be linked to their experience in

program development, enhancement of rules and regulations that are mandated for children, and better policies put in place for families.

Policy Issues

It is important for researchers, policy makers, social workers, and family scholars to become aware of this underserved population. Human service professionals are in need of more training and understanding to help them. For example, professionals should be able to coach and counsel children and mothers about appropriate ways to interact during visits, on the telephone, and during correspondence.

Agencies should develop case management handbooks for use as an introduction and orientation to working with children whose parents are incarcerated. Such handbooks should address issues like model case plans, the designation of specialized caseworkers, and agency transportation to clients. Child welfare agencies might consider establishing linkages with enhanced visiting programs serving their communities.

The role of the professional is very important as children continue to travel from system to system. The professional is responsible for the child's well being before, during, and after the parent's incarceration. The professional is the only connection that the child has with the parent during the time of the parent's incarceration.

Gaps and Conclusions

In order to provide healthier outcomes for children, particularly for African American children, human service professionals should receive appropriate support during the initial period of adjustment for the children, as their parents are adjusting to the prison environment (Hope House, 2001). Human service professionals should receive

more education on how to handle these unique cases. The gaps between knowing what the children need and how to support them are not addressed in the systems that the children use every day.

The gaps for professionals working with incarcerated parents and children include lack of information about the parent, lack of contact between parents and children, and creating a permanency plan for children. For many incarcerated parents, caseworkers are their only link with children in care (Seymore 1998). In addition caseworkers face many challenges; geographical distance, prison security requirements, and high caseloads all impede their communication with parents (Seymore, 1998). As a result children suffer the consequences of not being able to communicate with their parents.

Theoretical Framework

Children of incarcerated parents come into contact with case managers, service workers, and foster care workers throughout their parent's incarceration. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1993) is useful in describing the interaction of children and the services that they receive directly or indirectly in the child welfare, criminal justice, and educational systems. The theory encompasses a clear picture of how children and professionals work together to improve the lives of families, and may help to explain the professionals' relation with the child's informal care or other nonparental care. Bronfenbrenner's theory helps us to connect the social systems that children use frequently in their lives, systems that have implications for family researchers, social workers, and policy makers.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has four levels of environmental systems, differentiated on the basis of their immediacy with respect to the developing person. These are the person's micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. The family is the principal *microsystem* in which the child's development takes place. Relationships between the family and other settings for development, such as the day care center or school, constitute a *mesosystem*. External environments in which others participate and thereby affect the child are termed *exosystems*.

Work settings and other social networks are examples of micro, meso, and exosystems that are embedded in the *macrosystem*, the broad ideological values, norms, and institutional patterns of society. Additionally, the *chronosystem* is used for examining influences on the person's development of changes and continuities over time in the environment in which the person lives (Bronfenbrenner 1986). In the case of children of incarcerated parents the child is moving through a system by relying on the help of the human service professionals and agencies. According to Bronfenbrenner the child and the parents are the microsystem.

The mesosystem comprises the school and neighborhood. However, for children with parents who are in prison the microsystem is weakened by loss of communication and contact with the parent. The child depends mainly on the relative caregiver and human service professionals. The child's parent in prison becomes the exosystem. However, the missing parent influences the child's development by not being available in the life of the child on a continuous basis. The macrosystem consists of the community agencies and professionals working with the child and parents. The chronosystem

consists of the policies that are in place for children of incarcerated parents. These policies influence what services and programs will be provided to children to promote healthier outcomes developmentally.

Significance of the Study

Children of incarcerated parents often have more contact with their social worker, case manager, or primary caregiver than with their own parents. These children and their jailed parents need professional help to maneuver through the criminal justice and child welfare systems. Presently we know little of how the professionals view their priorities in this regard. This study allows the voices of human service professionals to be heard and may help to identify changes needed to serve families undergoing the stress of parental incarceration. Additionally it can be used to understand how professionals working with children can affect services and programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Overview

This exploratory study describes the needs of children of incarcerated parents as perceived by the professionals who work with them on a daily basis. Professionals were asked to describe their experiences in response to the question: Given your role in providing services to families, what do you see as the needs of the kids?

Using the method of concept mapping, human service professionals developed a clear picture of the needs of children of incarcerated parents. A half-day focus group and Q sort were employed as part of data collection. In this chapter, I first describe concept mapping as a methodology. Next, I describe the recruitment process for the half-day focus group and for the individuals who only participated in the Q sort. Third, I describe the focus group procedures to initiate concept mapping among the participants. Fourth, I describe the participants in the half day focus group. Finally, I discuss the Jackson group of human service professionals who participated in the Q sort method of data collection.

Concept Mapping

In the present study concept mapping with a focus group was used to assess the research question. Concept mapping provided the vehicle to hear the voices of the professionals who work with children of incarcerated parents. The reason for the use of concept mapping as a methodology is that the information generated by a group discussion of focused questions produces a rich understanding of the points of view of the

participants, in this case professionals who work with children of incarcerated parents.

The use of concept mapping makes it possible for any group to describe ideas about some topic in a pictorial form (Trochim, 2001). Concept mapping can be used in strategic planning, product development, and market analysis. For this study it was used for practice-oriented research. This methodology helps researchers who want to involve groups in the act of data generation and interpretation (Trochim, 2001).

Concept mapping is a statistical technique designed for the management and interpretation of a certain type of qualitative data, i.e., the statements generated during a “brainstorming” session. Concept mapping consists of six steps: 1) preparation, 2) generation, 3) structuring, 4) representation, 5) interpretation, and 6) utilization, with 10 to 20 participants involved in each session (Trochim, 2001). A mapping process can have hundreds or even thousands of participants, although there is usually only a small group.

The group can generate up to 200 statements in a concept-mapping project (Trochim, 2001). Structuring of statements involves each participant sorting out statements into piles of similar statements. Each participant names each pile with a short descriptive label. Then each participant rates each statement on some scale. Usually the statements are rated on a 1-5 scale for their relative importance, where a 1 means that the statement is relatively unimportant compared to all the rest; a 3 means it is moderately important, and a 5 means it is extremely important.

The representation of statements is the process of taking the sort, rating the input, and representing it in map form (Trochim, 2001). The interpretation of statements involves the facilitator working with the group to develop its own labels and

interpretation maps. The final step is the utilization of statements; the participants use the map to help address the original focus of the research question.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited from various agencies in a small city in mid-Michigan. The agencies consisted of human service organizations, such as Child and Family Services, Lutheran Services, Catholic Social Services, St. Vincent Home for Children, probate court, community mental health, advocacy services, and child welfare services.

Human service professionals were contacted directly by telephone and invited to participate in the study. After my initial call to the professionals, I followed up with another phone call or e-mail to confirm participation in the project. In addition, flyers were mailed and faxed to various agencies to further distribute information about the project to potential participants.

Focus Group Procedures

To acquire the qualitative data, a focus group was formed of 8 human service professionals from the mid-Michigan area. The focus group consisted of social workers, case managers, foster care workers, adoption workers, and advocates. The purpose of the focus group was to learn how social service providers who work with children of incarcerated parents see the needs of this invisible population of children. The focus group also provided a variety of statements about the participants themselves.

This approach was enhanced by a quantification of the statements and themes generated to facilitate the group, and to assign descriptive meanings for the participants to interpret the relation of the themes to one another (Brown & Calder, 2000).

On the day of the session the participants arrived at the Human Ecology building on the MSU campus at 8:30 a.m. Participants filled out a consent form and questionnaire before beginning the concept mapping process. They were given the top half of the consent form to keep for future reference.

The day began with introduction of the researchers and the study. I explained that this study would require half of their usual work day, and that their participation was very valuable for the project. I explained what the participants would be doing through the session. After participants filled out the consent form and questionnaire the rules of the study were explained. I also had a “get- to- know you” activity. At 9:30 a.m. the concept mapping process began.

Brainstorming

As mentioned earlier, Trochim’s method of concept mapping (2002) consists of six steps; Step 1 in the process is preparation. According to Trochim (2002), focused brainstorming and rating are the initial steps for concept mapping. The group began the brainstorming process at 9:40 a.m. by answering the question: Given your role in providing services to families, what do you see as the needs of the kids? The group answered the question through a series of round robins.

Step 2 of the concept mapping is generation of statements. This focus group consisted of eight participants who had 4 opportunities to generate at least 60 statements.

An assistant in the back of the room typed the statements entered into the computer as they were being brainstormed. Also, a flip chart and LCD overhead projector were utilized to write down the statements. The brainstorming session lasted for an hour.

The statements were entered into a rating form created using a word processor. Copies of the rating forms were made during a half-hour break and distributed to participants for their rankings when they returned. Statements were rated from very important to least important on a 3-point scale. Participants rated for fifteen to twenty minutes. The same identification number was used on the rating form and on the questionnaire in order to match them up later.

Rating

The second step of concept mapping is the generation of statements which are the focus of brainstorming for the participants. The generation of statements consists of the rating for each of the statements. After the rating process we took a fifteen-minute break for snacks. During that time cards were printed off for each participant. Cards were generated from a spreadsheet program. Before beginning the sorting process I explained the rules of sorting based on Trochim's method, and demonstrated by using a stack of playing cards.

Sorting

The generation of statements involves step three structuring of statements. The structuring of statements consists of sorting and rating of the statements. Participants then sorted their statements anyway that they found appropriate. Participants could have as many piles of cards for the sorting process as they wished. They sorted the statements in a way that made sense to them.

The group read the statements and thought about all the statements that were similar. The sorting of the statements into groups took an hour. At the conclusion of the day the sorted statements were entered into the computer. The sorted statements from

each group created a similarity matrix, as the research assistants entered the data into the computer. Lunch was provided to the participants in the room and the day ended at approximately 1 p.m. The participants received a small honorarium of \$25.00 and reimbursement for parking.

Southern Michigan human service professionals (Q sort)

A volunteer assistant recruited the remaining 8 participants from Southern Michigan. The participants consisted of probation officers, social workers, and adoption workers. The volunteer assistant distributed a set of cards to sort, a rating sheet, and a ranking form to complete off site, and went to each participant individually to explain the instructions for completing the packet. Upon completion of the sorting and ranking for the Southern Michigan group, each participant received a \$10.00 gift certificate for Chili's Restaurant.

Participant Description

The eight human service professionals from the half-day focus group and the eight Southern Michigan participants ranged in age, gender, experience in the field, and ethnicity. One participant from the southern Michigan group did not complete the sorting task. Subsequently, fifteen participants completed the sorting tasks. As a result, the analysis is based on the 15 participants who completed the sorting and rating tasks. Of the participants, 53% held a bachelor's degree, 6% held a master's, and 1 held a doctoral degree. Overall this was a highly educated sample. The most common educational level among the participants consisted of having a master's degree. The participants' mean age was 33 and ranged from 25-60. Experience in the professional field ranged from four

who had worked in the field 3-5 years, to five who had worked in the field 5-10 years, to six who had worked in the field more than 10 years. There were 12 females and 3 males.

Characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 3.1. There were five African Americans and 10 European Americans.

Table 3.1.

Distribution of participant characteristics

Characteristic	n (persons)	Frequency %
Gender (N=15)		
Female	12	80.0
Male	3	20.0
Ethnicity (N=15)		
		(100)
African American	5	33.3
European American	10	66.7
Education (N=15)		
		(100)
BA/BS	8	53.3
MA/MSW	6	40.0
Ph.D	1	6.7
Experience in the field (N=15)		
		(100)
3-5 years	4	26.7
5-10 years	5	33.3
more than 10 years	6	40.0
		(100)

The numbers and frequencies of participants by relevant characteristics, gender (male or female), ethnicity (African American, European American), education, (BA/BS, MA/MSW, Ph.D), experience in field, (3-5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years).

Analysis

In this study I explored the perspective of human service professionals with respect to the needs of children whose parents are or have been incarcerated. In brief, I determined which needs were viewed by these professionals as primary by calculating the most selected items among those generated in the session. Next, through concept

mapping and multidimensional scaling (MDS), I identified key groups or categories of items (clusters) as seen by the whole group of human service professionals.

The analysis consisted of comparison groups by key demographics—ethnicity, education, and length of profession—by clusters statistically to determine whether groups of human service professionals differ in voicing immediate needs of children of incarcerated parents. In this analysis I assessed how similar the concept maps' mean rating of each cluster were to the human service professionals as individuals compared to the group as a whole. What follows is a more detailed description of the process for three analyses. The three analyses were the cluster analysis, analysis of concept map, and analysis of participant demographics.

Brainstormed statements were entered into Word. SPSS was used to conduct multidimensional scaling (MDS), cluster analysis, and statistical similarity matrix for the final maps. Also the research team referred back to the questionnaires for other demographic information.

The sorted statements were entered into a spreadsheet program in a statistical similarity matrix to analyze the data. Each person's card sort was entered into a binary symmetric similarity matrix. This is a square matrix with the items forming the rows and columns and 1's in the diagonal. Cell entries of 1 indicated that a pair of statements was sorted into some pile. Entries of 0 indicate that the pair of statements was not sorted into the same pile. The individual matrices were summed in a final similarity matrix in which the numbers representing the number of people who placed pairs of statements were seen as conceptually similar. The final similarity matrix was entered into a two dimensional

non-metric multidimensional scaling (MDS) procedure (SPSS, 1999). This procedure produces a two-dimensional map of the items based on how items were sorted. Items closer together on the map are perceived as more similar than those that are further apart. A hierarchical cluster analysis of the X-Y coordinate values from the multidimensional scaling was conducted next using Ward's method. In addition, follow up sorting could be done with participants on an individual basis to insure accurate interpretation of comments made during the initial concept mapping process. Corrections and additional review of the statements took place after data was collected.

I applied a 3-point scale to rate the importance of each of the statements. The scale utilized spanned from least important to very important. The sort results were entered into SPSS. I assigned a unique number to each pile of sorted statements and entered the number into the appropriate row or columns. (MDS) was conducted for the whole sample in order to arrive at statistical groupings of the statements.

Multidimensional scaling (MDS) was used to create a picture to answer the research question. MDS produced a series of clusters. I decided how to label clusters within the concept map based on the configuration of items within each cluster' some of the dimensions can be supported from the literature.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of this study, provided by the human service professionals' perspective of the needs of children of incarcerated parents, are presented in this chapter. The method of concept mapping was used to hear the voices of human service professionals who worked directly or indirectly with children of incarcerated parents. The concept map produced in this study consisted of nine clusters representing what the human service professionals agreed on as the most important statements.

In response to the concept map I looked at the breakdown of each cluster by item and statement, the mean rating for each cluster, and demographic characteristics for the human service professionals. Finally I looked at the additional analysis of clusters by key demographics of the human service professionals based on ethnicity, education, and length in profession. The analysis of the clusters by key demographics helped to distinguish differences in responses of individual human service professionals from those of the whole group sharing those characteristics.

Descriptive findings and data reduction

The findings consisted of a total of 60 statements from the half day focus group, which reflected participants' views on the needs of children of incarcerated parents. These 60 statements were reduced to 46 statements because several of the statements were similar or overlapping in meaning. These are the statements that were most similar in meaning when the participants created their categories (Table 4.1). For instance, there

were similar statements about the importance of “stability in the home,” and “building up the household situation.” These statements were similar in the sense that they required a strong family structure for children and parents. A group of statements like “frequent visitations,” “visitations between children and their incarcerated parents,” and “not enough visitations” would have been collapsed into one category or statement.

Table 4.1.

Mean rating for each cluster

Cluster	Mean	(sd)
1. Mentorship and counseling	2.61	(.26)
5. Children’s developmental needs	2.51	(.34)
6. Networking between social programs	2.42	(.38)
7. Outreach	2.40	(.39)
2. Parenting education and legal services	2.29	(.48)
3. Community based programs	2.29	(.46)
4. Services coordination	2.20	(.56)
9. Political strength and advocacy	2.19	(.56)
8. Research and education	2.01	(.49)

The table includes the mean ratings of the needs of children of incarcerated parents as perceived by the human service professionals in each cluster.

The top three cluster domains were mentorship and counseling, children’s developmental needs, and networking between social programs. Mentorship and counseling has the highest mean rating. The human service professionals contended that mentorship and counseling are the most important needs for children of incarcerated parents, (m=2.61). shown in Table 4.1. The least important need is research and education (m= 2.01), shown in Table 4.1.

Another example of similar statements would be “parenting classes for incarcerated parents,” and “implement parenting skills training before parents are released

from prison or jail.” Parenting skills training and parenting classes both focused on requiring incarcerated parents to improve their parenting skills. These remaining statements all became newly configured statements, and were then grouped into clusters, which formed the concept map.

After the brainstorming session the experts, including the primary investigator/ author and statistician, examined the set of statements for redundancy or ones that could be doubled or collapsed into others. This process reduced the 60 statements to 46. The statements that discussed communication, mentoring, counseling, research, and education, and points where the professionals had similar views, were grouped together. These statements were about needs that most affected children of incarcerated parents and their families.

Participants in the half-day focus group were encouraged to generate at least 60 statements. The group examined the statements for editing purposes; also the researchers edited the final 46 statements. Table 4.2 provides a breakdown of the edited statements by cluster. The final group of statements used in the (MDS) analysis is in Table 4.3.

Table 4.2.

Data reduction of 60 brainstormed statements to 46 statements

***Reflects a doubled or similar statement addressed in data collection process**

1. More peer support groups
2. Having access to free legal services
3. Need for mentorship because of the loss of guidance
4. Educational support services for children
5. Open communication from service professionals, corrections, courts, such that children can be informed about the parental incarceration process
6. Ability to make contact with the incarcerated parents

Table 4.2 Continued

7. Use of reunification programs
8. Other parent openly communicates about the incarcerated parent
9. Open communication of kids with their custodial parent(s) about the incarcerated parent
10. Children's separation from parents' criminal issues
11. Access to counseling
12. Children's stability to talk about their feelings
13. Individual therapy for children
14. Counseling to deal with the grief, loss, and shame. Increase in coping skills
15. Enhance children's coping skills
16. Addressing the needs of parents
17. Help parents with resources after they complete the incarceration term
18. Real "re-entry" programs for parents after their release
- 19. Importance of stability in the home***
- 20. Building up the household situation***
21. Better networking between existing social programs that help kids and their families
- 22. Need for mentors and volunteers (community based)***
- 23. More staffed programs not dependent on volunteers***
- 24. Problem too many volunteers and not enough hired professional staff***
25. "National" networks of mentorship and programs
26. Neighborhood programs and natural resources for children. National, central agency needed for coordination services
27. Phased programs that fit developmental stages
- 28. Frequent visitations***
- 29. Visitation between children and their incarcerated parents. Not enough visitations***
30. Facilitation of access for visitations, e.g. transportation for visits
31. Close gaps that result in missed information about parents' potential abusiveness/neglectfulness before children make contact to be reunified
- 32. More specific rules to avoid contact with abusive parents***
- 33. Need for more communication between children service systems, courts, corrections, police, etc.***
34. Family services workers educate children about their parents
35. Need for a complete psychosocial profile of family
36. Better utilization of existing research
- 37. Research on this subject not accessible to professionals in the field***
- 38. Research presented at conferences such as the Black Social Workers or National Council on Family Relations or Child Development***
39. Ongoing education to field professionals
40. Need for specific resource directories for children with incarcerated parents and the other non-offending parent
41. Silence of communities with respect to parent incarceration

Table 4.2 Continued

- 42. Parenting classes for incarcerated parent***
- 43. Implement parenting skills***
- 44. Stability for children with incarcerated parents. Child acceptance of his/her presence family systems
- 45. Reduce number of child replacements while in foster care, relative care, etc.
- 46. Knowing parental love
- 47. More time with relative care provider, foster parent who might have a busy schedule
- 48. Need for positive role models
- 49. Follow-up and follow-through with after care plans by families
- 50. Follow through with after care plans by families
- 51. More pay for direct care workers
- 52. Hire and attract more qualified professionals
- 53. Resources are not enough and the need for funding in the field
- 54. Political advocacy for human services field
- 55. Need for more effective lobbying
- 56. Need for more effective and focused political advocacy
- 57. More funding allocation for the human services field
- 58. Federal/state/local policy changes in favor of human services
- 59. Having a middle safe place supervised for children before and after visitations if long travel is involved
- 60. Sleeping quarters available for kids before visitation***

Data reduction of brainstormed statements of children's needs from the focus group of Mid Michigan human service professionals.

Cluster Analysis

The researchers examined maps with different numbers of concepts before arriving at a decision in favor of the nine- cluster solution. The first solution reviewed included 7 clusters, with no clear themes. By increasing the number of clusters by two, additional clear themes emerged. The nine- cluster solution provided the best interpretability. The results of the cluster analysis are in the following list.

Cluster 1-Mentorship and counseling for children. Cluster 1 represented the need for more mentorship and counseling for children as suggested by the statement “Need for mentorship due to loss of guidance.” The human service professionals reflected on the need for more peer support groups and individual therapy to help children deal with grief, loss, and shame.

Cluster 2-Parenting education and legal services. Cluster 2 stresses the need for access to free legal services and resources after parents have completed their incarceration term, such as reunification programs for families. The human service professionals felt that parenting classes are needed for incarcerated parents. They also thought phased programs are needed that fit the developmental stages of children. Also there is a need for “real” re-entry programs for parents after they are released.

Cluster 3-Community based programs and services for families. Cluster 3 describes the need for access to counseling and educational support services for children and the need for more mentors and volunteers (community based) including facilitation of access to visitation, e.g., transportation for visits. The human service professionals described a need for follow-through with aftercare plans by families. Children of incarcerated parents need a transitional safe supervised care location before and after visitation if long travel is involved.

Cluster 4-Service coordination of corrections, courts and the human service professional. Cluster 4 represents the need for open communication from human service professionals, corrections, and courts, such that children can be informed about the

parental incarceration process. Human service professionals suggested the need for a complete psychosocial profile of families.

Cluster 5-Child's developmental needs. This cluster represents the need for children to make contact with incarcerated parents. This cluster consisted of eight statements about children coping with their parent's imprisonment. There is a need for open communication of children with their custodial parent(s) about the incarcerated parent. Human service professionals saw a need for children's separation from parent's criminal issues and enhancing children's coping skills. Service providers discussed the importance of stability in the home. The responses from the participants suggested the idea of knowing parental love, or making more time available with relative care-providers/foster parents who have busy schedules. Finally the participants discussed the need for positive role models in the child's life.

Cluster 6-Better networking between social programs for children and their families. The two statements in this cluster represent the need for better networking between existing social programs that help kids and their families. The information provided by the networks will help to close the gaps that result in missed information about parent's potential abusiveness or neglectfulness before children make contact or are reunified with parents.

Cluster 7-Outreach. The two statements associated with this cluster stress the importance of outreach for the family. The focus in this cluster is on resource directories and key information for the family. Human service professionals acknowledged the need for more staffed programs that are not dependent on volunteers.

Cluster 8-Research education for field staff. This cluster focuses on the need for better utilization of existing research by field staff. Human service professionals found a need for increased accessibility of research on this subject. They stressed the need for national networks of mentorship programs. Cluster 8 represents the need for neighborhood programs and natural resources for children of mentorship programs. Cluster eight also involves a call for a national, central agency to be developed for coordination of services for children and families.

Cluster 9-Political strength and advocacy. This cluster represents more pay for direct care workers. Human service professionals stressed the need for political advocacy for the human services field. Political advocacy for the human services profession is needed on all levels from the federal, state, and local levels. Cluster 9 focused on more effective lobbying. The human service professionals stressed the need for more funding allocations, as well as federal, state, and local policy changes in favor of human services for children of incarceration and their parents.

Table 4.3.

Cluster items for concept map

Cluster 1: Mentorship and counseling for children

- Item 1. More peer support groups
- Item 3. Need for more mentorship due to loss of guidance
- Item 12. Individual therapy for children
- Item 13. Counseling for children to deal with grief, loss, and shame
- Item 36. Reduce number of child multiple placements while in foster care, relative care

Cluster 2: Parent education and legal services

- Item 2. Access to free legal services

Table 4.3 Continued

Item 15. Helping parents with resources after they have completed their incarceration term

Item 7. Use of reunification program

Item 23. Phased programs that fit developmental stages of children

Item 33. Parenting classes for incarcerated parents

Item 34. Implementation of opportunities for parenting skills training before parents released

Item 16. Real “re-entry” program for parents after their release

Cluster 3: Community based programs and services for families

Item 10. Access to counseling

Item 4. Educational support services for children

Item 19. Need for more mentors and volunteers (community based)

Item 25. Facilitation of access for visitations, e.g., transportation visits

Item 41. Follow-through with after care plans for families

Item 46. Having a middle safe, supervised care/location for children before and after visitations, if long travel is involved

Cluster 4: Service coordination for corrections, courts, and the human service professional

Item 5. Open communication from service professionals, corrections, courts, such that children can be informed about the parental incarceration process

Item 27. Need for a complete psychosocial profile for families

Cluster 5: Children’s developmental needs

Item 6. Ability to make contact with incarcerated parents

Item 5. Open communication of kids with their custodial parent(s) about the incarcerated parent

Item 9. Children’s separation from parents’ criminal issues

Item 14. Enhance children’s coping skills

Item 17. Importance of stability in the home

Item 37. Knowing parental love

Table 4.3 Continued

Item 38. More time with relative care provider/foster parent who might have a busy schedule

Item 39. Need for positive role models

Cluster 6: Better networking between social programs for children and their families

Item 18. Better networking between existing social programs that help kids and their families.

Item 26. Close gaps that result in missed information about parents' potential abusiveness/neglectfulness/before children make contact or are reunified

Item 40. Follow-up and follow through with after care programs and with service care providers

Cluster 7: Outreach

Item 31. Resource directories with key information for the family

Item 20. More staffed programs not dependent on volunteers

Cluster 8: Research Education for field staff

Item 28. Better utilization of existing research by field staff

Item 29. Increase accessibility of research on this subject not accessible to professionals in the field

Item 30. Ongoing education for field professionals

Item 21. National networks of mentorship programs

Item 22. Neighborhood programs and natural resources for children of incarcerated parents, national, central agency needed for coordinating services

Cluster 9: Political strength and advocacy

Item 42. More pay for direct care workers

Item 43. Political advocacy for human services field; need for more effective lobbying

Item 44. More funding allocation for human service professional field

Item 45. Federal, state/local policy changes in favor of human services for children of incarceration and their parents.

The items and descriptive statements for each of the nine cluster domains identified from the concept map.

Analysis of clusters by key demographics

Human service professionals in the half day focus group and in the (Q sort) only group were asked to fill out a questionnaire to collect demographic information. In addition I addressed whether there are significant differences in the mean ratings given to each cluster by different groups of people.

I expected to find a difference among the human service professionals in areas of ethnicity, length in profession, and education (shown in Tables 4.4-4.6). The first 3 clusters of the concept map (Figure 1) show that African American and European Americans agreed that mentoring and counseling rated the highest for children of the incarcerated for the whole group. By having mentors children will feel cared for and be more likely to have high self esteem. However, African American human service professionals thought that children were in need of more service coordination of programs, networking between social programs, research and education, and political strength and advocacy for children of incarcerated parents. African American human service professionals felt that political strength and advocacy was very important as children transition while their parents are in prison or jail (Table 4.4).

Also, in terms of length of profession, the human service professionals who had more experience in the field did not show a difference in any of the nine clusters (Table 4.6). However, the length in profession played a small role in determining the responses to the question. The education of the human service professionals played a small role in

determining the needs of children and families. The ethnicity of the human service professionals played the largest role in determining the needs of children.

Ethnicity/Education/ Length in Profession Analysis

The different groups of human service professionals were defined by ethnicity (African American vs. European American), educational level (BA degree vs. MA degree or higher) and years in profession (5 years, 5-10 years, 10 or more years; shown in Table 4.6). By doing additional analysis using the SPSS program I could determine the difference between groups.

Ethnicity

African Americans and European American social workers agreed on the need for mentoring and counseling for children of incarcerated parents. However for Cluster 2- Parenting education and legal services, African Americans ($m=2.57$) implied that it is more of a need than European Americans did ($m= 2.14$). African Americans and European Americans disagreed on cluster 3- Community based programs, and the largest cluster difference was Cluster 4- Services coordination, with ($m= 2.60$) for African Americans and ($m=2.00$) for European Americans. Refer to Table 4.4. This finding suggests that African American social workers view service coordination as a more immediate need than European Americans do; however this does not imply that European Americans did not think service coordination was important.

African Americans ($m=2.44$) disagreed on the need for research and education with European Americans ($m=1.80$). Refer to Table 4.4. The social workers disagreed on the need for political strength and advocacy (African Americans ($m=2.56$) and European

Americans ($m = 2.00$)). This implied that African Americans felt a greater need for changes in policy for children of incarcerated parents. African Americans described a need for changes in current policies for children and families.

Education

The social workers' educational level played a small role in the results of the 9 clusters presented in this study. Race and education played the largest roles. The education of the human service professionals was used to determine how MA's compared to BA's in the field. For example, there was not a significant difference between groups for cluster 1- Mentoring and Counseling. However the mean rating for BA degree vs. MA+ degree for Cluster 2- Parenting education and legal services showed a slight difference. Refer to Table 4.5.

The $m = BA$ was 2.17 and for MA it was 2.47. There was a significant difference for Cluster 4- Service coordination, with BA ($m = 2.00$) and MA ($m = 2.42$). Also a significant difference was shown for Cluster 9- Political strength and advocacy, with BA ($m = 1.95$) and MA plus ($m = 2.45$). The remaining clusters did not show any significant difference. Human service professionals who held master's degrees showed a significant difference for cluster # 3- Community based programs and services.

Length in profession

Social workers responded to the question of length in profession. Respondents' choices included 5 years, less than 5 years, 5-10 years, and 10 or more years. Cluster 1- Mentoring and Counseling did not show any significant difference between groups. Refer to Table 4.6. In addition those not having a great amount of experience (in the field for a short period of time) did not show a significant difference in contrast to those who had

worked in the field for a long period of time. Human service professionals who worked longer in the field had a higher mean rating for each cluster. The human service professionals with less experience had a lower mean rating. Refer to Table 4.6.

Table 4.4.**Mean rating for each cluster by Ethnicity**

Cluster	Ethnicity	F	Mean	Sig
Mentorship and counseling				
	African American	0.31	2.56	0.587
	European American		2.64	
Parenting education and legal services				
	African American	3.047	2.57	0.104
	European American		2.14	
Community based programs				
	African American	2.362	2.53	0.148
	European American		2.16	
Services coordination				
	African American	4.875	2.53	0.046
	European American		2.47	
Children's developmental needs				
	African American	0.331	2.58	0.575
	European American		2.47	
Networking between social programs				
	African American	5.856	2.86	0.031
	European American		2.20	
Outreach				
	African American	2.167	2.60	1.650
	European American		2.30	
Research and education				
	African American	9.093	2.44	0.010
	European American		2.30	
Political strength and advocacy				
	African American	4.103	2.56	0.064
	European American		2.00	

The results of an ANOVA analysis reporting the ethnic differences between human service professionals across the cluster domains.

Table 4.5.**Mean rating for each cluster by Education**

Cluster	Education	F	Mean	Sig
Mentorship and counseling				
	BA	0.335	2.65	0.573
	MA		2.57	
Parenting education and legal services				
	BA	0.845	2.17	0.375
	MA		2.47	
Community based programs				
	BA	2.439	2.15	0.142
	MA		2.47	
Services coordination				
	BA	2.400	2.00	0.145
	MA		2.42	
Children's developmental needs				
	BA	0.635	2.44	0.440
	MA		2.58	
Networking between social programs				
	BA	3.987	2.16	0.067
	MA		2.71	
Outreach				
	BA	0.867	2.31	0.369
	MA		2.50	
Research and education				
	BA	2.079	1.85	0.173
	MA		2.20	
Political strength and advocacy				
	BA	3.674	1.95	0.077
	MA		2.45	

The results of an ANOVA analysis reporting the educational differences between human service professionals across the cluster domains.

Table 4.6**Mean rating by cluster for Length in Profession**

Cluster	Length in profession	F	Mean	Sig
Mentorship and counseling				
	3-5 years	2.240	2.40	0.149
	5-10 years		2.68	
	10+ years		2.70	
Parenting education and legal services				
	3-5 years	0.146	2.39	0.866
	5-10 years		2.28	
	10+ years		2.21	
Community based programs				
	3-5 years	0.613	2.50	0.558
	5-10 years		2.67	
	10+ years		2.16	
Services coordination				
	3-5 years	0.887	2.50	0.437
	5-10 years		2.00	
	10+ years		2.16	
Children's developmental needs				
	3-5 years	0.482	2.36	0.629
	5-10 years		2.58	
	10+ years		2.54	
Networking between social programs				
	3-5 years	0.301	2.58	0.746
	5-10 years		2.26	
	10+ years		2.44	
Outreach				
	3-5 years	0.012	2.37	0.988
	5-10 years		2.40	
	10+ years		2.41	
Research and education				
	3-5 years	0.256	2.10	0.778
	5-10 years		1.88	
	10+ years		2.06	
Political strength and advocacy				
	3-5 years	0.698	2.45	0.517
	5-10 years		2.00	
	10+ years		2.18	

The results of an ANOVA analysis reporting the differences in length of time in the profession between human service professionals across the cluster domains.

Description of concept map

The concept map is the visual picture created from the responses that were organized into the list of statements created by the human service professionals. The concept map is divided into four quadrants of items with similar themes according to the needs of children of incarcerated parents. These themes were determined by the human service professionals themselves, through their sorting of the original brainstorming statements.

The first quadrant, located on the upper right side of the map, represents the need to enhance family relationships. See Figure 1. The clusters of Quadrant 1 include Cluster 1- mentorship and counseling; some of the items within Cluster 1 were v1 more peer support groups, v3 need for mentorship due to loss and guidance, and v12 individual therapy for children.

Cluster 3-Community based programs also falls in this quadrant; the items within Cluster 3 are v10 access to counseling and v4 educational support groups for children.

The second quadrant, also on the right side of the map, is Cluster 5- Children's developmental needs. The items within cluster five are v6 ability to make contact with incarcerated parents, v5 open communication of kids with their custodial parent (s), v14 enhance children's coping skills. See Figure 1.

The third quadrant, located on the upper left side of the concept map, represents programming and resources for parents and children. See Figure 1. The clusters within the quadrant are Cluster 2- parent education and legal services. The items within cluster two are v2 access to free legal services, v15 helping parents with resources after they

have completed their incarceration, and v7 Use of a reunification program. For Cluster 7- outreach the items within the cluster are v20 more staffed programs not dependent on volunteers, and v31 resource directories with key information for the family.

The last quadrant, number 3, is located on the left side of the map.

Cluster 6, located in the lower middle of the concept map stands alone and represents better networking between social programs See Figure 1. The items within the cluster are v18 better networking between existing social programs, v26 close gaps that result in missed information about parents' abusiveness/neglectfulness before children make contact and are reunified, and v40 follow-up and follow-through with after care programs and with service providers.

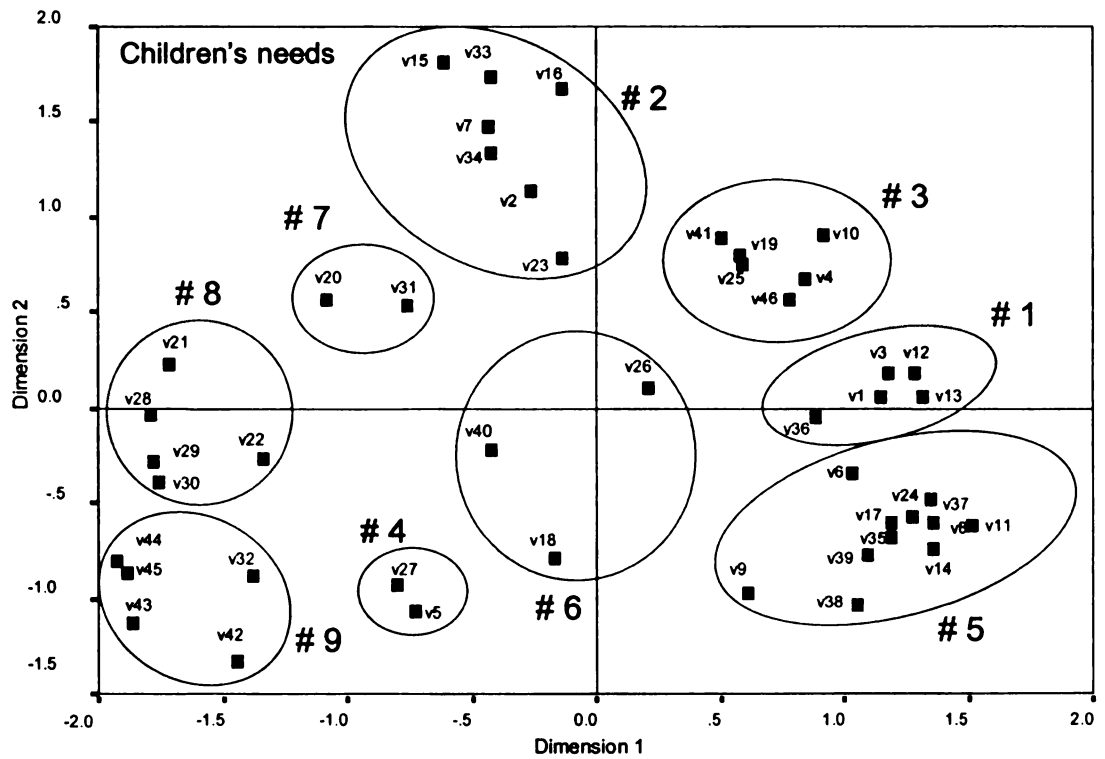
The fourth quadrant, located on lower left of the concept map, represents policy issues and research for families. See Figure 1. The first cluster for the quadrant is Cluster 4- service coordination for corrections, courts, and the human service professional. The items within that quadrant are v5 open communication from service professionals, corrections, and courts, such that children can be informed about the parental incarceration process, and v27 need for a complete psychosocial profile.

The second cluster in the quadrant is Cluster 8-research and education for field staff. Some of the items within the cluster are v28 better utilization of existing research by field staff, v29 increase accessibility of research on this subject not accessible to professionals in the field, v30 ongoing education for field professionals. See Figure 1. The final cluster in this quadrant is Cluster 9- political strength and advocacy. Some examples within this cluster are as follows: v42 more pay for direct care workers, v43

political advocacy for human services field/need for more effective lobbying, v45 federal, state, and local policy changes in favor of human services for children of incarceration and their parents.

Figure 1.

Concept Map: Children of incarcerated parents needs as perceived by the human service professionals



The concept map shows the plot of human services professionals' responses about children's needs determined by the group as a whole (denoted by small circles) and clustered into the nine groups.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The human service professionals (HSPs) responses in the study provided a base to understanding their sense of urgency or lack thereof in children's needs. In this section I begin by discussing the cluster groupings in relationship to the child and the HSP. Next, I discuss the definitions of clusters in relation to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1993). Finally in this section I focus on the meaning of the concept map and understanding of the relationship of clusters to one another.

HSPs on the front line have the opportunity to assess children's needs considering their closeness to the daily issues of incarcerated parents and their children. It was descriptively learned that HSPs thought mentorship and counseling was the most important need and research and education was the least important need for children of incarcerated parents.

In addition the HSP's believed that children are need of positive role models while their parents are in prison or jail. The need for role models was among the items listed in the mentoring and counseling cluster. The human service professionals indicated that providing counseling services to minimize the child's mental health is an important need for children of incarcerated parents.

The HSPs viewed children of incarcerated parents as having more immediate needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and family support and felt that these needs should be addressed immediately following the parents incarceration.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1993) is useful in describing the interaction of children and the services they receive directly or indirectly from the child welfare, criminal justice, and educational systems. The human service professionals' views from this study supported Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. The first three domains indicated by the human service professionals are that children need mentoring and counseling, parenting services and legal education, and community based programs. Mentoring and counseling directly affect these children as they travel through the various systems, fitting into the category of the mesosystem.

However, parenting education and legal services fit into the category of the exosystem. The middle three domains of the concept map have a systemic impact on the child. The services that are needed for parents indirectly affect the child. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory (1993), community based programs would fit into the category of the macrosystem. Community based programs are services that directly affect the child in the community.

How the HSPs view their working experience, how they directly deliver services to children, and policies they individually identified as environment are in the bottom three domains. The list of clusters includes outreach, research and education, and political strength and advocacy. Outreach, research and education, and political strength and advocacy fit into the category of the exosystem, which is the policies that exist for children of incarcerated parents. These policies influence what services and programs will be provided for children to promote healthier outcomes.

The human service professionals also addressed the legal issues that have an impact on the child. From the youngest children to the oldest children these cut across age groups. For example, parenting education affects infants and toddlers. The effects of foster care would impact the child during early and middle childhood. The effects of the legal system may impact the child during late adolescence, during a time of greater risk for becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

Concept Map

The concept map method and approach provides a new dimension to the field and allows for a greater understanding of needs. It also seems to help provide a clearer picture of directions for services and programs for children of incarcerated parents. Recent studies provide either a qualitative or quantitative approach for research. Whiting (2003) conducted a qualitative study on foster children to hear about the issues they confront in the child welfare and criminal justice systems. However this study provides both a qualitative and quantitative approach to better serve children of incarcerated parents.

The concept map clearly shows a picture of the children's needs according to the HSPs who participated. The method of concept mapping was used to explore what human service professionals view as the needs of children of incarcerated parents. Looking at the concept map it is evident that HSPs view mentoring and counseling as the most important need of children of incarcerated parents. Beckerman (1998) states that counseling and support services need to be incorporated into case plans to assist children with the impact of their mother's incarceration.

Professionals also agree that outreach, political strength and advocacy, and research and education are needs of children. They were mentioned by the human service professionals but were of less priority. However, this group of needs fits into Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory in the chronosystem. These needs indirectly affect the child as policies that could be developed to improve the quality of life for families. In addition the nine clusters in the concept map represent these needs.

Domains and Sample Demographics

In the analysis of sample demographics, ethnicity, education, and length of time in profession were assessed. Ethnicity was the most discriminating demographic of the 9 domains and African Americans differed on 5. The five domains were community based programs, service coordination, parenting education and legal services, policy strength and advocacy, and networking between social programs. In each case African American means were higher, suggesting that they felt more strongly or more passionate about these domains than European Americans. Education had relatively little impact on perspectives in domains, although there were two places where it seemed to matter. It may be that in education the difference between a BA and an MA is not a large gap in the understanding of children's needs. Nevertheless the two domains that seemed to matter were research and education, and political strength and advocacy.

Surprisingly, length of time in the profession made no difference in the current analysis. In this analysis 3 categories were used, ethnicity, length of time in profession, and education. It is possible that length of time in the profession may make a difference; however it may be that the difference between more than 5 years or less than 5 years,

which was not tested, could be more important than 10 years or more in the category.

Also, this category may have obscured other differences, that is, the difference between the first two categories may be more meaningful than the last two.

Also the analysis of the ethnic groups revealed that while African American and European American HSPs agreed as a whole group on the need for mentoring and counseling, African Americans viewed parenting education and legal services, community based programs, and education and research as more important.

Strengths and weaknesses

In this section I discuss strengths and weaknesses of the study.

Strengths

A major strength of the study was the ethnicity of the HSPs. The range of ethnicities represented brought rich responses to the concept mapping process. The African American and European HSPs provided a diverse set of solutions to problems that children face in the child welfare and criminal justice systems. The responses provided by the human service professionals will affect both current policies for programming and services in the future. Human service professionals from both the (Q sort) only group and the mid-Michigan focus group brought a diverse geographical sketch to bear on the needs of children.

The experiences from two different cities enhanced the perspective of the human service professionals. The information from the HSPs provided valuable data toward improving services and programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Weaknesses

One weakness of the study is that gender was not balanced among the human service professionals; 80% were females. The study may have had a different perspective with more male human service professionals. The experiences of male human service professionals would be valuable in determining needs of children of incarcerated parents. The results of this study imply that more female social workers are on the front-line working with children of incarcerated parents. A balance in gender of front line male HSPs may have led to different set of findings; however the 80% of female HSPs in this study is more representative of the HSPs on the front line. By comparison there are higher numbers of males in management positions.

Another weaknesses of the study was that the sample of HSPs could have been a more diverse group.

Also the sample consisted of human service professionals who were mainly social workers. Of the sample, 80% were social workers and 10% were juvenile probation and foster care workers. The sample could have reflected different outcomes if it had been a more diverse group in terms of work background, meaning more probation officers, juvenile detention workers, therapists, and court advocates. The court advocates might have changed the findings by providing a stronger emphasis on advocacy, policy, and needs of children as they travel through the criminal justice system. Court advocates have the advantage of being able to assess children during the legal process. Therapists could have provided information on the children's emotional needs in dealing with the grief and loss of having a parent in jail or prison. Therapists possess vital insights on children's

psychological profiles for mental health in the future. The views of HSPs from these fields would provide information to improve services to children throughout the ecological system.

Summary

The findings indicated that 9 clusters representing micro system, meso system, and macrosystem assessment of children's needs were identified by service HSPs. This knowledge of children's needs is reflected in three clusters of the concept map. The HSPs viewed the needs for mentoring and counseling, parenting education and legal services, and community based programs as the top three domains. These programs and services help children as they travel through the criminal justice and child welfare system.

The larger systemic issues in the bottom three domains of the concept map reflected a need for political strength and advocacy on behalf of children and parents, to encourage legislators to make changes in existing policies and create new policies. Also, race in the profession matters amongst the human service professionals. According to the results of the key demographics African American human service professionals had different views of children's needs, in contrast to those of the European American HSPs. This is important based on the number of African American children in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1993) includes the chronosystem which reflects needs that indirectly affect the child. The chronosystem consists of policies that are required to improve the quality of life for families. The policies that currently exist for children of incarcerated parents can be enhanced by new

policies in services and programming. However new policies must be created in the system. The nine clusters in the concept map represent these needs.

It is also important for changes to be made to better support human service professionals in all fields. HSPs should receive appropriate support during the initial period of adjustment for the children whose parents are adjusting to the prison environment (Hope House, 2001).

Concept mapping

The concept mapping employed in the present study provides a qualitative and quantitative assessment that helps to distinguish it from other research with human service professionals. The HSPs in this sample were providing services to children with parents in prison or jail. They articulated detailed descriptions of children's needs and also grouped them into themes. Concept mapping provided a unique opportunity to distill their voices both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Human service professionals

The needs that HSPs identified were generally consistent with the existing literature on children of incarcerated parents. Beckerman (1998) stated that counseling and support services should be incorporated into case plans to assist children with the impact of their mother's incarceration on their lives. The HSPs in this study agreed that children of incarcerated parents are in need of more peer support groups, mentorship due to loss of guidance, individual therapy, and counseling to deal with grief, loss, and shame. The HSPs pointed out the need for access to resources and education. The increasing rates of incarceration require professionals to increase their training and knowledge of children

with parents who are detained (Mumola, 2000). Moreover, the following needs are important for children and parents: parenting education and free legal services, reunification programs, parenting classes for incarcerated parents, and resources after they complete their incarceration term.

HSPs in the study identified the need for community based programs and networking between social programs. This is consistent with some research on programming. In Michigan Project Seek (Satayahan, 2002) was a successful program that worked towards reunification of parents and children, but failed due to lack of funding. Michigan programs are in need of more funding allocations specifically for children of incarcerated parents.

Current federal and state policies

Human service professionals emphasized the importance of policy concerns and changes in practice. Currently federal and state policies are in place that do not benefit children of incarcerated parents. For example the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 requires that permanency planning must begin within 12 months of the original placement. However, a woman's average sentence is 24-36 months. At that time parental rights can be terminated (Satyananthan, 2002). The current policies do not encourage family stability and cohesion in the home.

The Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 includes time pressures that make it almost impossible for parents to keep and form a bond with their children. Children of incarcerated parents have a need to build family cohesion in the home to reduce recidivism and intergenerational incarceration. One of the most significant

interventions for children of female prisoners allows them to live in residential programs with their mothers (Johnston, 2006).

Foster care policies do not allow licensed foster care parents to receive financial support for caring for their children regardless of how many children they have (Satyanathan, 2002). It would be helpful to know the services that help support the parent child relationship. Where there are gaps in policies and coordination of services these will again be pointed out by the human service professionals in this study.

Policy Recommendations

A few of the children's needs articulated by HSPs were: counseling, parenting education and free legal services and information, parenting education, parenting classes, individual therapy, mental health services, transportation services, political support for programs for children, and programs to develop social skills and life skills training. These needs translate into policy recommendations.

Human service professionals are in need of more funding to continue to provide resources to children of incarcerated parents. Cluster 9 of the concept map reflected a need for more political strength and advocacy. The HSPs described the need for more funding to help them in their duties and for children and families.

The funding that is needed to continue to provide resources is as follows:
Increased financial support for relative caregivers of children of incarcerated parents could be accomplished if some of the money allocated for prison programs could be used for children of incarcerated parents. Funding is needed for transportation for children to visit parents in prison or jail, and for collaboration between the criminal justice and child

welfare systems. Human service professionals also suggested that more pay is needed for human service professionals to perform their duties. They pointed out that children as they age out of the foster care system need money for college and other resources (Roberts, 2004).

The results of this thesis can provide information for HSPs to use in the field. The information provided by the concept mapping process can be used to assess training of human service professionals who work with children of incarcerated parents in Michigan. Human service professionals could gain more training in child development and the legal aspects of the criminal justice system. Subsequently, legislators would be made more aware of this population of children and the people who serve them throughout the child's developmental stages of life. This study will identify important areas of need and flaws in the system in regard to this population of children. These findings will help extend the existing literature on needs of children of incarcerated parents.

Future Research

The research on children of incarcerated parents is very limited. More qualitative and quantitative research is needed to hear the voices of the children of incarcerated parents. The same quantitative and qualitative research is required to hear the voices of the parents. The parents are often overlooked and ignored and their needs as parents are not responded to in the criminal justice and child welfare system. The research from this study may underscore the importance of prisoners maintaining relationships with their children.

In the future I would use the same process with a subgroup of human service professionals who work more directly with the children and compare them with the “whole” group. I would determine whether human service professionals who worked directly with children had different experiences than those who worked indirectly in the field. Also in the future it would be helpful to compare HSP groups by geographic location; it would be useful to compare whether human service professionals who work closer to the prisons and jails had different responses from other HSPs with different roles. The implications this study could be recast into policy briefs for family impact seminars in the family studies and child development fields. The results of this study may help to bridge the gap between policy and research. This study will give voice to practice in the area of children of incarcerated parents. Human service professionals could gain more training in child development and the legal aspects to improve the services given to children.

Further research is needed for mentoring and counseling programs for children. The study indicated that African American children encounter many challenges dealing with their race and ethnicity that other children of incarcerated parents bypass. Continued research is required to establish systemic services and programs for children of incarcerated parents, especially children of color.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Human Service Professionals: Assessing the Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents

Consent to Participate

Human Service Professionals: Assessing the Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents

Consent to Participate

Dear Participant,

The goal of the study is to explore the perspective of professionals regarding children of incarcerated parents. A focus group will be conducted with the participants to gain some understanding of the professionals and their job. Your participation in the focus group is for one half of a workday. We ask that you complete a 5-minute questionnaire, which includes some basic background information and a few brief questions about job experience, and your work in the community.

This project is part of my master's thesis. For the final report and thesis the identities of the participants will be protected and only group data will be reported. With respect to confidentiality, your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Only my major professor, statistician, or I will have access to the questionnaires. Code numbers will be assigned to all completed study materials to further ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Your participation is strictly voluntary and is greatly appreciated. Human service professionals and policy makers will benefit from the knowledge of how best to address the needs of children of incarcerated parents. Should you have any other questions or wish to speak to

Toiia L. Rukuni and Dr. Deborah J. Johnson please use the contact information below. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: UCRIHS@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. Please keep the top sheet for your information.

Sincerely,

Toiia L. Rukuni
Master's graduate student
Michigan State University
Family and Child Ecology
(517) 214-4762
browntoi@msu.edu

Deborah J. Johnson, PhD
Professor, Family and Child Ecology
107 Human Ecology Building
Michigan State University
E. Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 432-9115
Fax: 353-8751
John1442@msu.edu

Thank you for participating in this study. If you have any questions, please contact Toiia L. Rukuni or Dr. Deborah J. Johnson with information on the first info page.

Study Consent Agreement

Instructions: If you would like to participate in the project please sign below. Thank you.

I voluntarily agree to complete the project.

Sign here if you agree to participate

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Professional Background Questionnaire

Toiia L. Rukuni

Human Service Professional Project (2005)

Michigan State University

Professional Background Questionnaire

Thank you for taking time to participate in my project. In this project I am interested in learning about human service professionals and their role working with children of incarcerated parents. The information from this study may help us better understand the perspectives of human service professionals and ultimately create healthier outcomes for children of incarcerated parents. Please carefully read through and answer the following questions. Thank you for your participation on this project.

Instructions: Complete all section of questionnaire as follows. Answering each question in the space provided.

1. Name: _____

2. Date of Birth: _____

3. Gender: Male/Female (Circle appropriate response)

4. Ethnicity: (Circle one response or fill in)

a. African American/Black

b. Asian / Asian American

c. Caucasian/White

d. Latino/a

e. Other _____

1. Education: (Circle highest degree attained)

a. Some high school

b. High school/completed GED

c. Completed BA/BS

d. Masters/MSW

e. JD

f. PhD.

g. How much child development training have you had? (Circle one answer)

a) Degree program requirement b) 3 or more courses c) professional certificate

- d) Undergraduate degree e) extramural courses
- f) no training in child development
- g) Have learned about child development on my own

h. What is your job title? _____

Circle and give answer where space is provided to the following questions:

6. How long have you been working in your profession? (Circle 1 answer)

- a. Less than a year b. 1-2 years c. 3-5 years d. 5-10 years e. more than 10 years

7. Describe your role or duties with respect to children of incarcerated parents? Please Explain.

8. If you have a caseload what percentage are made up of children of incarcerated parents? (Circle 1 answer)

- a. Caseloads do not apply to my job b. 1-15% c. 16-25% d. nearly half e. more than half f. almost entirely

10. What services do you think children of incarcerated parents need? Name 3 priorities

10. Do you think that the problem is? (Circle 1 answer)

- a. Insurmountable b. solvable c. hopeful

11. What changes or policies would you suggest in your professional structure for addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents?

12. Are you a child welfare worker? (Circle 1 answer)

- a. Presently b. yes, in the past _____ years
- c. No

13. Have you received child welfare training? If yes answer question below,

- a. Yes b. no c. no started, not completed d. not applicable

14. What year or years did training take place? (Answer if yes on question 13).

APPENDIX C

Human Service Professionals Flyer to Participate

Human Service Professionals' perspectives needed for a Research study

Help contribute to our understanding of the needs of children of incarcerated parents

Research Study

Are you?

- A Human Service Professional
- Who is working or has worked with children that have parents in prison or jail
- Over 21

If yes, you may be eligible to:

- Participate in a half-day focus group
- Refreshments and lunch provided
- An honorarium may be provided

Details:

- When: Study will take place in late March
- Where: Michigan State University Campus
- What: Focus Group Discussion

For more information contact
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Michigan State University
Human Service Professional Project
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Or

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APPENDIX D

Southern Michigan Human Service Professional Instructions and Procedures

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Human Service Professional Project (2005)
Jackson Group

**Southern Michigan Human Service Professional Instructions and
Procedures**

Toiia L. Rukuni
Dr. Deborah J. Johnson

Introduction:

There is a lot being said about the needs and concerns over incarcerated children, mental health, schooling, developmental needs, care of various sorts-family, foster, street programs almost none of this information considers what you know as front line professionals who work with them and interact with in the system. The study is strictly voluntary and you have permission not to participate at any time before you fill out the consent form. The investigators on the project are Dr. Deborah J. Johnson a professor in the department of Family and Child Ecology, and Toiia L. Rukuni a graduate student in Family and Child Ecology. The study is research for her thesis to complete her master's degree in Family and Child Ecology.

The purpose of the study is to further the connection between research and practice in the area of children of incarcerated parents. The study will give voice to practice through the perspective of human service professionals. As a consequence this study will help to improve the services given to children with parents in prison or jail. Use your experience and knowledge of this area to further research the question; from your point of view what are the needs of children of incarcerated parents?" The study should take 20-25 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire, rating, ranking forms, and the sorting of the cards.

I. Consent Forms and Questionnaires

- A. Participants will fill out consent forms to gather consent from each person for the study. The participants will keep the top half of the consent form for their reference. Participants will be asked to fill out a sign in sheet to have a copy of their names, agencies, and other contact information to use when presenting the results of the study.
- B. **Questionnaire-** Participants will fill out a questionnaire describing their education, sex, professional background, ethnicity, etc. This questionnaire will be used for demographic information during the analysis stage of the study.
- C. **Coding labels-** will be placed on all forms prior to participants filling out the questionnaire.
- D. **Coding labels-** will be used on the rating and ranking forms.
- E. Participants will be asked to rate each statement listed from 1-3 based on the question, "From your point of view what are the needs of children of incarcerated parents?" Participants will then rank the order from (1, high, to 46 low)-each statement according to their priorities as a professional.

- F. **Sorting-** The cards with 46 statements will be prepared for participants by researcher. Participants will sort their statements in grouping that make sense to them. Participants can have as many piles of cards as they wish for the sorting process. The participants will label each pile of cards with the name they feel fits the pile and then affix post it notes with the name to the pile. The participants will put the piles in bundles with a rubber band, and then put the bundles in envelopes according to the ID number on each envelope. The envelopes will have a coding label as well prior to the distribution of the cards.
- G. **Conclusion-**Each participant will receive a Chili's \$10.00 gift certificate for participating in the project. The certificates will be given at the conclusion of the rating, ranking, and sorting process.
- H. **Thank you-** the participants will be thanked for their time and effort on participating in the project. If they have any further questions about the project they can contact Toiia L. Rukuni or Dr. Deborah J. Johnson from the information provided on the consent form. The results of the data will be available for participants in early fall. The results will be shared with all agencies and programs that participated on the project will be contacted and provided with a report.

Materials: Consent forms, questionnaires, post it notes, envelopes, rubber bands, cards with statements, master copy of sign in sheet, Chili's coupons.

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