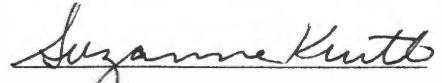


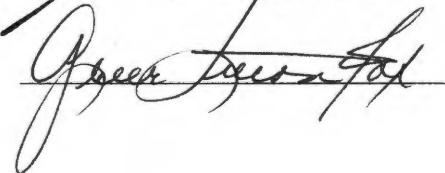
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Jacquelyn L. Sandifer entitled "Parenting Behind Bars: An Evaluation of the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.


Suzanne Kurth, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:





Acceptance for the Council:


Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate
Studies

**PARENTING BEHIND BARS:
AN EVALUATION OF THE PARENTING PROGRAM AT
THE KENTUCKY CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Jacquelyn L. Sandifer
May 2003**

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2003b
.326

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband David Sandifer whose belief in me, encouragement, and support have made it possible for me to complete yet another lifelong goal. His faith and optimism inspire me; his adventurous spirit makes life fun.

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I wish to thank all those who helped me begin, continue, and complete this degree. I thank my professors for challenging, teaching, and guiding me; the inmates and staff at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women for allowing me access to their world; student peers for their collaboration and camaraderie; friends for their prayers and encouragement; and my mother, brother, and sister for keeping the memory of my father's faith and courage alive. Special thanks goes to Dr. Suzanne Kurth whose wisdom, knowledge, and suggestions have been invaluable in guiding this process.

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Abstract

Parenting Behind Bars: An Evaluation of the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women

Two thirds of incarcerated women are mothers. Increasing incarcerated mothers' parenting abilities while they are in prison may increase their potential for practicing effective parenting both inside and outside the prison context. This study evaluated the efficacy of the parenting program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) in changing inmate mothers' parenting knowledge and skills.

A pretest-post tests nonequivalent comparison group quasi-experimental design was used to assess short term change in parenting knowledge after a 12 week parent education course. Results from paired samples *t*-tests of parenting class participants' time one and time two scores on scales from the Parent Child Relationship Inventory (Gerard 1994) and the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (Bavolek and Keene 1999) suggested change likely resulting from the KCIW Parenting Program. Before and after differences in scores of a treatment group ($n=64$) of participants who completed the course indicate significant positive change in their child development knowledge; preference for corporal punishment; attitudes about parent child role reversal; and empathetic awareness of their children's needs. No significant change after 12 weeks was indicated in a comparison group ($n=26$) of inmate mothers who had never participated in the KCIW parenting program.

Contextualization of KCIW inmate life provides a backdrop for quantitative findings. Wanting to belong and be significant to someone appears to have resulted in the

emergence of an indigenous culture that focuses on who likes whom as well as various imported culture features. For example, narrative evidence from semi structured interviews with 50 inmates suggests that parent education classes and parent child interactional opportunities (Bonding Program, Kids Day, Teen Day, and Girl Scouts Beyond Bars) impact how inmate mothers “do their time.” These opportunities provide time for practicing parenting skills; aid inmate mothers’ emotional adjustment; and help alleviate some of the problems associated with regular visitation (e.g., lack of privacy for parent/child communication, time restraints, and practices that encourage parent-child role reversal).

Based on this program evaluation, prison parenting programs can change how inmate mothers’ see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices. From a life course theoretical perspective, increasing incarcerated mothers’ social capital (i.e., stores of knowledge, skills, and relationships) may aid their reintegration into society and encourage them to choose pro social pathways. Equipping them to transfer and create stores of social capital in their children (e.g., through effective parenting) may aid in preventing their children from following the criminal pathway set by their parents.

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Chapter 1

The Problem

The contemporary response to crime is increasingly to incarcerate offenders. Both the numbers of incarcerated women and men have risen dramatically, but the number of incarcerated women has increased faster than that of men (U.S. Department of Justice [USDJ] 1999a). Embedded in the overall pattern of increased incarceration is a dramatic increase in the number of imprisoned mothers and concomitantly of the number of children whose relationship with the parent who has both nurtured and provided for them within the limits of her ability is jeopardized. Inasmuch as the future of any society rests with its children, and it is parents who are charged with providing for and socializing children to conform to the norms of pro-social, non-criminal behavior, we should explore inmate mothers' perceptions about parenting responsibilities, processes, and parent-child relationships.

Some inmate mothers may not have been parented nor are they now parenting their own children in a manner conducive to developing pro-social lifestyles. The transmission of patterns of family relationships from one generation to the next is an accepted fact (Martin 1976; Lewis and O'Brien 1987). Learning parenting skills in prison is important because many women in prison come from dysfunctional families characterized by problems such as parental alcohol and drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and incarceration of a parent (USDJ 1994; Chesney-Lind 1997; USDJ 1999b). Being parented poorly teaches people to be poor parents and poor parents may produce children at risk of criminal lifestyles and incarceration, therefore contributing to the continuing growth in prison populations (Farrington and West 1990).

This research examines one type of effort to effect change, The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW), which “provide(s) the opportunity for incarcerated mothers to acquire (and practice) parenting skills, and in many cases provide(s) reparenting” (KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines 1998). The KCIW parenting program attempts to (re)socialize inmate mothers who may not have developed the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that facilitate conformity to society in general or may not have been acculturated into a parenting role. The specific question guiding this research is: “Can a prison parenting program change how people see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices?” An evaluation of the effects of the KCIW program on participants provides a partial answer to this important question. This research also explores how the parenting knowledge and skills of this group of incarcerated mothers compares to those of unincarcerated norm groups of mothers.

PARENTING PROGRAMS IN WOMEN’S PRISONS

The literature about parenting programs for inmate mothers consists primarily of descriptions of various programs and anecdotal accounts of why contact between incarcerated mothers and their children is important and helpful both during their incarceration and presumably for their future relationships. No consistent definition of what constitutes a prison parenting program exists. Ways of addressing parenting needs of incarcerated mothers vary widely and virtually any type of activity or class that relates to children is reported by prison officials as a parenting program. One type of “program” involves only longer visitation opportunities. Other programs offer only classroom parenting instruction The National Institute of Justice attempted to identify innovative

parenting programs for women in prisons or jails. Relatively few programs were reported. Of those reported, only twenty-one were specifically designed for parent education. Another twenty-one were categorized as “innovative child visitation programs” (USDJ 1998).

Current parent education programs across the women’s correctional system are criticized in the literature for lacking consistency, uniformity, and formal evaluation (Johnston 1995). Only three evaluations of the effectiveness of parenting programs for incarcerated women appeared in the recent literature (Browne 1989; Harm and Thompson 1997; Moore and Clement 1998). These studies utilized small samples over short periods of time. Browne’s sample consisted of twenty-nine females serving relatively short jail sentences. Harm and Thompson’s sample was forty-four imprisoned women involved in “weekly” parent education classes. Moore and Clement’s sample size was twenty women who had completed an 18 hour parent education course. None of these studies is an in depth evaluation.

Prison parenting programs also have been criticized for teaching ideal parenting goals without providing opportunities for practicing parenting skills (Johnston 1995). Dual component programs that offer both parent education and opportunities for applying parenting and relationship building skills are exceptional in the prison setting (USDJ 1998). Prison administrators may need to draw on parenting program models outside the prison context for developing this type of correctional program.

Dual Component Models Outside the Prison Context

Based on assessments of parent education programs outside a prison context, programs that concurrently involve both parent education and parent-child interaction may be effective for accomplishing correctional parent programming goals. Block (1998), Wilczak and Markstrom (1999), and Tremblay, Vitaro, Bertrand, LeBlanc, Beauchesne, Boileau, and David (2001) assert that dual approach parenting programs that combine classroom education and interactional components are preferable to single component programs (in any setting). Dual component programs are more effective for strengthening family relationships. Parent training coupled with parent-child interaction opportunities “could prove successful in reducing children’s disruptive behaviors and improving parent-child interaction whereas only one component could prove insufficient” (Tremblay et al. 2001: 357).

Models of good programs may be found in rehabilitation programs for other populations. Improving parent child relationships through parent education and parent child interaction is a current rehabilitation strategy for drug abusers. Research suggests that strong relationships with children encourage substance abusing mothers to stay free of drugs (Finnegan 1988; Finkelstein and Piedade 1993). Relationship building program models found effective for substance abusing women may be particularly applicable to parenting programs in women’s prisons as the offenses of many female offenders are drug/alcohol related (e.g., selling or possessing drugs, illegally obtaining money for drugs, or being high when committing the offense) and drug/alcohol addiction relapses are major factors leading to post release failure (USDJ 1999b).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PRISON PARENTING PROGRAMS

Various types of programs and classes have been described as beneficial for addressing both rehabilitation and institutional adjustment goals for incarcerated populations (Clear and Cole 2000). A recent study conducted by the Correctional Education Association found that inmates who take classes (of any kind) are 23% less likely than other prisoners to return to prison. They further concluded that “every dollar spent on prison education” yields a savings of more than two dollars in spending on re-incarceration (Schmidt 2002). Palmer’s (1996) meta analysis of correctional interventions suggests that parenting classes are one of the more promising programmatic efforts for incarcerated populations. Baunach (1985) asserts that parent education and programs that teach parenting skills while encouraging responsible decision-making are especially important for incarcerated women, as most are single mothers who will return to parenting (often without social or economic support) after prison.

Rehabilitation

Research over several decades supports suggestions that strengthening family bonds through parent education is an effective correctional rehabilitation strategy that reduces recidivism. Hairston (1988) found post-release success to be higher among inmates who had strengthened family ties during incarceration. National recidivism rates in 1990 were much lower among inmates who completed programs aimed at improving parenting skills (Rudel and Hayes 1990). Carlson and Cervera’s (1991) research

indicated that a solid family relationship to which released prisoners can return is the best single predictor of post release success.

Rehabilitation efforts to improve family relationships have implications for reducing recidivism through decreasing *prisonization* (Brodsky 1975; Fishman and Alissi 1979; Wilczak and Markstrom 1999). Prisonization (Clemmer 1940) is a process of an inmate's adoption of the prison culture and criminal identity that results in weakened ties to family and other segments of the non-incarcerated society (Brodsky 1975; Wilczak and Markstrom 1999). If prisonization occurs (i.e., a prisoner or criminal identity is acquired) when released, the individual will likely engage in the criminal behavior that has become intrinsic to the socially deviant identity and be returned to prison. The risk of prisonization is lessened if an inmate maintains family ties and therefore a preference for living in the free world. "Hence, recognizing the risk for prisonization and the acquisition of a criminal identity, programs directed toward parent education and strengthening family ties may serve to diminish the assumption of criminal identities and potential for recidivism among inmates" (Wilczak and Markstrom 1999:92).

Recidivism may be reduced with programs that may decrease *infantilization* (Clark 1995). Infantilization can be defined as the assumption of childish attitudes and behaviors (e.g., expecting to be cared for or reversing parent-child roles) that may result from being treated like a child. Clark (1995) suggests that making women dependent by depriving them of opportunities for adult decision making and activities while concurrently instructing them to be responsible may result in increased difficulty in successfully negotiating life after prison. She reasons that parenting programs, especially

those with parent child interaction opportunities, may encourage responsible adult behavior and thus aid post release success.

Research on prison parenting programs (for both women and men) indicated that parenting programs may also aid in developing important social and interpersonal skills in inmate parents. Klein and Bahr (1996), studying both male and female prisoners in family centered cognitive skills programs, reported that after completion of the program, prisoners' abilities to recognize, reflect upon, and generate possible solutions to a variety of relationship problems were enhanced. Wilczak and Markstrom's (1999) study of the impact of parent education on a group of incarcerated fathers shows that knowledge about parenting and child development was enhanced and inmate fathers became more confident parents. They began to believe that their parenting practices directly affected their child's behavior and that they had the ability to manage relationship problems. Bayse, Allgood, and Van Wyk (1991) found that inmate fathers who completed a parent education course were significantly less narcissistic than a control group of incarcerated fathers. The men were also more focused on family responsibilities, valued family cohesion more, and perceived greater social support for refraining from behavior that could result in reincarceration once released.

For many, post release success hinges on facing and dealing with the realities of life outside prison. Inmates must face the rules society sets for its members and the consequences and troubles that follow inappropriate behavior (Clear and Cole 2000). Incarcerated mothers' after prison situations are often parenting alone, with limited financial resources, in an environment where drugs are readily available and peers and

associates embrace a criminal lifestyle. Upon release they often face multiple responsibilities of locating suitable housing and stable employment, adjusting to living with their children, coping with the stigma of being an ex-offender *and* being the primary (often sole) nurturer and provider (Glick and Neto 1977; U.S. General Accounting Office 1979; Bloom and Steinhart 1993). A parenting program that incorporates parent child interaction opportunities may help keep parents connected to and aware of the realities of the challenges of teaching children that when people behave more responsibly, their problems decline; when people do not behave in a manner consistent with the realities of their lives, difficulties and possible consequences (e.g., incarceration) increase.

Institutional Adjustment

Adjusting to being incarcerated is difficult for most inmates (Clear and Cole 2000). About two-thirds of incarcerated women are mothers (USDJ 1999b). As “being a parent” is the social identity emphasized by most incarcerated mothers (Grossman 1984; Bloom and Steinhart 1993) and many plan to resume a parenting role when released from prison (McGowan and Blumenthal 1978; Datesman and Cales 1983; Baunach 1985), adjusting to not being able to be with their children may be particularly difficult for a substantial group of inmates.

Several researchers have suggested that female inmates’ emotional and mental health issues (e.g., depression, stress, guilt) often revolve around family relationships (Pollock 2002; Fessler 1991). Separation from children creates mental health challenges as contact with children may be central to the emotional well-being of imprisoned mothers (Acoca 1998). Inmate mothers worry about not being involved in their children’s

daily lives, providing for their children after release, and the healthfulness, adequacy and safety of their children's current living situations (Fessler 1991; Hairston 1991). They experience guilt for causing the separation (Baunach 1985) and for the impact their incarceration is having on the children. An inmate mother may feel depressed, inadequate, and fearful that her children are angry with her and will not want to live with her when she is released from prison (Pollock 2002). Parenting programs that teach relational and communication skills and encourage contact with children may aid incarcerated mothers' institutional adjustment by alleviating depression, stress, and guilt.

Potential Benefits for Children

In addition to positively affecting incarcerated populations, the benefits of effective in prison parenting programs on the children of incarcerated mothers should be considered. More than a quarter of a million minor children have a mother in prison or jail (USDJ 1999b). Programs that teach mothers how to be more effective parents and that strengthen parent-child relationships could impact future generations. These children often face a multitude of consequences as a result of their mother's criminality and subsequent involvement with the criminal justice system. Research suggests a growing recognition that experience with the criminal justice system is intergenerational, placing children of incarcerated parents at greater risk than their peers for future involvement with the criminal justice system and second generation incarceration (American Correctional Association 1990; Barnhill and Dressel 1991; Johnston 1991, 1992).

Other researchers add that specific parenting practices and family factors (e.g., weak or disrupted bonds of attachment, any type of parental absence, parental rejection,

severe forms of punishment and lack of parent-child involvement, supervision, or parental discipline) correlate with and predict juvenile conduct problems that often lead to adult criminality (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Farrington and West 1990; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Sampson and Laub 1993). Based on the proposition that parenting skills have an impact on children's disruptive behaviors, various parent education programs have been devised. Dumas (1989) and Kazdin (1987) reviewed studies of the effects of parent education programs (outside the prison context) and both concluded that teaching parenting skills is a promising form of intervention for addressing children's conduct problems.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The emphasis in the literature on the importance of parent education and strong parent-child relationships for aiding prisoners' societal reentry and reducing recidivism and on the role of effective parenting for socializing children into socially conforming, non criminal adulthood, coupled with the dearth of research evaluating parenting programs in women's prisons justifies this study. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Parenting Program on developing inmate mothers' parenting knowledge and relationships with their children. Although an examination of long term program effect for reducing recidivism or affecting intergenerational crime is beyond the scope of this study, documenting short term effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the program will answer the question, "Can a prison parenting program change how people see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices?" Documenting change (or not) in parenting areas targeted by the

KCIW parenting program, and exploring how KCIW mothers' parenting knowledge compares to that of non-incarcerated norm groups will provide insight about inmate mothers' specific parent education needs and aid in developing programs particularly for incarcerated mothers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Developing, maintaining, or enhancing a mother's parenting skills and the parent-child relationship is an offender rehabilitation strategy that can facilitate post release success through increased adequacy of and confidence in parenting abilities and through strong, supportive relationships with children that can motivate a released offender to stay out of trouble. In addition, effective parenting may produce children who know and conform to societal norms of acceptable behavior.

An assessment of learning and behavioral outcomes of the KCIW parenting program will provide useful information to the Parenting Committee, institution administrators, and the Kentucky Corrections Cabinet for formulating and directing plans and programs. Also, an evaluation of short-term effect on inmates' parenting skills, attitudes, and behaviors may provide a foundation for further research on incarcerated mothers' parenting as it relates to societal re-entry and post-release success. On a broader scale, assessing the effectiveness of this parenting program that combines both classroom instruction and an interactive component can provide a model for other states to follow in implementing programs for incarcerated women and their children.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theoretical foundation for this research is in the sociological literature that suggests that both family socialization (e.g., parenting) and family relationships affect individuals' potential for criminal behavior. These family processes are explored in both the criminological and family theoretical literature. Recently, Fox and Benson (2000) suggested that "the fields of criminology and family studies as sub-specialties of sociology have developed in relative isolation from each other" "despite considerable overlap in their concerns and subject matter, and in their theoretical framework" (p.2). They also asserted that exploring the interconnections between criminology and family studies is beneficial for understanding family processes as sources of both vulnerability to and protection from criminal behavior.

For this research, parenting and family relationships are viewed as two key processes that occur in an individual's life course (the sequence of socially constructed, age graded phases of a person's life from childhood through adulthood [Elder 1985]) that may contribute to the onset of criminal behavior or conversely to the desistance of criminal behavior. Researchers document that the way children are parented is associated with delinquency and adult criminal life styles (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Farrington and West 1990; Patterson, Reid, and Dishion 1992; Agnew 1992; Akers 1997) and that family relationships are associated with an individual's criminal propensity or conversely, with changing a criminal's lifestyle (Reiss 1951; Reckless 1961; Hirschi 1969; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Sampson and Laub 1993). The assertion that a criminal life course can change or be prevented by parenting and/or family relationships

provides impetus for examining the question, “Is it possible to develop a program that changes how prisoners see and enact the parenting role?”

“Sketch[ing] various points of convergence in theoretical and empirical approaches to families and crime” (Fox and Benson 2000:3) is helpful for understanding connections between families, crime, and criminal justice programming. The impact of family socialization on criminality has not been a sustained or major focus in any one sociological or criminological theory. However, as revealed in the following review of selected theories, conjectures about the impact of both effective and ineffective parenting run (even if beneath the surface) throughout the theoretical literature.

Parsonian Structural-functionalism

In the now classical structural-functionalist view, socialization and social control are complementary processes within effectively functioning social systems. The proper functioning of family and parents are key to the regulation of individual social behavior. Family is the social institution first charged with socializing its members to want to do what they are “supposed to do” and with applying moderate forms of social control (e.g., regulatory sanctions such as punishment and discipline) when needed to correct and keep members in compliance with societal norms and expectations. When family socialization (e.g., parenting) fails to produce and maintain patterns of socially conforming behavior, another societal structure, the criminal justice system, steps in to reinforce and protect the social order. Thus, from this perspective, criminal behavior represents a failure of socialization (Parsons and Bales 1955; Fox and Benson 2000).

Strain Theory

Strain theory is derived from Robert K. Merton's work. Crime may result from strains and frustrations related to the inability of some to achieve middle class standards or monetary success through legitimate channels. Goal blockage increases the likelihood that an individual will find illegitimate means (e.g., theft, selling illegal substances or services, fraud, embezzlement) or strike out at others because of emotional stresses and strains (Merton 1938; Cohen 1955; Cloward and Ohlen 1960).

For Agnew (1992) strain may also result from a range of family conditions related to feelings associated with provider role failure, parental inadequacy, and perceptions that others see them as inadequate parents. Adding parental strain to blockages to legitimate means of economic support can increase frustration and further promote illegitimate means of obtaining financial resources (crime) or destructive ways of coping (e.g., alcohol or drugs). Agnew (1992) also suggests that any or a combination of these parental strains may lead to *poor parenting* which he defines as the use of lax or inconsistent supervision and discipline that may promote feelings of normlessness in children; excessively strict supervision; harsh discipline; or failure to teach effective problem solving and social skills. Poor parenting increases juvenile strain and results in negative effects that may encourage juvenile delinquency.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, rooted in psychology, is used by some criminologists. Social learning theory assumes that individuals learn behavior through association with others and through positive and negative reinforcement. The family's ideal role is as a

“conventional socializer against delinquency and crime. It provides anti-criminal definitions, conforming models, and the reinforcement of conformity through parental discipline; it promotes the development of self control” (Akers 1997:73). Conversely, deviant behavior may be an outcome of internal family interaction because deviant parental models and ineffective and erratic parental supervision and discipline reinforce or endorse non-conforming or criminal behavior (Akers 1997).

Control Theory

Rather than assuming criminal behavior is learned, control theory assumes that all individuals will probably go against social norms at some point and engage in acts of deviance, delinquency, and crime unless they are, by some mechanism (either informal or formal), prevented from doing so. Indirect control of an individual’s behavior is accomplished through relationships with significant others. Children conform because they do not want to disappoint those to whom they are emotionally attached.

Most versions of control theory limit their focus to explaining the internal control mechanism in a child or adolescent (e.g., not wanting to disappoint a parent) that produces conforming behavior (Reiss 1951; Nye 1958; Reckless 1961; Hirschi 1969). Some suggest that control theory can be applied to both adult and juvenile criminal behavior (Akers 1997). An age inclusive application of control theory might suggest that the same desires of not wanting to disappoint someone important to them could also be present in parents who do not want to disappoint their children. Thus, internal control resulting from bonds of attachment to significant others may be operative for adults as well as juveniles.

Self-Control Theory

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) extension of control theory posits only one type of control--*self-control*--as the cause of crime. These theorists argue that low self-control may lead to criminal choices. Self-control is stable over time. Individuals with low self-control will have a greater, stable, tendency to commit deviance at all stages of life and across all social circumstances. Self-control theory does not allow for the possibility of change in the level of an individual's self-control.

According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, lack of self-control is a "natural occurrence" that will happen in the absence of steps taken (by parents) to stop its development. Good parenting may mediate low self-control. Conversely, parents who are unable to or refuse to monitor a child's behavior, do not recognize deviant behavior when it occurs, and fail to punish such behavior produce children who do not exercise self-control. Direct control mechanisms like teaching self-control and conforming social behavior and attitudes, and supervising and disciplining are also essential to the development and maintenance of the key parent-child social bond relationship (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Children who are not attached to their parents or whose parents are deviant or criminal themselves are the most likely to have poor self-control and therefore make poor choices.

Life Course Theory

Life course theory is the most useful theoretical framework for this research as it links key elements from the preceding theories and asserts that delinquency and criminality are likely a product of a combination of multiple factors, forces, and

processes that occur throughout the developmental context from childhood to adulthood. The life course is defined as the sequence of culturally defined age-graded roles and social transitions that are enacted over time (Caspi, Elder, and Herbener 1990). These sequences are described in terms of trajectories and transitions. Trajectories (also referred to as pathways) are long-term age-graded patterns of development. Transitions are events or short-term changes (e.g., being in prison, parenting behind bars) that can change the course of a life course trajectory. The effects of parenting, “informal social control in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood” (Sampson and Laub 1999:192) and “social relations between individuals (for example, parent-child)” (Sampson and Laub 1999:193) help mediate the effects of negative events by equipping individuals to successfully navigate pro social life course trajectories or pathways.

Life course theory suggests that how individuals develop is influenced by a combination of factors and environmentally contextualized experiences (e.g., imprisonment, effective or ineffective parenting, strengthened or weakened relationships resulting from incarceration). The interactional effects that result from various life situations, pathways, and events may coalesce to create a processual state ripe for a particular outcome (onset, persistence, or desistance from crime) (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986). Strong family relationships may deflect someone from a criminal trajectory onto a pathway of non-criminal conformity (Sampson and Laub 1993). Conversely, a negative event (e.g., the incarceration of a parent) can serve as a turning point that sets off a chain reaction of events that direct a child onto a delinquent pathway (Hagan and Paloni 1990). The same processes (e.g., family relationships and

parenting practices) that may propel an individual's negative behavior lifestyle (i.e., deviant life course pathway) may also alter a negative life course trajectory by serving as a deflection event (e.g., the establishment of a strong positive family relationship) that guides and supports an individual's positive pathway or trajectory.

Sampson and Laub (1993) and Hagan (1997) draw on previous conceptualizations of *human capital* (Schultz 1961; Becker 1964) and *social capital* (Coleman 1988) to suggest that criminal behavior across the life course is associated with a capitalization process (the acquisition, investment, expenditure, and possible loss of resources) that occurs at various life stages. Human capital "refers to the skills and knowledge acquired by individuals through education and training. . . . [that] changes persons so as to give them skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways" (Hagan 1997:67). "Social capital [is] derived from strong social relations (or social bonds)" that "represent social and psychological resources that individuals can draw on as they move through life transitions" (Sampson and Laub 1993:18-19) to refrain from criminal behavior.

The life course social capital model assumes that through parenting and relationships, parents use their own social capital to help create the social capital or skills and capabilities of their children who in turn grow up and pass along their social resources (e.g., parenting skills) to their children. Ineffective or dysfunctional parent-child relationships or parenting skills disrupt the development of social capital (Hagan 1997). Ineffective parenting and relationship characteristics identified in life course theory include: lack of parent-child involvement, emotional ties, supervision, or discipline; parental absence and parental criminality; harsh, inconsistent or ineffective

communication or discipline; parental rejection; rigid control; and inability to set behavioral limits (Glueck and Glueck 1950; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Farrington 1986; Patterson 1992).

Life Course Theory and Correctional Programming

The advantage of life course theory for establishing the importance of parenting programs is its applicability to adult desistance from criminal behavior (Shover 1985, 1996; Farrington and West 1990; Sampson and Laub 1993) and for identifying parenting behaviors that negatively impact children's trajectories. Life course theory supports the idea that increasing incarcerated mothers' parenting skills and strengthening parent child relationships is one way to help both incarcerated mothers and their children.

If a prison program can increase the parenting and relationship resources of an incarcerated mother, she can in turn invest them in her children who can invest them in their children. Children may become better equipped to avoid criminal pathways and mothers may become better equipped to change their criminal pathways. Increasing stores of skills and building or strengthening parent child relationships (especially for those who may not have been effectively parented) may affect the development of a "next generation" of ineffective parents and/or criminals who continue this pattern of intergenerational transmission.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has established the importance of examining prison programs designed to address the parenting skills of incarcerated mothers, as well as the need for research that explores inmate mothers' parenting. The life course theoretical perspective

supports this research by suggesting that parenting practices and parent child relationships affect an individual's life course pathway and that the transmission of skills through effective parenting can help individuals' choose pro social lifestyles. Literature about women's prison, incarcerated women, and children of the incarcerated are reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The lives of mothers in prison must be examined within the context of the history of women's incarceration in the United States. Before 1870, all women and men, regardless of age or offense, were confined together in large rooms that resembled "drunk tanks" of modern times (Shover and Einstadter 1988). Conditions for all prisoners were very harsh, filthy, and in keeping with societal views that prisoners were society's outcasts that should be minimally sustained, punished, incapacitated, and deterred from harming society. Only those prisoners who received resources from family or who could steal, barter, or bargain from other inmates obtained even marginal relief from the deplorable conditions of confinement. For women, prison environments where the strong preyed on the weak and women were objects for sexual gratification were unsafe and unhealthy.

Eventually, female offenders were placed in a separate room within facilities for males. Even with the advent of separate cells in the Pennsylvania Penitentiary system (based on the separatist philosophy of confinement where inmates were at all times silent and isolated in cells to become penitent) and New York's Auburn Prison (the congregate system where men slept in separate cells but ate and worked together in silence), women were still kept in an attic room (Shover and Einstadter 1988). Rafter (1983) reports, "Food was sent up to them once a day and once a day the slops were removed. No provision was made for privacy or exercise, and although the women were assigned some sewing work, for the most part they were left to their own devices" (p. 135).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, female prison reformers brought attention to the plight of female offenders. The Women's Prison Reform Movement championed the stance that the needs of female prisoners were different from men's; women needed institutions separate from men, female guards, and discipline through religion and paid work. Even with reform, the conditions of imprisonment for females remained harsh. The prevailing correctional ideology for women was that women who committed crime were depraved, beyond redemption, and deserving of whatever befell them. "Because 'true' women were considered the guardians of morality, when a woman transgressed she seemed to threaten the very foundations of society" (Rafter 1985:49).

A gradual shift in correctional ideology from retribution to rehabilitation resulted in a treatment correctional model (for both men and women) that assumed deviance was an illness and that with proper treatment offenders could be "cured" and therefore reformed to return to society. Men's reformatories were still prison-like but women's reformatories were organized on the "cottage plan." Women lived as a family in residences where they had their own rooms and were taught "proper" female behavior through work (usually farm work to produce institutional food), religion (stressing morality and social place), education (exclusively in domestic areas), and love (through caring relationships of staff). Only women judged "redeemable" were chosen for these reformatories. Those chosen were non-habitual, criminally inexperienced, young women convicted of minor crimes (e.g., drunkenness or prostitution), and white. Black women and others considered unworthy and unredeemable were guarded in custodial institutions which were feminized male prisons (Shover and Einstadter 1988).

Rehabilitation through treatment (the medical model) remained the dominant correctional ideology until the 1970s when more punitive “get tough” measures for both male and female “incurable” criminals took hold with politicians. The reformatory ideal (i.e., rehabilitation) remains highly influential in administrative decisions regarding the confinement of women. Yet, administrative strategies for inmate behavioral control (i.e., architectural design and security measures characteristic of a custodial model) are increasingly apparent. In most states the reformatory and custodial models have, in effect, merged into one facility with dual tasks. Most women’s prisons across the nation are no longer unfenced groups of cottages on campus like grounds; they are enclosed by high fences and monitored by cameras in observational towers. Correctional Officers (both female and male) closely monitor inmate behavior by enforcing strict sets of rules and schedules.

Administrative Challenges

Concurrently meeting the ideals of the custodial model (incarceration for incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution) *and* the rehabilitation model (individualized treatment to change criminal and anti social behavior) while embracing growing demands for a reintegration model (preparing inmates for productive crime free lives in the community) is challenging. Correctional administrators are faced with satisfying perceived public and political requirements of the “get tough” and “penal harm” movements (Clear 1984) that demand a general attitude of punitiveness, decreasing prisoner amenities, and long sentences while concurrently rehabilitating prisoners before they are released.

Increasingly incarcerating women for non-violent minor offenses and for longer sentences has resulted in expanded prison populations and stretched resources in women's prisons. As most states have only one women's prison, all female offenders, regardless of offense or custody level (community, minimum, medium, and maximum security) are housed in the same facility. Providing education (e.g., academic, vocational, and parenting education) and services (e.g., spiritual, physical, and mental health care) as well as multilevel security in one facility results in stretched resources.

The type and number of prison programs offered is influenced by several factors (e.g., budgets, prison population size, inmates' preferences, public opinion). Changing societal attitudes about shared parenting responsibilities (e.g., fathers should responsibly help with parenting) and economic and policy imperatives that women should be employed (mothers should responsibly provide or contribute financially) present programmatic challenges in prisons for both females and males. Both male and female prisoners need to learn the attitudes and techniques of effective, responsible parenting as well as skills required for employment outside prison (Pollock 2002).

Prison administrators are required to make decisions about which programs are maintained and at what levels. The question of whether prisons and programming for men and women should be fundamentally the same or different is raised in challenges for parity between men's and women's prisons and programming. Parity issues surface because historically, women's correctional facilities have not received funding comparable to that of men's correctional facilities. Educational and vocational training programs for women have been seriously under funded (Hunter 1984) and men's prisons

have services and training opportunities that women's prisons do not (Muraskin 2000; Pollock 2002).

Some address the parity issue by suggesting that prison programs are not required for everyone as "constitutionally, no obligation exists for the government to provide any benefits [for anyone] beyond basic requirements" (Muraskin 2000:227) They argue that most prison programs are an inmate privilege rather than a requirement for female or male inmates. Others assert that interpreting this principle as justification for unequal programming between male and female inmates is "an excuse for invidious discrimination among potential recipients" (Gobert and Cohen 1981:294).

A few equal-protection challenges and requests for parity in educational, industry, health, and mental health services have been reviewed in the courts with somewhat favorable results for women. For example, *Bukhari v Huto* (1980) held that even though institutions for women serve smaller multi custody level populations that require proportionately greater expenditures to provide women services equivalent to those in men's institutions, "institutional size is frankly not a justification but an excuse for paucity of services" (Muraskin 2000:229). Resulting from this and other cases, change has occurred in some women's prisons. A few programs have been added (Clear and Cole 2002) and others modified or eliminated to pay for new programs.

Some suggest that changes resulting from misinterpreted parity guidelines could result in undesired outcomes (Muraskin 2000; Pollock 2002) as the needs of female and male inmates are not the same. "Although some (male and female) inmate interests are similar, others are separate and distinct. In many institutions, criteria developed for men

are applied automatically to women, with no consideration for gender differences” (Muraskin 2000:226). Programs particularly helpful for female inmates may not be maintained in women’s prisons if they are not considered equally helpful for males. For example, prison officials note that female offenders are more receptive to and receive more benefit from help with parenting, child welfare, and home stability skills than male inmates. Parity with men’s prison programming in these areas and in mental and medical care could result in women receiving inadequate services because “every indication is that their needs are different and greater than men’s in [these] area[s]” (Pollock 2002:219).

Several researchers suggest that more attention and funds for female inmates than male inmates may be necessary because of physical differences between the two sexes and that if additional money is not budgeted for programs, adding some programs will typically result in the loss of others. As women need programs and services that equip them to *dually* provide and parent when they are released reducing or eliminating parenting programs or academic and vocational programs to compensate for adding other programs may leave women prisoners with a different set of unmet needs (Muraskin 2000; Pollock 2002).

THE WOMEN’S PRISON CULTURE

Like prisons for men, women’s prisons are *total institutions* (Goffman 1961) in that they encompass and control every aspect of a prisoner’s life. Inmates cannot leave the institution, must follow an extensive set of rules, must adhere to strict schedules, and are closely supervised. Prison rules prohibit most forms of individuality. Yet, prisoners

are able to create a culture, language, methods of determining status and power, and a prison economy based on the barter and exchange of valued items (e.g., contraband, food, services, and sex).

Researchers agree that there is some form of informal social organization among prison inmates; they disagree as to which of two models best explains the emergence of a prison culture. The *indigenous model* suggests that prison culture arises from the forces and circumstances of individuals deprived of access to basic human needs inherent within confinement (McCorkle and Korn 1954). Inmates adapt and adjust to the *pains of imprisonment* that derive from the deprivation of freedom, material goods, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, security, and other outside amenities by organizing their lives to alleviate hardships created by being institutionalized (Sykes 1958). The *importation model* of prison culture formation suggests that inmates bring beliefs, identities, and group allegiances of their “street lives” with them into the institution. Outside roles and norms are then modified to fit prison conditions (Irwin and Cressey 1962).

Barbara Owen’s (1998) study of incarcerated females in a California prison emphasizes the importance of personalized relationships (both inside prison and outside prison) in women’s prison culture and their adjustments to prison life. She finds evidence for both the importation theory (i.e., that the culture, processes, and inmate adjustment to prison life is shaped by pre-prison experiences and relationships) *and* the indigenous theory of prison culture (i.e., prison culture derives from women’s adaptive responses to institutional demands and deprivations by organizing themselves into close relationships

with other inmates). As in men's prisons, prisonization is said to occur if a prisoner adopts an inmate or criminal identity (Clemmer 1940; Owen 1998; Clear and Cole 2000).

The literature about incarcerated women suggests that each prisoner's pre-prison experiences and identities specifically associated with being female (e.g., motherhood) critically impact her particular adaptation to the deprivations of prison life and how she "does her time" (e.g., what activities and programs she chooses) (Baunach 1985; Bloom and Steinhart 1993; Owen 1998). Regardless of the origin or processes from which prison cultures emerge, researchers agree that women's prison culture and men's prison culture are different (Giallombardo 1966; Heffernan 1972; Burkhardt 1973).

Gangs and Pseudo Families

Most of the literature that describes the culture of men's prisons describes a violent and predatory prison environment with inmate's banding together in "gangs" for committing violence, securing goods or services, or for protection (Irwin and Cressey 1962; Clear and Cole 2000). Descriptions of the culture in women's prisons suggest that although exploitation and pursuit of material gain may exist, women are more accommodating and deferent to each other and authority. They seek emotional support in small, intimate groups called *pseudo families*.

Pseudo families are characterized by traditional family roles and same-sex relations. Members of the pseudo family assume an assortment of family roles (e.g., husband, wife, mother, son, daughter). Some women adopt male gender roles and others adopt female gender roles; some are dominant and some are dependent. Relationships may include homosexual activity that grows out of sharing and emotionally supportive

relationships (Giallombardo 1966; Heffernan 1972; Ward and Kassebaum 1965; Burkhart 1973; Owen 1998).

The relative prevalence of homosexual relationships in women's prison culture has long been debated. Close to a century of research about female prison sexuality offers various ideas about the amount, nature, and causes of homosexual behavior in women's prisons (Otis 1913; Selling 1931; Halleck and Hersko 1962; Ward and Kassebaum 1965; Giallombardo 1966; Heffernan 1972; Propper 1978; Owen 1998; Greer 2000). Research is characterized by varying definitions of "homosexuality" (ranging from love letters or hugging to sexual activity and a committed sexual relationship) as well as selective observation often of small samples. Estimates of the prevalence of homosexual participation range from a low of 30% to a high of 95% (Greer 2000). A common thread throughout discussions about homosexuality in prison is that women's homosexual behavior derives from emotional needs for "closeness" and relationships; for men, physical needs are offered as causative, although dominance may be important.

INCARCERATED WOMEN

Until the 1970s rates of female incarceration were quite low. During the last decades of the 20th century several policy shifts occurred that increased those rates. They are: a "get tough" approach with increased likelihood of incarceration (and for longer periods of time) for anyone who commits a crime; reduced flexibility in sentencing from codified mandatory sentencing guidelines; a "war on drugs"; and increasing tendencies to revoke probation or parole sending women back to prison, usually for failed drug tests (Chesney-Lind 1995). The low numbers of incarcerated females of the 1970s rose to

unprecedented highs at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the past two years, in some jurisdictions, the rate of increase has slowed but the number of incarcerated females continues to grow (Pollock 2002).

Larceny, forgery, fraud, and embezzlement (crimes typically noted as “female crimes”) continue to represent a substantial portion of women’s crime as females are more likely now than ever before to participate in property crime. Women’s property crimes are usually committed for small amounts of money and are often related to drug use. For example, of inmates incarcerated in state prisons in 1998, nearly 1 in 3 reported “they had committed the offense which brought them to prison in order to obtain money to support their need for drugs” (USDJ 1999b:9). Nearly 4 in 10 were under the influence of drugs when committing their offense (USDJ 1999b).

The pattern of offenses among females in state prisons has been changing. The rate of serious violent offenses (e.g., murder) has been declining since 1980. Nearly 90% of the increase in the number of violent female felons convicted in state courts “was accounted for by aggravated assault, perhaps reflecting increased prosecution of women for domestic violence” (USDJ 1999b:6). The proportion of women in prison for both property and violent crimes has decreased steadily since 1979 while the proportion of women in prison for drug and public order offenses grew during the same time period—almost tripling between 1986 and 1991 (USDJ 1999b).

Nationwide, the majority (more than $\frac{2}{3}$) of imprisoned women are black, Hispanic, or of another minority group. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of incarcerated women are of child bearing and rearing age, that is, between 25 and 44 years of age. The educational level of

women prisoners increased in recent decades as did that of the general population, but it is still low. A substantial minority (44% of those in state prisons, and 37% of those in federal prisons) did not complete high school or earn a GED (USDJ 1999b). Their reasons for dropping out of school are associated with a lack of educational commitment, pregnancy, and boredom (American Correctional Association 1990). Incarcerated women are substantially less likely to have ever married than women in general (nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of the women in state prisons and slightly over $\frac{1}{3}$ of females in federal prisons) (USDJ 1999b).

Female offenders generally were in an economically marginal position before their arrest. Over $\frac{1}{2}$ (60%) of the women in state prison in 1998 reported they were not employed full-time before their arrest. Their low levels of full-time employment are paralleled with low incomes (about 37% reported monthly income of less than 600 dollars) and dependence on welfare (almost 30% received welfare assistance before arrest) (USDJ 1999b). A 1991 survey of women state prison inmates reported a similar low level of full-time employment with about a third (35.7%) working full-time before their arrest (USDJ 1994). When employed, women inmates earned little more than the minimum wage, less than they needed to support themselves and their children (American Correctional Association 1990). This employment and income profile has led some to conclude that women who become involved in illegal activity “tend to commit survival crimes, most often petty economic crimes to earn money (or) feed a drug-dependent life” (Owen 1998:11).

Female inmates are twice as likely to have grown up in a single parent household as members of the general population. Almost half of the female state prison inmates

(47%) reported that at least one member of their immediate family had been incarcerated with a higher percentage of black than white women reporting they had a family member who had been in prison or jail (USDJ 1994). Nearly 60% of women in state prisons experienced physical or sexual abuse at some time before their first incarceration, about one-third as children (USDJ 1999b). Many incarcerated women report that as children they experienced harsh discipline by their parents (Chesney-Lind 1997).

The combination of personal characteristics and offense patterns of female offenders suggests that the typical incarcerated female is of child rearing age, unmarried, a minority group member, a mother of minor children, undereducated, economically marginal, a survivor of abuse, from a difficult home situation with other family members with incarceration histories, and dependent on drugs or alcohol. She was incarcerated for a low level non-violent offense, directly or indirectly related to the use or abuse of drugs or alcohol.

INCARCERATED MOTHERS

About 2/3 of incarcerated women (65% of state prisoners and 59% of federal prisoners) are mothers of minor children. The majority of these imprisoned mothers reported living with their minor children at the time of sentencing to prison (USDJ 2000). Social stereotypes of incarcerated mothers are negative. Law breaking mothers are judged by society to be unfit, irresponsible parents who ignored the possibility of being incarcerated and therefore of separation from their children. Public perception is that they are probably incapable and unaware of parents' responsibilities (Carron 1984).

The limited literature that addresses the quality of women's mothering before they entered prison is primarily based on qualitative research. The findings and conclusions are mixed. Several qualitative researchers suggest that most incarcerated mothers were working hard at parenting before coming to prison and were "good mothers" within the limits of their abilities and circumstances. They report prison mothers expressed appropriate concerns, parental attitudes, and behaviors (Baunach 1979; Harris 1995; Owen 1998). Further, these mothers believed that loving and guiding their children in socially appropriate attitudes and behaviors is important (LeFlore and Holston 1990) and most attempted to maintain contact even when constrained by incarceration from being children's daily caregiver and economic provider (Henriques 1982; McGowan and Blumenthal 1978; Owen 1998).

Some imprisoned mothers actively reject the stereotypical image and describe themselves as "good mothers" (LeFlore and Holston 1990; Owen 1998). Their definitions of "mother" as someone who comforts, assures, teaches, guides, loves, cares, corrects, and is "there for" her children are not unlike common social perceptions of mothering. They describe a mother as someone who is concerned about her children's emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being and who teaches them "right and wrong" (Berry 1999). Yet, others say they "don't know how to be a mother" (Harris 1995: 4) and express feelings of inadequacy as parents both during incarceration and when contemplating reunification with children (Baunach 1979; Chapman 1980).

Regardless of how incarcerated women judge themselves as mothers, all parents are expected to socialize children about the norms, values, expectations, and skills

necessary for survival in the larger society. Not only are parents expected to train young children in skills to become more autonomous (e.g., dressing and feeding themselves, making good decisions regarding their personal safety and well being), but also parents are charged with instilling a sense of right and wrong and facilitating development of emotional attachments, communication skills, and interpersonal skills children need to become socially functional adults who pursue pro social pathways. Through control, modeling, and direct instruction, parents are expected to socialize their children's transformation from helpless infants into members of society who not only know but also enact dominant norms and values (Cherlin 2002).

Whatever their self assessments, the parenting skills of these mothers are not known. We also do not know how inmate mothers' parenting skills compare to those of other mothers. Incarcerated mothers as a group presumably exhibit a range of parenting perceptions and skills. Teaching parenting skills to incarcerated women who may not have had appropriate mother models on which to pattern their behavior may help incarcerated mothers better handle multiple responsibilities when released (Henriques 1982). Learning parenting and relationship building skills may foster bonds of attachment to their children that in turn may encourage a commitment to self control and socially conforming behavior in both mothers and children (Johnston and Gabel 1995; Tremblay et al. 2001). Even if an incarcerated mother has no parenting deficiencies, there are few parents ("good" or "bad" by cultural standards) that cannot benefit from encouragement and instruction in parenting skills and techniques that can improve or strengthen relationships with their children (Tremblay et al. 2001).

Difficulties of Parenting Behind Bars

Prior to incarceration, most incarcerated mothers were the primary caregivers for their children, many doing the best they could at nurturing and providing considering their economic and social circumstances (Grossman 1984; Baunach 1985; Bloom and Steinhart 1993; Berry 1999). When incarcerated, many attempt to maintain some semblance of the mother role by staying connected to children through prison visitation, telephone calls, and the mail. But, there are inherent problems with each of these approaches to maintaining connections (e.g., caregivers' resources, prison regulations, and judicial and social policies).

Women prisoners are usually incarcerated considerable distances from their families as most states have only one facility for women. Further exacerbating the distance problem is the location of the majority of women's facilities in rural and outlying areas. These facilities are therefore not easily accessible through public transportation systems. Transporting children for visits may be prohibitively expensive and the logistics nearly impossible for some of those providing care for inmates' children.

Even when resources are not a barrier to children visiting their mother in prison, some mothers do not want their children to see them in prison or be subjected to prison security procedures (e.g., "pat downs," barbed wire topped fences, the presence of uniformed correctional officers). Some caregivers (and inmates) decide that the crowded, noisy prison facilities are not appropriate for children. Visitation rooms usually lack

privacy for parent-child communication and furnishings (adult size tables and chairs) are uncomfortable for a child (Zalba 1964; Beckerman 1989; Hairston 1991).

Telephone calls also require financial resources. All telephone calls from prison (regardless of whether local or long distance) are toll calls that require the receiver to pay for the “collect” calls. So, an inmate’s ability to have telephone contact with children is contingent upon the willingness or financial ability of the caregivers to pay for the prisoner’s calls. Contact with children through cards and letters is, of course, less expensive but, some inmates find it difficult to express themselves in writing or grow discouraged when children do not answer or comment about receiving letters or cards.

THE CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

The children of incarcerated mothers are “doing time” too. Though it is recognized that parental crime, arrest, and incarceration have a major impact on the lives of children, little attention is given this disadvantaged group. They have been referred to as “invisible children” because their physical and emotional needs may not be considered in responses to their mother’s illegal behavior (e.g., arrest, sentencing, incarceration, and correctional programming) (Sandifer and Kurth 2000).

A recent estimate is that there are “more than 1.3 million minor children who are the offspring of women under correctional sanction; [with] more than a quarter million of these children hav[ing] mothers who are serving time in prison or jail” (USDJ 1999b:8). The National Council on Crime and Delinquency projects that as many as ten million children have a parent who at some point in their adult lives has spent time in prison or jail, or has been on probation or parole (Gabel and Johnston 1995). The number of

children affected by the imprisonment of a parent is rapidly growing in tandem with the rising prevalence of imprisonment as preferred legal sanction.

Custodial arrangements for the children of prisoners vary with the gender of the imprisoned parent. Approximately 90% of the minor children of incarcerated fathers live with their mother whereas only 24% of the minor children of incarcerated mothers live with their fathers (USDJ 1991). Seven to thirteen percent of the children of imprisoned mothers are in foster care with nonrelatives (Bloom, 1993; McGowan and Blumenthal 1978; USDJ 1991).

The children of prisoners are often among the economically disadvantaged of society *prior* to parental imprisonment. The work of the American Correctional Association's Task Force on the Female Offender (1990) suggests that approximately 85% of incarcerated mothers, before imprisonment, had legal custody of minor children and were their primary source of financial and emotional support. The earlier review of the characteristics of incarcerated women established that many of these women had inadequate employment and thus presumably difficulty financially providing for their children.

Difficulties Experienced by Children of Incarcerated Mothers

When a parent goes to prison the family loses whatever financial contribution she or he has made to family support. Also, additional resources may be necessary for prison visits, long distance phone calls, or a household move. To cope with additional financial burdens, children's caregivers may need to take multiple jobs or work long hours, and thus spend less time with them. Older siblings may be forced into the job market or into

child care and other adult responsibilities for which they may not be developmentally ready.

Children are sometimes instructed to keep their parent's incarceration a secret so that the family will not be embarrassed. Secrecy further isolates these children (Hostsetter and Jinnah, 1993). Children of prisoners may experience social stigmatization and be rejected or taunted by friends or extended family members. Social stigmatization can inhibit the child from seeking relationships with peers, teachers, or other significant adults and may result in exclusion from social groups (Carlson and Cevera 1992; Hagan 1991; Hagan and Palloni 1990).

Research identifies a plethora of additional difficulties experienced by children of the incarcerated. Changing custodial arrangements may cause severed family, school, and community ties. Some children may not be able to sustain school performance levels and exhibit behavioral problems at school and home. Others may feel ostracized and guilty or experience social, emotional and cognitive delays. The "sustained emotional trauma" (Johnston and Gabel 1995) associated with the incarceration of a parent can produce responses ranging from embarrassment and anger to eating and attachment disorders (Baker, Morris, and Janus 1978; Fritsch and Burkhear 1981; Lowenstein 1986; Johnston and Gabel 1995).

The events surrounding and following the experience of parental imprisonment can be a turning point initiating a pattern of unfavorable life choices. These events coupled with economic deprivation may increase the likelihood that children of incarcerated mothers will follow a path or pattern of antisocial behavior that leads them

into adult criminality. The unintended consequences of our current correctional policies and the scarcity of effective programs that encourage the maintenance of family ties through parent child interaction opportunities during incarceration may be contributing to the production of a large “next generation” of criminals (Hagan 1996).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a general overview of the characteristics of women’s prisons and of women prisoners. The lack of information regarding their parenting skills is established as are the difficulties incarceration poses for maintaining relationships with their children. Chapter 3 provides an in depth examination of the context of the lives and environment of mothers who are incarcerated at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women.

Chapter 3

Incarcerated Mothers At KCIW: The Context

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) Parenting Program in increasing inmate mothers' parenting knowledge and in developing strong relationships with their children. An additional objective of this research is to identify and explore parenting problems and difficulties specific to incarcerated mothers that need to be addressed when developing programs particularly for inmate mothers. Life course theory supports examining parenting issues specific to incarcerated mothers within their environmental context (Nurse 2000; Piquero and Mazerolle 2001). A qualitative examination of KCIW inmate mothers' experiences was chosen to contextualize the quantitative evaluation (a pre test/post test quasi experiment) of parent education classes.

I explore how parenting and relationships with children shape and impact the lives of incarcerated mothers from the perspective of KCIW inmate mothers involved in the classroom component and/or the interactive component (*The Bonding Program, Kids Day, Teen Day, Girl Scouts Beyond Bars*) of the KCIW Parenting Program. This chapter attempts to document the activities and lives of these women, understand experiences of inmate mothers from their own point of view, and conceptualize their behavior as an expression of the social contexts of their lives (mothers separated from their children). Special emphasis is given to documenting the world from the perspective of prison mothers through the use of inmate narratives (Geertz 1973).

METHODOLOGY

Field observation involves spending considerable time in the research setting, observing everyday life, participating in events, asking questions, eavesdropping, and keeping copious notes or recordings of gleaned data. By studying one case (the KCIW Parenting Program) the investigator can describe in greater depth and gain insight into meanings people give to the reality around them than would be possible otherwise (McTavish and Loether 1999). A picture of inmate life and parenting behind bars at KCIW emerged from observations during approximately 70 trips to the prison and about 350 hours of fitting my program evaluation research objectives around prison procedures (e.g., counting prisoners, paging prisoners to class or interviews). Interview participants' eagerness to tell me their "stories" facilitated environmental contextualization by providing unexpected but rich, in depth qualitative data about these women's lives in prison.

My approach is in principle ethnographic. But, the term *quasi ethnography* (Incardi, Lockwood, and Pottinger 1993; Owen 1998) better fits this study because I was not (nor cared to be) fully immersed in the social world of prison life. I was able to gain some understanding about how inmate mothers create a sense of personal order within controlled situations of prison interaction through interviews and informal conversations with particularly forthcoming inmates and very cooperative institutional staff. I explored inmate culture, processes, and relationship networks by seizing unexpected observational

or conversational moments to gain insight about what is really “going on” with inmate mothers.

Thick interviews and extended periods of time eavesdropping and observing inmates during their “break times” and during periods of time between interviews generated a large volume of information about inmates lived experiences. I present a detailed cultural description of how inmate mothers at KCIW structure and adapt their lives within the confines of rules, schedules, and deprivations (especially deprivations associated with loss of contact and relationships with their children) of prison. The ethnographic approach combines the reporting of information drawn from institutional documents and from inmates’ descriptions. Narratives are used extensively to illustrate and describe findings. In sum “key aspects of the case are pulled together in an analytic way, with considerable attention to illustrative detail” (McTavish and Loether 1999:164).

Gaining Access

Access to the research setting was gained by developing a relationship with the Prison Information and Public Affairs Officer. My initial contact with her was to arrange a field trip for a group of my students enrolled in a special topics course entitled “Families, Crime, and Criminal Justice.” I had been told that she would inform the main tower and send a memorandum to the main gate so that we would be allowed to enter the “sally port” (the waiting area between two gates used for searches and identification) and that a picture ID and a “pat down” search would be required before we could enter the prison. The prerequisite that “ethnography starts with a conscious attitude of almost

complete ignorance” (Spradley 1979:4) posed no difficulty for my research. This initial entry was the first time I had ever been on the grounds of a prison of any kind.

At the time of the field trip I arranged to return to the prison to discuss dissertation research topics with the Prison Information Officer. The extensive conversation resulted in a tour of administrative portions of the facility, an in depth discussion of the KCIW parenting program, and receipt of written guidelines for requesting permission to do research from the Kentucky Department of Corrections. I then contacted the parenting class instructor to tell her of my interests and seek cooperation for my research. She was (and remains) cooperative and interested in my evaluation of the parenting program.

Requests for permission to do research with vulnerable population human subjects were submitted to and approved by both the Department of Corrections and the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board. (Appendix A). My role in the prison setting as “researcher” was understood and readily accepted by both staff and inmates; they were not only willing but also eager to talk and to help me. I soon became accustomed to ID checks, “pat down” searches, prison paperwork, and required procedures for entering the prison with a bag of papers and a tape recorder. The director of the Educational Program at KCIW sent a memorandum for long term, anytime access to the prison to the main gate. Tower and gate officers became familiar with my project and credentials so access to the prison was fairly easy with few delays.

KCIW staff (e.g., deputy wardens, program managers, teachers, and correctional officers) provided candid and pertinent information about institutional life. The parenting

class instructor introduced me to her parenting classes, as well as other inmates involved in interactive components of the parenting program, and also to staff. Her rapport with the inmates and the loyalty of her inmate classroom aide proved to my “entry ticket” for access into the world of women in prison. Without her flexibility and cooperation in allowing me to use class time and evaluate a program, this research would not have been possible.

Population and Sample

The approved research population consisted of all mothers that were enrolled or had completed the parenting course at KCIW who volunteered to participate in this project. An unmatched comparison group of approximately 50 volunteers drawn from the general population of inmate mothers at KCIW who had not participated in the institutional parenting program was also approved. Treatment group participants ($n=119$) were recruited on the first day of each of the 8 parenting courses (two groups of about 15 women each quarter) that began within the one-year time frame of this research. At the time the project was explained to potential research subjects, parenting course participants interested in being interviewed individually were asked to sign a list from which I would make appointments for another of my visits to the prison. Interviews were conducted with 35 of these women based on their availability during times allocated for my use of an appropriate room.

Interviews were also conducted with 15 more women who had previously completed the parenting course and were involved in an interactive component of the KCIW parenting program. These inmate were selected through a chain referral technique.

The comparison group of non parenting program participants (42 women) was recruited from various classes in the education center, the institutional substance abuse program, prison industry, and dormitory day rooms.

An written explanation of the project and measures taken to protect their privacy was read to all potential participants (Appendix B). They were informed that helping with the research would not earn them money, “good time,” or influence with the parole board and that non-participation would not penalize them in any way. Those who agreed to participate signed consent forms for both the Kentucky Department of Corrections and the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (Appendix C). In the course of one year of research, I tested, formally interviewed, or had informal conversations with at least 300 inmates involved in the parenting program, the comparison group, other prison programs or groups, and numerous staff. I observed numerous other inmates.

Gathering and Recording Data

Field observations and informal conversations were organized around the questions: “How do inmate mothers at KCIW organize and enact their lives, and cope with the confines and restrictions of prison life”? “What is it like to be a mother and in prison”? and “How does a person ‘go about’ being a mother while in prison”? These themes carried over naturally into the semi structured formal interviews with those who volunteered for private tape-recorded interviews.

Individual, semi-structured, in depth interviews were guided by researcher prepared questions (Appendix D). Interviews ranged from thirty minutes to two hours. The primary focus for individual interviews was parenting program participants’

assessments of parenting classes and parenting program visitation. Separating motherhood and parenting experiences from their everyday prison lives, lives before prison, and plans for the future proved impossible. The stories of the 50 interviewed women provided narrative accounts of the feelings, deprivations, adjustments, accommodations, and lived experiences of being a prisoner and a mother at KCIW. In depth conversations were limited to inmates involved in the parenting program that had signed consent forms. Informal conversations with others (e.g., educational and chapel groups) were initiated in my presence by helpful prison staff to add to my understanding of institutional life.

Interview data from inmate mothers along with observations of and informal conversations with inmates and staff provided data for “rich description” (Geertz 1973) of the setting and structural circumstances (i.e., rules, procedures, and schedules) of confinement. Several hundred pages of documents supplied by the prison (e.g., *The Inmate Hand Book*, *Parenting Program Guidelines*, *Policy and Procedure Guidelines*, standard operating procedures documents, and pertinent memorandums) were examined. The documents supplied by prison administrators offered specific details about the prison, procedures, and the regulations that constrained the inmates.

I also attended several parenting classes, a parenting committee meeting, the prison volunteer orientation, and participated in several formal tours of the facility. Hand written notes were made during classes and meetings attended. Information and insights from informal conversations and observations were recalled and recorded onto cassette tapes immediately after leaving the prison (most often in my automobile in the prison

parking lot). Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was unable to observe three of the KCIW Parenting Program interactive components (Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, Kids Day, and Teen Day). I voluntarily limited my observation of inmates involved in The Bonding Program to 15 or 20 minutes on selected bonding visit days out of courtesy for the privacy of the new mothers and their infants.

Analyzing Findings

As Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest, I organized my findings into “thinking units” of practices, meanings, relationships, groups, organizations (e.g., the parenting program), lifestyles, and the prison world. Written notes, transcriptions of audiocassettes of observations and interview, as well as mental impressions were continuously analyzed as the study unfolded. Toward the end of my research, materials were reviewed and segments of typed interview transcripts were sorted into categories by topic and concept. Illustrative narratives were identified to describe and offer insight about the prison, life inside prison, networks of relationships both inside and outside prison, and the difficulties and techniques of parenting while in prison. By conscious intent, I learned about the rules, schedules, procedures, and organization of prison life primarily through the eyes of inmates. Written administrative documents supplied by the prison were consulted repeatedly to verify and clarify specific information about formal rules, administrative procedures, and prison history.

THE RESEARCH SITE

The Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) is the only prison for adult females in Kentucky. Its mission is “to provide humane program and service

opportunities for sentenced offenders that will enhance their community re-integration and economic self sufficiency, and that will be administered in a just and equitable manner within the least restrictive environment consistent with public, staff, and inmate safety” (Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Informational Brochure 2002:1). Incapacitation of offenders through a custodial model of corrections that “ensures community protection through close management and supervision of the inmate population” is always an immediate goal. But, a reformatory model advocating opportunities “for offenders to use their time of incarceration in a productive manner and rehabilitate themselves” and a rehabilitation philosophy that “each offender has the capacity to change” also influences Kentucky correctional policy for women (Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Inmate Handbook 2000:1).

KCIW is a multi custody facility charged with meeting the housing and programming needs of women with a wide range of sentence lengths, security requirements, and physical and mental needs. It accommodates felons sentenced from one year to life; women who have offended for the first time; community, minimum, medium, maximum custody level, and death row inmates; and female offenders who are pregnant, mentally challenged, physically disabled, or elderly. It is located approximately 20 miles Northeast of Louisville and houses felons from all of Kentucky’s 120 counties.

History

During the first part of the twentieth century women prisoners in Kentucky were housed in facilities with males. But, in 1937, on the heels of the Women’s Prison Reformatory movement, Kentucky began constructing a facility for females. The first

group of 87 inmates arrived on October 31, 1938. By 1940, the population had risen to 117 and operating costs totaled \$34,750. The inmate population fell to 51 prisoners with U.S. involvement in World War II. From 1943 through 1966, lower numbers prevailed with inmate population counts ranging between 50-70 and about 15 staff. By 1976, in tandem with overall rising crime and incarceration rates in the U.S., the Kentucky female inmate population had grown to 145 and then almost doubled to 283 inmates in 1990. By the turn of the 21st century the number of inmates again more than doubled to 680 (Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Inmate Handbook 2000). The population count is now 700 and rising.

The current annual operating budget is \$9.5 million. Staff has increased to 217, the bulk of which (141) are security employees. Institutional facilities currently include 5 living-unit buildings, a 44-bed special management unit, and a number of buildings that support institutional goals and management (e.g., academic and technical schools, Correctional Industries, family visitation, indoor recreation, and administrative offices). The institution's total land area is 270 acres but only twenty-seven acres are currently fenced. There is ample room for expansion if the prison population continues to grow.

Kentucky follows the national trend of increased incarceration and consequently prison expansion. Recent completion of an additional dormitory building expands total inmate capacity to 716. Implementation of a \$33 million expansion budget and several construction projects now under way offer continuing evidence of prison expansion (KCIW Information Brochure 2002). A new Correctional Industries site nears completion. Current prison industry space will be renovated to provide improved

recreation space. A new administration building now under construction will include improved prison visitation areas. Additional expansion projects will begin soon.

Change

Budget shortages, public and political “get tough” attitudes, crowding, bureaucratization, and attempts to establish gender equity or parity have all been cited as instigators of change in prison management strategies (Quinn 1999, Pollock 2002). With the number of inmates at KCIW increasing significantly in the past several years, both inmates and staff report change at KCIW. Areas of change include more restrictions, security, and regimentation (including uniforms); fewer services and events (e.g., talent shows and dances); and decreased physical space per inmate as well as decreased quality of provided necessities (e.g., toiletries and food). Inmates report feeling more restricted from interacting with staff than in the past and that staff are less caring and treat inmates like children (i.e., infantilization). One inmate observed:

When I was here before, (six years ago) I could have a conversation with an officer. I even got to talk to the warden sometimes. But now, nobody won't listen. They act like I'm not a person, treat me like a child. This is kindergarten compared to how it was when I was here last time.

Another inmate offered:

This place has changed. When I was here before, it wasn't so bad. We could wear our own clothes, the food was better, there were talent shows and dances where we could dance with each other. Now, we don't have all that... they write you up for everything. You can't even give someone a drag off your cigarette. They don't let us decide anything for ourselves. They treat us like children.

Although changes may simply reflect new technology, changing institutional goals, or a quest for efficiency, it is unclear how changes in public and political attitudes

and correctional goals in general (i.e., retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, or rehabilitation) may be affecting change at KCIW. Personnel changes over the past several years (e.g., warden, deputy wardens, psychologists, dietary supervisor) and institutional bureaucratization may have affected prison operation. Concern about possibilities of prisoner allegations or litigation and/or staff interpretations of what is required for equity of services and therefore parity for women prisoners may also be shaping changing institutional priorities.

The Setting

In general, The Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women does not look like most people imagine a prison--the “cold,” foreboding, concrete institution with barred cells and imposing “guards” depicted in media images. Indeed, some have remarked that this prison looks and feels very much like a small college campus (obviously ignoring fences, correctional officers, and other security devices). The women appear to walk about freely carrying out their daily routines (jobs, classes, assignments). Prison grounds and yards are clean, well groomed, and attractively landscaped. A few covered pavilions offer sheltered space for visiting, smoking, and sitting and there are a few coinless pay telephone stations. The most attractive feature of the main yard area is its tall, stately, shade trees. The presence of shade trees is particularly striking in a prison setting. Staff indicated that in men’s prisons, past experience has taught administrators that men may climb tall trees and try to “air walk” their way over fences to freedom. Women, on the other hand, seldom try to “run.”

Over a period of about a year and a half of frequent visits to the prison, I grew accustomed to the fences, cameras, observational towers, and signs. Inmates' faces grew familiar to me. Before January 2002, when it became mandatory for all prisoners in Kentucky to wear uniforms, it was often necessary to remind myself that I was in a prison as I walked from the gates, past the chapel and the very old recreation building (called "the barn"), across "the yard" in front of the three story very old and stately Main Building to the education building where parenting classes are held.

The attractive grounds and seemingly free movement of the inmates from one section or "compound" of the prison to another cannot disguise the fact that the women who live here lead very controlled lives in a highly controlled setting. High fences topped with rolled barbed wire both enclose the grounds and also partition the prison into smaller (more manageable) areas within the prison. These fences outline outer and inner physical boundaries within which inmates must stay without a special pass.

Observational towers containing an elaborate network of cameras that allow correctional officers to constantly "watch" inmates' activities reinforce the fact that privacy is not a prisoner privilege. Signs that specify "no inmate standing in front of this line," "*inmate* bathroom," and "*staff* break room," delineate inmate restrictions and the inmate/staff segregation system.

The buildings are a mix of new and old. The oldest structures are the Main Building and The Barn that made up the entire prison facility when it first opened. Main Building is a multi-use, centrally located building that serves as the administrative and activity hub of the prison. The mailroom, canteen, infirmary, library, legal aid and law

library, central security, and offices for deputy wardens' and some other support staff form the nucleus of institutional life. Main Building is also used as a sleeping and assessment center for newly arriving inmates and dormitory space for about 125 other inmates.

Several sidewalks laid in a spoke-like pattern lead to Main Building and the Main Yard (the area in front of Main Building) from the other prison buildings. These concrete pathways connect the main yard and building to the front entrance gate (Post 1), the Chapel, Operations Building (prison records, accounts, personnel, and Head Warden's offices), and the Education and Prison Industry Building. Sidewalks that branch off main spokes lead to the Dining Room and the Special Management Unit (also referred to as cell block or lock down) and three additional inmate living areas.

Near the front gate, The Barn, appropriately named for its current appearance and original use, is used for indoor recreation and as the visitation area where prisoners receive family and friends from "outside the gates" on scheduled visitation days and hours. Just outside the front gate, but still considered a part of the institution, is a community custody level dormitory (a less restrictive correctional environment prescribed by the courts for some inmates).

The Women

The total inmate population is around 720; the exact number of inmates changes daily. Approximately 40% are serving time for violent crimes; 31% for drug related crimes; 22% for property crimes; 4% for sex crimes; and 3% miscellaneous crimes. Offenders' median age is 36 years with a racial composition of 63% Caucasian and 37%

African American. Included in the population are females serving from one year to life, a death row inmate, and first offenders, as well as disabled, mentally challenged, geriatric, and pregnant inmates (KCIW Information Flyer 2002).

Estimates from staff suggest that now as in the past, most (about 80%) of KCIW's inmates are mothers. While the proportion of incarcerated women who are mothers may be stable, informal conversations with staff reveal an overall perception that the characteristics of inmates (mothers and non-mothers) coming in are different than in the past. They are younger, more involved in drugs, more are HIV positive, and more arrive with mental health diagnoses. Staff report that more inmates than in the past arrive pregnant or physically disabled. Inmates now at KCIW are also more likely than those in the past to have been previously incarcerated.

Recidivists. When asked why they think some women “keep coming back” several inmates and staff offered a variety of explanations but no one answer to perceived increase in recidivism emerged. Explanations included drugs, financial strain, and poor home environments. Several inmates blamed their re-incarceration on the people they were hanging out with and “going back to the same environment that brought me here the first time.” One inmate said, “I can give you one word for why I keep coming back—CRACK. I can’t resist crack.” Another said, “I keep on doing stupid things.”

Some suggested that being treated like a child and “becoming accustomed to having others do things for them rather than accepting responsibility for doing for themselves” (infantilization) contributed to recidivists irresponsibility, lack of self control, and needs for immediate gratification. Others suggested that some inmates adopt

a prisoner identity and feel “at home” only in prison (i.e., prisonization). “They don’t know any other life but prison life and don’t know how to live anywhere but in prison.” More than one inmate and staff reported hearing of a woman getting out and breaking the law deliberately so she could come back to prison and be with her girlfriend. One inmate mused:

It may be easier in prison than on the streets for some of these women. In prison they get food, a place to sleep, and medicine and they’re safe. On the streets anything happens. Things is tough.

Yet, none of the hundreds of women I talked with ever said they liked prison or wanted to stay. They all talked about parole or serve out dates and “not ever coming back to this place.” One inmate summarized:

In prison, you have 2 classes of people. There’s the good ones and the bad ones. And the good ones, I truly believe, want to help themselves. They know they’ve made a mistake. Whether how many times it’s taken them to realize it, they’ve finally reached that point in their life. They’re tired and they want to change. Or the bad ones that are just institutionalized and they don’t know any other way. But (for me) I think having been here in prison and not being able to be with my daughters. . . That alone, you know, that alone has changed my whole attitude and made me realize so much.

Pregnant inmates. Another phenomenon I observed over the time of my study was the apparently increasing number of pregnant women arriving at KCIW. National data suggest numbers of pregnant inmates across the United States are rising with about 10% of the female prison population pregnant at any one time (Pollock 2002). At KCIW, as reported by prison staff, about 25 women per year enter pregnant and subsequently give birth during their incarceration period. Usually there are no more than 8 to 10 pregnant prisoners at KCIW at any given time.

Although women who enter prison pregnant may not do so intentionally, prison does supply some pregnant inmates' unmet prenatal needs. One staff member described observing change in a pregnant inmate who entered prison exhausted, with sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, and skinny arms and legs. As days of nourishment and relief from "free world" responsibilities (e.g., child care and earning money for housing and food) passed, the inmate began to look healthy and rested.

Several individuals suggested that some pregnant inmates offend in order to receive prenatal and obstetric services. One inmate told me her "story" during a bonding visit (special visitation allowed between mothers and newborns). She explained that the baby she was holding was her fifth child and not the first born to her during an incarceration. She was married; her husband was caring for the other children; and her new infant was living at Galilean Home. She expected to soon be released from prison, "pick up the baby," and reunite with her family. She never overtly stated that returning to prison was planned. However, she did indicate that it was beneficial to be in prison when pregnant. In prison, she received food, time to rest, obstetric care, and the birth was paid for. At Galilean Home, her baby received loving, attentive, round-the-clock care and nourishment from volunteer nannies that live at the home and care for the babies of incarcerated women as their Christian ministry service. Obviously, KCIW was a better place for her than "on the streets" (an inmate expression for life outside prison) in economic distress and without adequate health insurance.

Those who had recently given birth reported no perceived inadequacies in medical staff, nutrition, or prison living conditions. Their stories focused more on being

scheduled for delivery and being transported to hospitals where they entered through a back entrance (a hospital administration request in order not to “alarm” other patients). Shackles were removed during delivery; hospital staff and the female correctional officer present in the delivery room were characterized as kind and supported. Feelings of intense emotional pain and sadness upon leaving the hospital to return to prison without her baby were expressed by one new mother.

I hadn't been here long before they scheduled it because I had to have a C-section. Monday morning they took me out. The 2 women officers that I had. . . they're like support, they're great. I went in a state car and I had on the orange (travel uniform) and I was handcuffed. They don't put (ankle) shackles on you because you're pregnant, anything can happen. And they're in there the whole time when you're having the baby. I mean, if you want them for support to hold your hand, they will. And if you don't need them, they're behind you. Once you deliver the baby, you're in a private room by yourself and they shackle one leg to the bed, no matter what custody you are. While you're having your baby, You're not shackled, hands or feet, because you have the monitor on your fingers and your heart and everything. They just have to be in the room. Once you go into recovery, then you're shackled to the bed. But the baby's in there with you as much you want it to be in there with you. You get to feed, you get to change, you care for the baby. Like I was there for 3 nights and 4 days because I had a C-section. And women that have their baby naturally, they stay 2 nights and 3 days. And I mean, it's not as bad. The hardest part is coming back here. You know, coming back here after you've been in the hospital that many days with your baby. And then it tears you apart.

Other Illness. Medical and other correctional staff related that sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, diabetes, and a plethora of health problems associated with addiction and generally unhealthy lifestyles are also troublesome to many incarcerated women at KCIW. Mental health issues such as more women entering prison with mental health diagnoses (partially due to deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill), are also reported as problematic. These health concerns, the medical problems of aging prisoners, as well as a growing problem with the presence and spread of the HIV virus

and AIDS stretch institutional medical staff and resources possibly limiting resources available for the prison parenting program.

ENTERING PRISON

Past research indicates most inmates feel entering prison is a dehumanizing, frightening, and stressful experience. They fear brutality and sexual abuse by correctional officers and other inmates as well as loss of friends and family (DeGroot 1998; Girshick 1999; Owen 1998). The dehumanizing nature of the entry process was described to me by an inmate.

When I came in I was scared. I had heard really bad stories. I dreaded being stripped and searched the most. It's a long process and even though it's females that do it, you wonder if they are gay. It was devastating. I mean, I had had three babies but with this I cried through the whole first time. Strip-searched, stripped naked in front of a stranger, that totally stripped me of any pride I had. Gone, it broke me.

Initial Degradation

Degradation begins upon arrival at KCIW. A woman's status changes from person to delivered property when brought to the prison. Prison receiving staff issues a receipt of delivery to correctional department transporting officers. She is given a prison registration number for identifying herself on prison documents, clothing and property. After being patted down or frisked for contraband and any property or cash she has with her is inventoried and stored, she is told to remove her clothing for a "strip search." Her body is examined for injury indicative of recent assault, physical marks (e.g., scars, birth marks, wounds, bruises, tattoos) or other abnormalities (e.g., deformities or amputations). Findings are recorded to protect correctional officers and the prison from accusations of abuse. She is told to "squat and cough" (considered a non invasive check for contraband

hidden in a body cavity). If she clears “squat and cough” she is sent to thoroughly shower, wash her hair, and be treated for the prevention of body lice. If there is “reasonable suspicion” of internal contraband, assessment center staff contacts the Warden or Deputy Warden for Security to request a body cavity search in the prison Medial Department by medical personnel.

The dehumanizing entry process continues as outer identity is shed and prison number and uniform become her new identity. She is given blue “scrub-suit” like uniforms, socks, shoes, and jacket that do not fit well as “state issue” is men’s clothing. She is also given an initial issue of undergarments and basic prison toiletries. An inmate is fingerprinted and photographed wearing a number board that identifies her face with her name, institutional number, and date of admission. She is then escorted to the Assessment Center, her initial housing assignment.

Assessment, Orientation, and Classification

Formal resocialization begins at the Assessment Center (AC) when she is given a 72 page *Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Rule Book* to introduce her to the extensive set of rules and regulations that govern prison life. Inmate rights, responsibilities, rules, regulations, prison procedures and programs opportunities are also verbally explained and described. She is also informed that she will not be seeing her children for several months and that telephone calls will be limited. She undergoes psychological, medical, and academic testing and a variety of interviews to assess her strengths, weaknesses, special needs, and attitudes toward compliance with prison rules.

After the initial orientation and assessment process is completed, an inmate meets with the Assessment and Classification Center Committee, which makes a work/program assignment and gives an initial custody rating. Custody level (maximum, close, medium, minimum restricted, minimum, or community) is based on assessed levels of risk and potential for escape and violence to herself and others within the institution.

After initial classification, her uniform changes from Assessment Center (AC) “blues” and her identity becomes a general population (GP) inmate. State prison uniforms (khaki pants and shirts during “program hours” and gray “sweat” suits for leisure time) symbolize her new status.

New inmates spend their first several nights in the AC sleeping room. Cots are lined side by side, very close together, in a large room with a barred door that is locked at night. Women (especially those in prison for the first time) are shocked and distressed by the behavior of other inmates.

In AC, every night, I would sit there and bury my face and just pray and cry. I don't want to see it [homosexual activity between inmates]. I laid in my bed and cried, honestly cried. I said please God, get me out of here. I don't want to see two women again.

After classification and program assignments and introduction to rules and rule enforcement, inmates are assigned to a long-term living unit. As inmates become acculturated and initial culture shock begins to subside, some speak out.

I'll tell them, that's fine if that's what you want to do (engage in homosexual activity) but please don't make me a part of it. I don't want to see it. I don't want to know about it. I think once they get out of AC they get scared of being caught. If they get caught, they can get locked down (disciplinary confinement in cell block). We better be careful. I haven't had the problem in the living unit I'm in now.

Living Units

Living-unit assignments are determined primarily by custody rating. Personality type, medical needs, levels of required supervision, and in some cases the severity of offense influence where an inmate lives. At KCIW the women are housed in one of five living areas (Main Compound Units, Pine Bluff, Ridge View, Lonnie Watson Center Unit, and Lonnie Watson Annex). Inmates deemed by staff or determined by court order to require locked cells are housed in a 44 cell maximum security building or Special Management Unit (SMU but also called cell-block). This “prison within the prison” is for offenders considered dangerous because of the nature of their offense, those in danger of being hurt by the other inmates, or those who have broken prison rules and are separated from general population into disciplinary segregation. In stark contrast to the high security measures in cell block, 50 minimum and community custody level inmates live outside prison gates in Lonnie Watson Annex. Most other minimum security, minimum restricted, and community custody inmates live in Lonnie Watson Center inside the gates (128 beds).

Pine Bluff dormitory is home to many of the long-term offenders. It has 60 double bunked units for 120 general population inmates and 60 single bunked units for “honor status” inmates. Ridge View unit serves as both dormitory for general population inmates and the site of the prison Substance Abuse Program (SAP) that operates like a very regimented, intensive, residential treatment facility program. Remaining inmates live in dormitory and specialty units of the Main Building (A-Dorm, B-Dorm, G-Dorm, 3rd Floor Dorm, Special Living Unit, Infirmary, and Infirmary Annex).

Several tours of the facility and frequent visits to staff offices within living areas revealed few bars but many locked halls and doors. Most inmates live in multiple occupancy, open room dormitories. A few, primarily honor status inmates, have private rooms or share their living space with only one or two roommates. Regardless of open bay or separate room living spaces, inmates' storage space for personal items is very limited. They must keep everything they "own" while in prison in a fairly small, narrow wall locker and a small night stand beside their beds. The number of allowed items (e.g., make up items, razors, feminine supplies, rolls of toilet paper, writing paper or papers of any kind) is very restricted and tightly controlled through an elaborate system of rules and unscheduled, random room and locker "checks" by correctional officers.

Most areas of a dormitory are shared common areas. All inmates assigned to a particular living unit share one inmate "break room" television, tables, and chairs; group bath rooms; a laundry room; an exercise room; and lawn area in front of the unit called "the yard." Some dormitories have a beauty shop and kitchen area with a few electric stoves, refrigerators, and freezers where honor status inmates who have sufficient income to purchase food items from the canteen can prepare their own meals.

Partitioned toilet and shower facilities are located in front areas of dormitory wings to allow correctional officers visibility for counting the number of feet in any one stall. Besides the loss of privacy that accompanies communal life, inmates are constantly watched from a central glass sided, locked from the inside, observation room. Correctional staff who patrol the living unit and a camera system reaching into every part of the dormitory compliment institutional strategies to regulate and control inmate

behavior. The women soon learn to accept the total lack of privacy for even the most basic physical needs.

THE PRISON ECONOMY

Prison has been defined as “an island of poverty in the midst of a society of relative abundance” (Williams and Fish 1974:42). Extreme simplicity with prisoners deprived of essentially everything but the bare necessities fits public definitions of deserved punishment. The level and amount of allowed amenities for prisoners is also influenced by limited correctional budgets and space and the need for administrative tools that facilitate social control of prisoners. By controlling the rewards and deprivations of prison life, prison administrators have yet another means to regulate inmate behavior.

Amenities in most prisons are scarce. Basic necessities are provided for the women at KCIW. They are given uniforms, food, a bed, linens, towels, a blanket, a toothbrush, a comb, and basic toilet articles (i.e., soap, magic shave, tooth paste or denture cream, toilet paper, and feminine supplies). With the exception of linens, towels, a blanket, and feminine supplies, the quantity of each of the above items is determined by the warden according to availability and funds.

The inmate economic system in many ways mirrors that of the outside. Some people seek and are hired for work, are paid, maintain funds in accounts, purchase goods, have job performance evaluated, and derive satisfaction and status from jobs. The prisoner economy differs in that it is a no cash system. Each inmate is allowed to have a personal financial account maintained by the institution. Monthly statements of account

balances as well as a copy of receipts of money orders are sent to each inmate. They authorize debits from their accounts for canteen items. Charges for medical and dental care are also deducted from pay. They may send money to authorized individuals outside and are allowed to establish saving accounts with outside banks.

Balances are built on accounts through money orders mailed to prison accounts by friends and family or by "state pay" (i.e., account credits based on an inmates in-prison job or training program, the rate of pay for that job, and number of hours worked). Inmates receive "state pay" based on a standard scale for the work they do in prison. Job openings and descriptions are posted but the inmate "grapevine" is a faster way to know what jobs are or will be available. If an inmate is eligible to work and meets qualification standards for a particular job, she applies, is interviewed, and hired (or not) at the discretion of staff supervisors. "Pay day" is once per month (after they have worked for one month). Eventually, her work performance is evaluated. She may be dismissed from a position if her work or work habits are not acceptable. If she is fired from a job, she is considered "unassigned" and must sit by her bed and do nothing until a prescribed period of time has lapsed and she is reclassified and reassigned at the discretion of the Classification Committee.

There are three types of jobs available for KCIW inmates: institutional jobs (i.e., necessary tasks for prison operation), Governmental Services (e.g., cleaning and upkeep of state fairgrounds, parks and public roads), and Correctional Industries (contracts with outside agencies or companies for the inmate production of items like mattresses and tourist literature). A standard scale of wages for institutional jobs offers from 75 cents

per day to \$2.00 *per day*. Government Services workers go outside prison gates into near communities to work in clerical and laborer jobs but their pay is still only \$1.25 to \$2.00 *per day*. Work sites include the Central State Hospital, Corrections Training and Convention Center, Environmental Protection Agency, State Parks, and the Fairgrounds as well as public highways and roads. The highest paid inmate work is in Kentucky Correctional Industries which is 25 cents to 85 cents *per hour* with time and half for overtime. Prison Industry at KCIW includes Mail Services, the Mattress Factory, the Print Shop, Screen-printing Shop, and Braille Transcription.

Examples of jobs that pay 75 cents *per day* are: janitors, landscape laborers, daily living aids to help disabled inmates, and dorm window washers. Wages of \$1.25 *per day* are paid for clerks, administrative aids, the chapel pianist, academic tutors, and the editor of Women of Conviction (an inmate news letter). Jobs that pay up to \$2.00 *per day* include fire and safety maintenance, beauticians, seamstresses, plumbing maintenance, cable TV maintenance aides, tractor drivers, vehicle maintenance, warehouse workers, laundry workers, cooks, laundry workers, bakers, dish washers and other kitchen help.

Those that can afford allowed luxuries (e.g., tobacco, small televisions, tape players, soft drinks, coffee, hair conditioner, and deodorant) may purchase them (as available) at the Institutional Canteen or as allowed from authorized outside vendors (only towels, bed linens, and a few laundry items purchased from J.C. Penneys). Canteen items are limited and costly. Regardless of ability to afford canteen “luxuries” or bedding, towels, etc., from an outside vendor, inmates can only purchase items at

specified times and are allowed to have and store relatively few of these “extra” amenities.

They are not allowed to credit funds to other inmate’s accounts, buy things for each other, or borrow or loan items. “Borrowing and lending” is a common “write up” correctional officers seem to enforce or ignore at their discretion based on the level of supervision or pressure they choose to apply on an inmate. Formal rules greatly restrict exchange of goods thus promoting an informal “underground economy” of barter and exchange of desired goods and services among the inmates.

The Underground Economy

Most women work or get legitimate assistance from outside. Additionally, some women find illegitimate ways to earn money, get desired goods and services, and gain prestige. I learned little about the informal economy of barter and reciprocity between inmates or between inmates and correctional officers. Snacks from the canteen, cigarettes, and jewelry were mentioned as popular barter. In depth information about trades, gifts, borrowing, and lending was scarce because exchanging items with inmates is subject to a “write up” and loss of good time or time in disciplinary segregation.

One particular “hustle” I learned about suggests that there are a few inmates who “act like, talk like, and wear baseball caps like men.” These “boy-girls” or “pappys” check out newly arriving inmates to find out which ones have “plenty of money.” The “new meat” inmates become targets for conquest by the prestigious and much sought after pseudo male pappys. If a connection is made, the status of walking with and “hanging out with” “pappy” is exchanged for canteen items. One pappy confided that she

had a good job in prison and made money from “tricks” (described below) but she didn’t have to spend it. Her “girls” bought her everything she wanted in return for the status of being chosen, sexual satisfaction from pappy, and having an available alibi or character reference if they broke the rules.

Information about one particular method of getting money sent in from the outside was offered by several inmates. Inmates call it writing “tricks.” In many ways, this method of getting money, mirrors the techniques and social norms of prostitution in outside society. The client is called a “trick,” is solicited, and is willing to pay for the attention of a desired partner.

It’s like turning a trick on the street. There’s ads they put on the Internet. You take pictures and send ‘em in with an application. Like we’ve got picture day coming February 23rd. We are going to take Valentine pictures, supposedly to be sent to family. You’re not allowed to have your legs open. You’re not allowed to have cleavage showing. But some put in new pictures on the Internet. They send it to Paper Dolls, Country Singles, Women in Prison, or Women Behind Bars or whatever. They tell them what they, you know, what type of man they would like. Some of them are free. I’m sure they [prison security] probably could catch them [inmates] if they tried hard enough. Because they [security] can do pretty much what they want. But, there’s always a way around something even if, well you know? There’s a girl here that’s got felony charges for mail tricking. I mean, you can get in trouble for it. You’ve got to be on your P’s and Q’s. Some discretess must be used.

Some “tricks” pay modestly but others lavish attention on their “girls” by frequently sending generous money orders to the inmate or in some cases to a bank account maintained by the inmate outside prison.

It’s a good business, if you ask me, yeah. You get a lot of them writin’ you and you get plenty money every day. Mostly, it depends on what your ad say and what you seeking and why you seeking this person and stuff like that. And then they offer, you know, if they can do anything for you. You know, we tell them about the visiting, how to send money, and different things like that.

Another inmate discussed learning how to set up her business and manage her bank accounts.

They send money to my account here if I want. But, I have a PNC account open down to the branch bank. I mean, they (the bank) send me my deposit slips and withdrawal slips and stuff like that. You can mail out money orders you get sent. You got to enclose a hundred dollars to start. So, I just opened it up with a grand and they sent me my bankbooks, my deposit slips. I been in here going on 13 years this year. It took about like a year, year and a half, after I got here to get started. I sat down and observed people who had been doing it since before I got here and see how they do it. Then I started doing it. You just put an ad. You fill out this paper and send it to a lot of places. You can put an ad everywhere. But the free ad that you place, you don't really get good guys, or whatever, or somebody that really actually care about you, that's willing to marry you and relocate from where they live to closer to where you are. But, I wrote one guy from a free ad and he sending me money. You know, the first money order was a hundred. Then I told him that I needed to buy a box. He was like how much is that, so I just said \$500. He sent me like \$500; you know what I'm saying. So, every time I get over \$100, I always take at least half and put it in the bank.

In addition to monetary gain, benefits for inmates may be feelings of support, power, and control and connection with outside.

I get money from outside. See, my family, they support me a lot. And I get tricks. I write letters to friends and stuff like that. It something to do, yeah you can call it that, but it's something to help kill your time. . . help time go by. Plus, once you start writing them, they start sending you money and you know, letters and stuff you start having somewhat little feelings about em and of course, bondings. You know, when I place my ad, I like them 45 and plus. You know, I put that race is unimportant because you know we grew up like that, but I still use that you know to the effect. Also, I put single, black female. And I get whites, blacks, I mean people from Canada and all kinds of different stuff, you know, so it just feels kinda like normal.

A client's "benefits" of associating with a girl in prison are obviously different than physically sexual prostitution. One inmate explains:

What do they get out of this? They gets correspondence. Some of them get friendships. Some of them get marriage. Some of them get, you know GOOD phone calls and GOOD letters. I guess they think that to be sending you money, they think that you are a part of them. They feel like that ya'll are in a

commitment or they want to marry you or they want a woman or they can come visit and they think they just, you know... Cause most men that I write, like, I got a couple that like a woman that's locked up because they feel like they got that control. Not some control like physical control, it's some kind of control like they know they not out there where other men can be with them, and this and that. You know, I got a couple of those.

Some women acknowledge that turning tricks on the inside is easy money but wrong because it continues an outside lifestyle that leads to trouble and imprisonment:

I know if I'm going to be having tricks in here [by mail], I'm going to want a trick on the outside. And that money is going to be out there just like it is on the outside. Because that's the quickest money. It's a profession, you know. It's the quickest money in the world. But when I get that money in my hand, you know what I'm going to go straight to. I'll find somthin' to get me high. I don't want the same cycle going on here. I've got to break the cycle somewhere. I've gotta break it. I have a lot of pen pals that I write. I shouldn't even be doing that. I need to cut that off too. I've got one that's sending me money. He loves me galore. Talk about he wants to marry me. "I can't marry you. You're an ex-con, I'm an ex-con. You're a drug lord and I'm a drug addict. Come on now. You got caught with 10 or 15 kilos, you've been in jail for 17 years and you're getting out in 67 days. It's not going to work. I can't do that."

Status

The in-prison stratification system is not unlike that of any society. Status is based on money (cash in their prison accounts, banks outside, and support mailed from outside); prison job; the nature of the crime committed; and the prison's system of recognition (e.g., honor status). High account balances do not provide high status for everyone. Turning tricks is easy money that offers a measure of respect from other inmates but having a lot of money through tricks does not yield the high status associated with being financially comfortable because of "money in the bank" from past lives or generous support from relatives.

You've got your people that are high class, got a lot of money, got the girls, the older men that come and visit them--tricks. And there's the people who... their

family is wealthy, they've got money. But you don't consider them with the trickers. No, no. That's a different group. They got it made...

The status symbols of some are envied and resented by others who have less economically.

She lives very well while she's here. To the best that you can live. They took everything away from her when they changed us to uniforms. A reason why they took all the clothes is because there was a lot of competition. They order a lot from catalogues. Here it's to flaunt. You know, to have all these different shoes and all these new clothes and nothing but the best. And it caused a lot of problems.

As in outside society, jobs are stratified according to desirability. High status, prestigious jobs offer responsibility, autonomy, creativity, and power through access to information or interaction with staff. Knowing "inside" information before it "hits the yard" is a commodity that can be traded with other inmates or staff. Opportunities to interact with staff provide avenues for developing relationships that may offer small amounts of individual freedom or flexibility within the confines of prison rules, schedules, and supervision. Relationships between a staff work supervisor and a prisoner may result in attitudes of mutual respect and influence. Non-material rewards for inmates may be feelings of self-worth; prison staff may feel encouraged by the capabilities and legitimate ambition of at least some inmates.

I'm told by a lot of officers that I'm not the typical inmate. I think a lot of them, they pertain to it in my work. I take my work very seriously. You know, I work this job just like I would work a job at home. This, for me, is training for at home. To be a more responsible person. And I take it very seriously. Plus I do, I'm in charge of grievances for the prison. You know, that's a serious matter to me. They're [inmates] complaining about something that's went on here. And I interact with the officers here and they see how serious I am, I guess. You know, and [her work supervisor] tells me, "you don't have to be so professional. You can lay back a little bit."

Status inconsistency between pay and prestige is exemplified in kitchen workers who are paid at the highest level of compensation available to work in the kitchen in “low status” jobs that require long periods of time standing and early morning or late evening hours.

I work in the kitchen. It's the best pay but it has the worst hours. I have to be there at 4:30 in the morning. People make fun of you for working in the kitchen though. They complain about the food all the time and say we're not clean.

Some inmates are identified as indigent or low income based on prison account balances and work status. Inmates who do not work and/or have no source of family support and who have account balances of less than \$5 for 30 days are considered indigent; \$15 or less for the month is considered low income. Indigent and low-income status results in no or reduced fees for medical and dental services and continued issue of no-charge hygiene items. Inmates relate that prison issue bar soap does not lather. The shampoo they are given is harsh and they must buy their own conditioner in the canteen. If she wants anything other than extremely basic personal items in very limited quantities, she must find a way to have money added to her account. Indigent status is particularly unpleasant for those who have earned honor status privileges yet lack financial resources for allowed activities. One inmate reports:

It's bad for me in prison. I didn't have anything outside. My parents are dead. I don't have any brothers or sisters. I've been on my own for a long time. My children are in foster homes. I'm doing JP (janitorial work) but it doesn't pay much and I used up all my money on medical and Tylenol. They count me indigent now. I get soap and that stuff free. I have honor status but I don't have any money to buy food and there's nobody to come for visitation. I live in Lonnie Watson and most of them cook their own food. The worst part is smelling the coffee in the morning and knowing I could make mine when I get enough money to buy a maker and grounds. I just try not to smell it. Nobody is allowed to give you a cup of coffee. I hope I can get a better job soon. I need to get some money.

Regardless of a prisoner's standing on other status hierarchies, some criminals are considered "low" because of the crime they committed. Those who have committed manslaughter or murder against adults (even the elderly) are seemingly not treated any differently by inmates than women incarcerated for other offenses. The "child molesters" and "baby killers" are disdained. "Because they're so low" they can only "hang with" each other because they are shunned by other inmates.

I found this one girlfriend and she came crying and she... she had killed her kids. I just totally cut her off.... I said, "no, no, no, no. I can't deal with you. I can't deal with you." She was, "like what's wrong?" "I can't deal with you, you killed your kids, I can't deal with you, I'm sorry."

Another inmate who excused her own criminal activity as drug related was less accepting of those who killed children.

I don't have no use for baby killers. There's more in here than I would ever imagine. People that I didn't know, that I use to speak to. Now I don't even want to speak to. The hardest thing to deal with is with killing a child. I can understand anything else. I can understand being on drugs and flipping out and I can understand that. But for you to hurt a baby, I can't understand what drug would make you do that.

THE LIFEROUND

Owen (1998:63) suggests that "in the simplest sense, a study of prison is about doing time" and that in a practical sense, "the majority of women shape the day around a job, vocational training, or a school assignment" (Owen 1998:103). The *liferound* can essentially be defined as the things a prisoner does (i.e., how an inmate spends her days and nights in prison) or how she "does her time" or how she "gets by." Her liferound revolves around institutionally scheduled times for getting up in the morning, making her bed and straightening her living area, carrying out personal hygiene requirements, going

to work or school, being counted, taking breaks, eating meals, meeting program and work obligations, going to bed, and going to sleep. Inmates have no real power for overall control of their time. Some women find ways to cope with being powerless to affect their own lives by building a liferound around the few choices they have. They individualize a routine (liferound) that helps them deal with the deprivation, degradation, confines, and boredom of prison life by including optional activities (e.g., maintaining contact with children and family; socializing within prison cliques; finding a girl friend; chapel, recreation, jobs, and classes).

But *doing time* involves much more than participating in jobs or training. It involves organizing *time* (hours in the day, months to possible parole, and maximum length of sentence) around the institution's prescribed schedule and yet, trying to find ways to cope with the emotional consequences and boredom of prison life. When asked how they "make it" or cope with prison life, experienced inmates respond: "I just do my day," "I just don't think about it," and "You just have to do your time. Don't let your time do you." One inmate explained how she interprets and learned the expression.

I'm doin' my time, not letting my time do me. That means, if *I'm* doin' *it*, I'm bein' proactive and I'm makin' a change. If you let the time do you, you're worrying about everything on the outside *and* inside. You're tryin' to live your life here and out there and it'll bring you down. You can't, you gotta let go. Other inmates said it from the day I walked in here. They'd see how upset I was or how depressed I'd get if I couldn't get a phone call through to my kids or couldn't talk to somebody....they'd say you gotta beat it. If you let the time do you, you'll lose. You'll be doin' hard time. You can think about your kids but you can't let it "eat you up."

For many inmates making a liferound takes on the aura of a quest for at least some personal individualism and control within an environment characterized by loss of

identity and personal powerlessness. They organize their lives in response to institutional demands and edicts but inmates adjust differently. Some appear to adjust to prison life by living in the present avoiding thoughts about past actions and their painful consequences or the future. For others, thinking about their children and other pre-prison experiences though painful, is a source of dreams and plans for the future that impacts the way they live and negotiate the liferound. Regardless of whether they focus on the present or look to the future, every inmate I came in contact with knew (often to the day) how long she had been in prison, length of time before possible early release, how old she would be if she served the maximum length of her sentence, and how old her children will be when she is released. A combination of institutional and outside relationships, connections, and forces; pre-prison experiences; and awareness that eventually she will be returned to the world outside form a behavioral axis for negotiating a liferound of “doing time.”

Scheduled Lives

Inmates work or go to educational or self-help classes or groups, eat, sleep, attend to personal hygiene needs (e.g., showers, hair care, and laundry), clean their rooms, “shop,” stand outside and smoke, make phone calls, and participate in recreation and chapel programs, and have “time off” according to schedules set by the institution. Inmates have little autonomy. Daily shower schedules for inmates begin at 5:00 a.m. and end at 7:40 a.m. and are from 4:00 p.m. till 11:00 p.m. on weekdays. Weekend showers may be taken from 5:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Honor inmates have more flexible showering schedules.

Activities in early morning hours may also involve going to medical and dental “sick call” (with permission of living unit staff). From 6:05 to 6:35 Monday through Friday inmates can be evaluated by a nurse who prescribes treatment or assigns an appointment with medical staff. Those who need prescription medications stand in “med line” (offered three times a day for the dispensing and supervised ingestion of prescription medications). Unless excused for medical or administrative reasons, all inmates are required to be dressed in prison uniforms and standing beside their beds by 7:30 a.m. for “count” (described in the next section). Required bed times vary by inmate classification and status. Honor status inmates set their own bedtimes. “Lights out” times for most dormitories is either 11:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m. Inmates are not allowed to talk after 9:00 p.m. in most dormitories. Inmates who work at night or are ill are allowed some flexibility in their sleeping hours.

The basic time management unit in a prisoner’s day is “program hours.” Most jobs and classes are scheduled during “program hours” (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). The work and class schedule of most inmates is from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. “Institutional breaks” are from 10:00 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. to 12:10 p.m., and 1:50 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is no posted schedule for dining hours. Meals are provided in the institutional “dining room” for one and one-half hour time periods announced for breakfast (before program hours), lunch (between morning and afternoon program hours), and in the evening (after program hours).

All inmates are expected to have program or work assignments. They are not forced to work or attend classes and may request unassigned status. An inmate is not

allowed to be classified “unassigned” if there is “institutional need” (e.g., for prisoner control or necessary institutional operational tasks). If an inmate chooses and is allowed unassigned status, she must dress in her uniform and sit beside her bed. She is allowed institutional breaks but is not allowed to sit or lie on her bed, use a radio or television or talk with other inmates during program hours.

The number of required hours for a “full time” job or program assignment varies by type of job or class. Some jobs require inmates to work shifts other than program hours (e.g., laundry, kitchen, night janitorial) and some inmates hold positions for which they work “on call” (e.g., plumber, audio visual technician). Educational classes may be scheduled in morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Some educational assignments are once a day and others are twice a day. Some inmates choose to participate in more than one educational opportunity or session. If inmates use school or college enrollment as their assignments, they must attend school at least three hours each day or take at least two college classes per quarter or semester.

Educational program assignments may include GED preparation, technical education (horticulture, building maintenance, and office technology), college classes (offered in the evenings), and life skills training (e.g., parenting, budgeting, personal change, health, life management, managing food resources, nutrition). Behavioral assignments include the prison Substance Abuse Program (SAP) or other groups and self-help classes offered through prison psychologists (e.g., anger control and management, compulsive behaviors, domestic violence, depressed anonymous).

Canteen, mail pick up, and other appointments are scheduled through living unit administrators. Each inmate schedules laundry time through living unit staff. Inmates wash their own clothing, linens, and towels with laundry detergent supplied for each washer load of clothing. According to inmates, a small machine measured allotment of a less than adequate cleansing agent is automatically dispensed for each washer load of clothes.

Inmates take care of basic hair cleanliness while showering as prescribed in personal hygiene rules that govern inmate showering procedures. But, specialty hair care processes (cuts, curls, perms, etc.) must be performed in a beauty shop. Regardless of whether or not she wants assistance from a “beauty shop worker” (chosen by the prison but very rarely a trained or licensed beautician), she must submit a written request through proper channels to schedule time and space in the beauty shop. If the requested procedure requires the use of toxic or caustic hair care products (e.g., perms, dyes, and bleaches), she must schedule staff assistance. Specialty products must be ordered from the canteen. A prison staff member transports these “controlled substances” from the canteen to unit beauty shop storage until a time for staff supervised use of these products can be scheduled.

Recreation is also governed by schedules. The Recreational Planning Committee, an inmate organization, plans and posts a monthly calendar of a variety of recreational events including a monthly birthday party, movies, and sports tournaments (e.g., volleyball, softball, basketball, table tennis, pool, and foosball). A schedule of chapel activities and services is posted in living areas and program buildings. The Institutional

Chaplain and her staff offer a variety of religious activities. Some inmates related that Sunday's were particularly difficult for them because when outside, they had attended church with their children but Mass, Sunday services, Bible study, and Chapel Choir helped. Some participate in a chapel sponsored program called *Aunt Mary's Story Time*. Inmate mothers read children's books onto audiocassette tapes, which are mailed (along with the book) to their children on the outside.

Depending on an inmate's program and classification, she may have "classified free time" when she is not in class or at work. Inmates are allowed to participate in a number of groups and activities (e.g., choir practice, Alcoholics Anonymous, special events), watch television in the TV room, play cards or board games in day rooms, or watch small personal televisions equipped with head phones. There is little variety in amusement opportunities for free time. Games, craft items, sports equipment, and fields are scheduled through recreational staff and a limited amount and quality of equipment in dormitory exercise rooms can be used at specified times.

Filling inmate's hours with work and program assignments cannot be overlooked as a valuable inmate management strategy. The more work/program opportunities a prison can offer, the less boredom, disturbances, and prisonization may result. Keeping inmates busy and on a schedule reduces free time that may be used in unauthorized activities and facilitates correctional officer supervision of inmates. Increasing numbers of inmates at KCIW has resulted in a shortage of job and program slots. KCIW prisoners appear to have ample "free time." Many end up "hanging out, gossipin' and doin' a lot of

nothin’” as one inmate described the socializing and milling around within living-unit yards and day rooms.

The “Count”

Regardless of individual inmate schedules or the overall institutional schedule, the daily routine is interspersed with frequent counts to make sure all prisoners are still behind the fences. Despite the rarity of escapes or “walk aways,” security concerns require that staff know exactly where every inmate is at all times. “Count” is the primary “checking” mechanism for insuring that prison security is protecting society from felonious offenders by keeping them behind the fences.

At night, inmates are counted in their beds about every hour and a half. Random, unexpected, unscheduled, intermittent counts may be called at anytime. Day time counts usually occur at 7:45 a.m., 12:05 p.m., 3:40 p.m., 5:40 p.m., 9:35 p.m., 11:05 p.m., and 12 midnight. When count is called (i.e., announced over the loud speakers), all activity halts while every inmate reports to her living area and stands beside her bed until correctional officers verify that everyone is where they are supposed to be and no one is unaccounted for.

No inmate movement or talking is allowed and all radios and television must be turned off during institutional count. All prisoners must remain beside their beds until the public address loudspeaker announcement that “count is clear.” Then, inmates return to their assignments or leisure time activities. “Count” can last anywhere from a few minutes to around an hour, depending on administrative efficiency and inmate cooperation.

Living by the Rules

My impression was that scheduled lives characterized by lack of privacy, severe restrictions on possessing personal property, and a set of rules that leave little room for individual choice or self determination structure prisoners' life round and daily existence. Every facet of personal life and relationships are governed by a page in the rule book that tells them where, when, and how, to do everything from eating and sleeping to asking for toilet paper before leaving a class or job assignment to use inmate restroom facilities. Prison rules and the enforcement of rules are implemented to maintain institutional control over inmates, ensure a healthy environment, and to insure the safety of both inmates and staff. Inmates' descriptions of prison life present a picture of strict rules, schedules, and dependence on prison staff for even basic needs. Several inmates suggested that prison life was debilitating as they are expected to be responsible and act like adults and yet, they are forced to be passive and dependent. Some asserted that being treated as children could complicate post release adjustment to the outside world where they are expected to act as responsible adults.

Rules that govern standing in line and eating in the dining room; visitation, mail, and phone calls; personal property and laundry; education, work, recreation, and chapel activities; personal purchases and inmate accounts; access to legal aid and grievance procedures; as well as rules and charts concerning methods and eligibility for release, parole, and probation are stated in a formal rule book. Extensive sections on General Living Rules and General Living Area Rules outline specific requirements for personal hygiene, hair care, clothing, television and radio use, sleeping area and bathroom rules,

and day room and “yard” rules that range from “inmates shall not step over or walk through or on flower beds ” (KCIW Inmate Handbook 2000:45) to “a bra must be worn” (KCIW Inmate Handbook 2000:39) and “no female inmate may wear or possess attire that is strictly male, i.e., athletic supporters or swim trunks” (KCIW Inmate Handbook 2000: 17).

Rule violations are common because virtually every aspect of inmate life is governed by institutional regulations. Correctional Officers patrol every area of prison grounds and facilities. Inmates, their property, and living areas can be searched at any time. *Shakedown*s (thorough searches of rooms) are conducted whenever authorities suspect an inmate may have *contraband* (e.g., money, drugs, or any item that inmates are not explicitly allowed to have). Random, unannounced urinalysis and breathalyzer testing is done at the discretion of a dormitory Unit Administrator, Duty Officer, Shift supervisor, Captain, Deputy Warden, or Warden.

As few prison have enough correctional officers to physically control all their prisoners, there are good behavior and performance incentives (e.g., honor status, program visitation, good time) that encourage conformity to rules and procedures. For example, six months after Assessment Center classification, KCIW inmates who meet a fairly extensive list of eligibility criteria can apply for *Honor Status*. The honor status list is reviewed and revised on the 15th and 30th of every month. *Honor inmates* earn entitlement to honor housing and additional privileges that include Friday night visits with food brought in by visitors, being paged first for meals and medicine lines, setting their own bed times, using a bed light any time during the day or night, preparing meals

in the living unit kitchens, spending an additional \$60 each month in the canteen, possessing one food storage box; storing food in refrigerators or freezers, and using telephones, showers, and the TV room at times not available to general population inmates.

Program visitation, special activity days with children, is also an administrative tool for inmate behavioral control. Program visitation opportunities listed in the KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines (1998) include Kids Day, Teen Day, Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, and The Bonding Program. Inmates become eligible to participate in program visitation by successful performance in parenting classes. Inmates must maintain a good behavior record to remain eligible for these extended visitation opportunities with their children.

Another administrative tool the state of Kentucky uses as incentive for good behavior and progress is giving inmates a chance to earn time toward early release. *Statutory good time* is a specified number of days automatically subtracted from a prison sentence for each month they do not get in trouble with prison authorities. *Meritorious good time* may be awarded for exceptional behavior or service. *Educational good time* may also be earned. For example, 60 days is taken off an inmate's sentence for earning a GED, technical diploma, or Associates degree in prison.

In addition to positive behavior incentives, a system of negative sanctions through a prison justice system provides a formal structure for in prison social control. It resembles the "outside" criminal justice system. Correctional Officers serve as "police" who monitor and "write up" rule breaking behavior. Prison "laws" as well as a schedule

of minimum and maximum penalties for each offense, and administrative procedures for handling rule infractions are specified in the KCIW Hand Book. The Adjustment Committee composed of KCIW staff members serves as the “court” that reviews charges of institutional violations and decides, according to specified guidelines, if and what disciplinary action will be applied. The hearing process is very similar to judicial processes “outside.” An inmate is given the right to be represented by a trained inmate legal aid and she may view incriminating evidence in advance. At hearing she has the right to make a statement, present evidence, present witnesses, and cross-examine her accuser. Appeals to Adjustment Committee decision can be made to the Warden within 15 days after a hearing (Kentucky Correctional Institution For Women Handbook 2000).

NETWORKS OF RELATIONSHIPS INSIDE PRISON

The prison culture at KCIW is in some ways similar to those described in other studies of women in prison (Ward & Kassebaum 1965, Giallombardo 1966, Heffernan 1972, and Owen 1998), but also appears to be markedly different. Similarities include adaptation and organization of the inmate social world through personalized relationships resulting from desires for closeness, caring, and belonging, pivotal needs for life in prison. Relationships, both inside and outside prison, are the essence of what sustains them. The dominant pattern of relationships among women prisoners reported as a “pseudo family” in classic studies is not immediately apparent and perhaps absent at KCIW. Exclusive cliques appear to be the dominant form of inmate life at KCIW. Other relationship patterns are mentoring relationships, “platonic” individual and group friendships, and homosexual couples.

Aware of the literature about the social organization of female prisoners into “pseudo families” (Giallombardo 1966, Heffernan 1972, Owen 1998), I looked for groups of inmates who might “look like” or “act like” family groups. When no family groupings appeared obvious to me, I asked inmates and staff if they were aware of “family” type groups at KCIW (i.e., if people usually “made up” an in-prison “family” like mothers, daughters, sisters, etc.). The common answer was “no, not really.” A long-term inmate summarized by suggesting that *if* there are groups like this, there are not many.

Cliques

Patterns of inmate interaction at KCIW look more like a sub-culture of adolescent cliques than a society of pseudo families. The women resembled junior high school girls (and boys) who pass notes, flirt with anyone who might be interested in their attention and affections, “check out” new arrivals, and serve as “go between” (e.g., she said you’re cute; does she look good to you?) to assist others in “hooking up” (joining together in a mutually satisfying relationship) with a girlfriend. Inmates’ accounts depict the junior high school motif.

We hated each other. I didn’t hate her, like you know, wish-she-was-dead hate her, but I could not stand her. She did not like me at all because this person that was liking me was going with her best friend. But I didn’t know. I’m new here. And she thought I was violating her friend by talking to her friend’s friend. It was a mess. I was doing my math homework, she had a 30-page paper, I was sittin’ there and we just started talking and it took off from there. I’m a girl. She’s the girlfriend. I *am* attracted to her. That’s got me confused because I didn’t think I would ever, you know. I know that she likes me and she knows I like her. I’ve never had sex with a woman before. I don’t like women like that, but I like her.

“I just want to fit in” often translates into a desire to be accepted as part of a popular clique:

I could fit in that crowd if I wanted to. There's different crowds that I try to fit in. You've got the black girls who are up and snotty who think they're almighty. Try to talk with the black girls and it's like they talk behind your back. When you talk to them and try to be their friend, they'll want you only for things that you can give them. Like if they want a pop, cigarettes, things like that, they'll be your friend. But if you ain't got nothing, they'll talk about you. It's like when they're in a group together, you go to talk to them, it's like "What do you want," you know. They've got an attitude all of a sudden. I'm like "well yesterday you was talking to me, but now you ain't got nothing to do with me" they'll turn around and walk off.

Another inmate described the clique, trying to make friends, and resorting to immature phrases of childhood to resolve troublesome interaction:

Some people just stay in a little group and gossip about other people. "Well look at her, she thinks she's all that." You know. It's the same people all the time. When they get smart, just walk away. But with me, I've got to get that last word out. I thought I had this one friend for three days and I told her something I didn't want nobody else to know... and the next thing I knew, the whole institution knew about it and I said "I thought you were my friend. I'm not goin' to be your friend."

Mentoring Relationships

Descriptions of some inmates as supportive and helpful to others (especially those new to the prison experience) sounded more like mentoring than family relationships.

One inmate who was returning to prison after being out for six years related first incarceration night conversations with a "young girl" in the bed above her (about the same age as her twenty year old daughter) to encourage and "help her through."

You know, it's just a way we help each other. The older ones teach the younger ones. We try to help each other get along. I know how scared she was. I was really scared the first time I came here. You've seen movies about prison; you've heard all the stories. You don't know what's going to happen to you.

I use to call home everyday. Others taught me.... We can't do it. You know, you don't know how long you're gonna be here. You've got to learn the responsibility for your family too. Don't run up your phone bill. You know, you

can minimize that. You can put this in letters and then have that verbal once a week, you know.

Friendships and Other Groups

Some women with similar lifestyles, goals, and backgrounds construct friendships, confidants, and a system of support that helps them cope and break the boredom. Usually people in a friendship relationship with another inmate are referred to as “good friends” or “best friends,” whereas a sexual partner is referred to as a girl friend. Friendships that are formed in prison may not continue on the outside because women who are released are dispersed geographically all over the state. Even healthy, supportive relationships or networks that develop in prison may be prohibited on the outside because conditions of parole often include prohibitions of associating with known felons. Experiencing prison life together produces emotional bonds and feelings of sadness when a friend is transferred or released.

My friend.. .left and I didn't even see her leave. And it just... I felt kind of empty for a little while. And then I had another best friend, she got out on shock probation yesterday and I stood at the chapel and watched her walk out and it just affected me. I don't know if I will ever see them again.

Another inmate talked about spending time with an older, more mature, settled group of friends.

The people that I hang around with, like at night when I go back to the dorm, there's about 3 women, we'll play cards together. They're in their 50s and up. You know, I hang around with the more mature crowd. I don't run around with the younger ones that are always in trouble. I don't get in that mixture of, you know. I'm usually pretty quiet.

Situational Homosexuality

The most talked about (by staff and inmates) relationship pattern at KCIW is homosexual couples. These are primarily short-term monogamous relationships with allegiance and alliances changing often. At KCIW staff and inmate reports of the prevalence of homosexual participation range from “a small number” to about 75% and on to “almost everybody in here at some time or another participates in homosexual talk or activity.” These estimates, like those reported in the literature, reflect problems associated with subjectivity and varying definitions. Some reports are that these same sex involvements are more about having someone to “care about them” and think they are special while others say it is fun to “play” (an inmate term for homosexual coupling). Inmates who do not seek the sexual companionship of other female inmates “put out the word,” “I don’t play.” Some inmates express disgust but try to understand the relationships.

It’s nauseating. You know, the girlfriends that try to sneak in bathrooms. I don’t mean to portray it as the entire prison is homosexual, because they’re not. But it’s a small, small group that are. And the greater of that teeny tiny small group are only that way because they’re in prison. That won’t take it out with them and they’ll be embarrassed that they did it when they’re here. It’s just...and it’s not even a sexual thing, it’s more about being companions.

One inmate defended her relationship with another inmate by saying their relationship was not sexual and that they had only been kissing.

It’s not sexual. It’s just somebody that cares for you and love you and talk to you. Somebody, you know, to run around with. Somebody to spend time with. As far as kissing, we did that, but I’ve never had a sexual relationship.

Others report homosexual activity due to “raging hormones” and some say they

were and still are bisexual. Many of my sources at KCIW reported that in-prison homosexuality is situational and results from the effects of confinement. In-prison situational factors mentioned included being deprived of male sexual outlets; loneliness or the need for companionship; boredom and the quest for the thrill of “getting away with something,” and economic manipulation. Fears of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases that mirror past relationships on the outside are evident in these women’s stories.

We haven’t done anything yet. I mean she’s offered, she’s wanted to, she’s practically begged and I told her no. I can’t do it. I can’t do that. Number one, I’m scared of getting caught. Number two, I don’t know what (illness) the heck you’ve got. I come in here with nothing and I’m leaving here with nothing.

Another inmate seemed to indicate that sex with her partner was inevitable but was not without risk.

We ain’t had no sex yet. Not that we haven’t wanted to, but you know, we can’t. She was afraid to tell me but she just found out that the man that she lived with for 6 years has HIV.... She’s afraid that she has AIDS. I know we would have to be very protected and in here, you know, you can’t really be protected. Except to stay away from it.

Emotional needs to be loved, cared about, or to matter are expressed in their “stories.” But, the dynamics of these and other relationships in prison are shaded by past outside relationships characterized by dominance, control, and exploitation. One inmate’s comparison of her in-prison homosexual relationship and past relationships with men reveals dynamics of power and dominance. Her passivity and a partner’s dominance is acknowledged in her in-prison and outside prison relationships.

I’ve never had a man treat me the way she does. She compliments me; she talks nice to me. It’s confusing and I’ve been under a little stress. I don’t sleep very well. This girlfriend stuff is a full time job. And it’s something new to me, you

know, I feel conscious some times. But, I'll do whatever (she) wants me to do. It's important to make her happy even if I do things I don't want to.

Another inmate adds overtones of racial dissension and gender dominance in homosexual relationships to her story of control and exploitation.

I've seen these girls. . .some of the black girls... they're controlling. Like my friend was at the table eating this morning at breakfast and her girlfriend come in and I was sitting there looking at the girl and I know her and I know she uses white girls for money. And (my friend)... was going to the store today. And she went and bought her a whole bunch of stuff and I can probably guarantee you in probably about 2 or 3 days, they'll be broke up. Cause she won't have no more use for her. They're controlling. They tell them where they can go, what they can do. And I've seen even the white girls. . .the butch and the female, but the butch keeps on telling her what she cannot, where she can go, who she can talk to and everything else.

Homosexual relationships in prison are both adaptations to the deprivations of prison and normative behavior for prison life. Homosexual relationships are both acceptable and expected. Several inmates reported that having a "girlfriend" and "playing" homosexual in prison does not preclude caring and communicative relationships with husbands, finances, boy friends, tricks or family on the outside.

Homosexual activity is:

just something you do in prison. I still love and talk to my boyfriend. I still love my kids. This is just something I need in here and they understand. See, I was kinda bisexual on the outside anyway. My mama is bisexual you know....she knows my girlfriend in prison. My mama says (my girlfriend) can use her address for parole. Sometimes my mama sends her money too.

Relationships with "tricks" are generally heterosexual but one inmate suggests that she has not discontinued her homosexual encounters in prison.

They know about my women usually. But, sometimes I tell them. I tell them straight up. But then you got... I mean, the men out there, I don't know what you'd call them, but you got men out there that's lonely, especially older guys.

Homosexual encounters and “petting” take place in the few places in “the yard” and in some storage rooms that are not in plain view of officers or cameras. Bathrooms in program and administration buildings “on camera” are also popular secret meeting places. Couples recruit another inmate as “look outs” for approaching staff. These “look outs” are said to be “pinning” for the couple. If caught, individuals involved in homosexual activity and in “pinning” receive “time” in the disciplinary segregation unit (lock down). The offense of serving as “look out” is referred to as “pinning” by both staff who write up rule violations and inmates. I repeatedly asked where the term “pinning” came from but no one knew the answer.

Most sexual activity between inmates occurs in the showers or in their beds at night when correctional officers are in other parts of the dormitory. Although some seek private areas and times, others very openly and blatantly “make out” in the presence of other inmates in dormitory day rooms and the recreation building when correctional officers are patrolling other areas. Several inmates expressed disgust and indignation that their personal rights to privacy were being violated when homosexual behavior is public.

Yesterday evenin', these two women were in the day room in (my dormitory) and were just goin' at each other. I mean, their hands was everywhere. I mean everywhere. I don't like it. I've been here a long time. I've got respect. These officers know me and know I don't get in trouble. So I just said to somebody else in the day room, loud enough so those women could hear me, “I'm just gonna say, leave your hands right where they are. Don't move, keep on doin' what your doin' to each other. I'm calling the officer so they can share it with ya.” They gotta learn, I don't stand for none of that foolishness in from of me. It makes me mad.

Another inmate attempted to be open minded and accepting of other individuals rights and preferences but wanted her right to not witness their personal behavior.

It degrades the love I have for my boyfriend. I don't want to see it. You know, I'm not going to condemn a person for it. Although I feel like it's totally wrong, but I don't want to see it. And I was like that in jail. You know, I knew there was homosexuals in there or wanna be's I call them. You know, I really don't think 90% of these women were or will be when they leave jail or prison walls. But I'll tell them the same thing. You know, that's fine if that's what you want to engage in, but please don't make me a part of it. I don't want to see it. I don't want to know about it.

Central Themes

Central themes emerged from both formal interviews and casual conversations about what women wanted from all types of in-prison relationships with others. "I miss my kids and family but while I'm inside, I need to belong, to be loved, to fit in, and to matter to someone" summarize the feelings of almost all the inmates with whom I talked. Several others expressed, "I want respect, to help people, and to be known as a good person." Loneliness and needs for acceptance and approval shape their lives and strongly influence relationship choices.

I mean, I want to talk to them and say, you know. I just want to be a part of a group. But I don't want to be a bad person. I don't want to talk about people and I don't want to hurt nobody. But people that's got money and things like that, they're a little bit snobbish. And you know, I don't like being around people like that. But I've been finding myself here just staying by myself and I like being by myself...it's OK I guess but, I wish I could find a group.

Intertwined with these interpersonal themes of wanting to belong and be "cared" about are overarching themes of control, dominance, and human needs for acceptance and love so great that they would knowingly allow themselves to be controlled by other individuals.

When I got in here I let somebody control me. Because I was wanting to be loved. I wanted to be loved. I want somebody to love me for me. As big as I am or if I get little. I want them to love me for me. I'm a good person on the inside. I will help somebody if they need it.

Negative experiences of their pre-prison lives also shape the dynamics of their in-prison relationships. Physical and emotional abuse, drug use, and/or an opportunity for obtaining money or goods quickly have been the pathway to prison for many. The control and domination dynamics of inmate relationships outside prison continue in prison relationships.

She's dominating while I'm very passive. She is just like any man I ever been out with. Because I tend to always choose a dominant person, someone that is controlling. In high school, I always had an older person and someone that, you know, more or less told me what to do. Oh, really, she don't tell me what to do, but she... she's dominating. Like I said something about getting my hair cut. She said how short and I said well I want the yellow cut off of it. And she said "No" and I said "Why" and she said "Do I have to have a reason." So I said okay. You know, it's just things like that. She'd be mad if I cut my hair. And if she's mad I'll get upset. If she's mad it would be the worst thing... her not liking me.

Another central theme for the women I studied was the importance of children. Children offer a stake in the world outside and a mental bridge between the present and the future. They are a vital link to plans and hopes of life after prison. One inmate said,

They may say this and that about a friend or girl friend in here but when it comes to it, its all about talkin' to the kids, seein' the kids, and gettin' outta here to be with their kids.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN OUTSIDE

Relationships and connections with those outside prison are very important to prisoners, especially incarcerated mothers. The Kentucky Department of Corrections states that "it is essential that inmates develop and maintain healthy family and community relationships. Positive relationships are important in maintaining morale, motivating positive aspirations, and planning effective programs" (KCIW Inmate Handbook 2000:8). In keeping with this belief, all inmates not under disciplinary

restriction are allowed to use telephones, letters, and regular visitation to build and maintain relationships with those outside.

Visits from family, especially children, are the most desired form of contact with the outside world for many prisoners. All inmates may receive visits up to two hours in length according to the following schedule:

Monday	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday.....	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Sunday.....	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Designated holidays.....	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Extended visits (four hours on any two weekend days per month instead of the normal two hour limit) on regular visitation days are allowed those who have traveled one-hundred-fifty miles or more an extended visit. All inmates are allowed contact visits except for some Special Management Unit and administrative restricted inmates who must use a non-contact visiting booth. Honor inmates are rewarded through longer telephone time (25 minutes) and additional visitation privileges (e.g., food visits on Friday nights). Inmate mothers involved in the parenting program are eligible for extended visitation opportunities with their children through special visitation days. Even with special allowances and additional visiting privileges, maintaining contact with those outside prison is challenging.

Barriers

Maintaining contact and relationships with children is particularly difficult. Barriers to connecting emotionally and physically with children are of three types: institutional procedures and policies; individual resources (finances, distance, caregivers attitudes toward the prisoner); and physical facilities (prison visiting areas that lack

privacy and appropriate furnishings for children). Strict policy and procedure guidelines set an unpleasant, restrictive tone for maintaining contact and relationships with children. Telephone calls are restricted to specific times during the day and by length. Calls must be made collect and conversations are cut off automatically after 15 minutes. For security purposes, conversations (except attorney-client) are recorded onto an institutional computer and monitored by searches on key words (e.g., marijuana, grass, gun, etc.) “Suspicious” conversations are printed and analyzed by security staff. Incoming mail is routinely opened and inspected for contraband before distribution to inmates. Outgoing mail is also opened, read, and marked in bold letters on the outside of the envelope “KCIW Inmate Mail.” As receiving marked mail may be embarrassing for their children, some inmates choose not to send letters or cards.

Procedures and policies related to visitation are also challenging. Before being allowed visitation privileges, inmates must submit proposed visitors’ names and required information (social security numbers, dates of birth, and addresses) to prison staff for approval. The initial approval process may take several months to complete. Lists may be changed or updated only twice per year during regular classification when required information is provided by an inmate. Approved visitors can include her children, an unlimited number of immediate family, and three other adults. All visitors (except approved volunteers, legal, clergy, and social service professionals) must be documented on an inmate’s approved list before they are allowed to visit.

Once a visitor is approved and comes to the prison to visit, security procedures (e.g., “pat down” searches of all visitors) are carried out before they are allowed in the

visitation area. These procedures may be intimidating (especially for children). An inmate described her children's fears and feelings about being patted down.

I tried to warn my children that they would be patted down when they came to visit. They come in the outer gate, look up at the guard who nods them in through the inner gate and then go directly to the barn where they do the I.D. cards and security stuff. Security staff checks them in and the adult member has to show their driver's license and make sure they're on my visiting list and all that. And then a male will pat down the males and a female will pat down the females, even the children. And they kind of try to make it a game, you know, and tickle them or whatever. But my girls are teenagers, so they just pretty much do a quick pat down. And, my oldest one said, "I swear that woman touched me. I know she did. She intentionally touch me." And I said, honey, really she didn't. She goes, "is she gay." I said, "that officer, I don't think so. I don't know." She said, "Well, she made me feel funny." "Well, I have to go through worse. When you come visit you leave and go get in your car. When I leave, I have to be strip-searched. Mommy don't get to just walk back out. I've got to wait for the search. Why? Because I could put drugs inside of me or anything. That's not something they're (prison staff) going to let happen."

Security procedures in the visitation area shape and constrain inmates' and visitors' behavior. Correctional officers walking around between the closely spaced tables and a security camera videotaping visiting room interaction emphasize the absence of privacy. An extensive set of rules are enforced. Although designed to control inmates, rules limiting items visitors can bring into the visiting areas reinforce an atmosphere of restrictiveness and lack of personal autonomy for inmate and their visitors. Visitors are not allowed to enter the area with cash in excess of \$15, packages, food, cigarettes, or matches. Cigarettes or snack items can only be purchased from vending machines in the visiting area. One mother commented about security and regulations during visitation.

Anywhere from newborn on up have to just set there. You can't play games or nothing. Your kid, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend or whatever can get you things out of the vending machines but I can't do it because they [prison security] have to keep us on camera all the time so we can't get up to go over there [to the machines]. They want to make sure they see everything. The kids want to run to

the machines all the time but they can't do that in there. People and kids have to act controlled or they get put out.

After every visit, an inmate must undergo a thorough search before she may leave the visiting venue. Being strip searched is experienced as so degrading that some prisoners say they dread or do not want visits.

Any time I have a prison visit, I, well, any inmate has to be strip searched before they leave to go back to their living unit. We all have to be strip-searched--the whole nine yards. That's after the children leave and everybody leaves. You've got a room off to the side there are 2 curtain areas. And they take 2 inmates at a time. Or if there's 2 officers and depending on how many officers... And it's a long process. I'm usually down there a good hour after my visit is over. Females do the strip search. Well, we wait forever in a line and they'll come out, one, or two. Or depending on how many officers are there. You go in, take off your clothes a piece at a time and they feel your clothes pretty much. You know, to make sure you don't have anything in your linings or try to stuff anything anywhere. You take off every item - your shoes, your socks, everything. They shake and feel every piece of clothes you have. Right there in front of her, you take off every item you've got. Then they say, let me see behind your ears. They check your ears, in your mouth, you lift your breasts, and then squat and cough. They don't touch you, but you squat. They never touch you at any time. But they're right there, you know, within a foot of you. Then they will step out of the screened area and pull the curtain and allow you to get dressed. It's humiliating even after its been done to you several times. Some women say they don't want visits because they are not going to put themselves through that.

Limitations on individuals' resources are also problematic. The primary barrier for most women at KCIW is financial (e.g., time and expense involved for family to travel long distances. One inmate focused on the cost of travel.

My mother doesn't get to bring (the children). It's so far and she can't afford to come up and down the road. Because I told her, it's important for them to have her support right now. I'm okay. You support me through your letters. And I'm going to pay her back. But I feel like they need her support more than I do.

Another identified the cost of telephone calls.

I couldn't call home everyday anyway, it's too expensive, about \$4.50 for the whole 15 minutes. It's pretty expensive. So it's like 10 dollars a week and we

don't have that. I call on Wednesdays and I call on Sundays, and I ask them how their weeks have gone, how is school, how are your friends doing, this is what happened to mommy today. To let them know what I am doing, and to know what they are doing. There are some days not everyone gets to use the phone.

Even when not limited by financial restraints, caregivers' attitudes may determine the amount and types of long distance parenting opportunities. Family members who may feel betrayed by offenders may put "blocks" on their phone or refuse to accept charges for calls thus preventing their communication with their children.

[My mother] wasn't accepting my phone calls at first when I first got locked back up. She was upset with me because I lived a big lie. I was letting her know that I was living in Louisville and I was living this perfect life and really I was getting high and everything. But I was not telling her the truth because I knew how much it would hurt her.

Prison visiting facilities and conditions that lack privacy and appropriate furnishings for children also restrain and impede effective communication and relationship building. Children who come to visit are always accompanied by an adult. The physical presence of caregivers or others during visitation may inhibit communication between mother and child.

The caregivers have to be there at the table with you and your kids at regular visitation. Well, like with my ex-husband, he's there at the table with us. You know, which made it kind of awkward because my youngest kept saying, "mom, we have something private we've got to discuss." And I had to say to my X, "can you please go get me a coke or can you go to the bathroom or can you do something, (one daughter) wants to talk to me private." They very seldom get to, have one-on-one time with mom--especially with our situation where I can't call all the time. When they want to talk to me, 90% of the time, they don't want to talk in front of him. It's usually female things and you know, he's right there.

Another inmate relates concerns over the lack of privacy and conditions that discourage her son from communicating with her.

On regular visits he has to sit still and my dad's there. He can't open up to me as much because my Dad is sitting there. Me and (my son), we have a bond where he can talk to me about anything and I like that. But, when my dad's there he won't talk. He just sits there with his chin on the table and acts bored.

Maintaining relationships involving the sharing of information, a process aided by communicating and sharing information, may be difficult in the presence of others.

She's afraid to ask me things about her father because my grandparents or my sister is around, because it's so hush hush about him. And I want her to ask me whatever she wants to but she won't. She thinks it's going to make them mad. So she'll just talk about different things. I don't get to explain things to her.

The visitation facility, The Barn, presents another barrier to maintaining personal relationships. It is a very old, well-worn, sparsely furnished building once used to house farm animals. Because of the bare wood floors, high ceilings, and crowded conditions, visitation time becomes very noisy.

With all them people in there talkin', you can't even hear yourself think, much less talk. It makes me nervous and my kids get jittery. My mom just can't take it. She can't stay the whole two-hour, it make her so jumpy. Sometime babies are cryin' and people is laughin' so loud...you can't really have any conversation.

The visitation room is furnished with molded plastic tables and chairs closely set side by side (about 36 inches apart) in rows. Visitors (including children) must stay seated at the tables. The adult size furniture is uncomfortable for the children and they have little to amuse themselves for the two or four hour-long visit.

Sitting there, especially with kids, is real hard because they don't understand the routine that inmates have to go through and follow the rules on. [My kids] want me to do little things like get up and make them a pizza and warm something up and you can't.

In the outside world children do not sit for long periods of time, so the forced inactivity during visitation is a problem.

The children have coloring pages, but other than that, it's just sitting at the table and talking. Since I do have honors, I can go outside. I guess that's another privilege. As long as the weather is permitting. You have to sit at a table. You have to stay there. You're not allowed to move. You're not allowed to get up. And when the kids come... they don't enforce this so much with kids, it depends on the officer... the normal rule is you can greet them, kiss them, hug them hello and goodbye. You know, you can hold their hands, but you can't sit there and hug them and play with them.

Visitation conditions and rules limit women's ability to play the parent role.

During visitation inmates are not allowed to use their tokens to purchase snacks for themselves or visitors. Some mothers' narratives suggest that visitation rules support parent-child role reversal, an unhealthy parenting practice.

In visiting, I'm not even allowed to go to the vending machines. Whoever is visiting me, if I want something to drink, they may buy it for me, but they have to go get it. It makes me small, but it means a big thing for us to be able to do for our children rather than us look at our child and say, can you get mommy a coke. That seems almost lazy. You know, it's kind of like, for me it even reverted back. A trigger the first time I said it was I remember when I was small and my mom use to constantly make me go run and go fix her a glass of Pepsi. And I had resented her for that. I feel like my kids are trying take care of me anyway and that's not good, my oldest especially.

PARENTING BEHIND BARS

Many inmate mothers attempt to parent (e.g., comfort, guide, and encourage) their children through telephone conversations, letters, and face to face visits. Maintaining relationships through these means would be difficult for any parent. To some inmate mothers "talking on the phone" and writing letters is difficult. Learning to parent in prison requires learning communication techniques and skills useful for parenting behind bars and for increasing parenting proficiency in the outside world to which she will return.

To address the parent education and visitation needs of inmate mothers, KCIW offers a parenting program that uses both classroom instruction and a parent child interaction component (program visitation) to teach, develop, and enhance parenting and relational skills while increasing positive interaction between inmates and their children. Parenting Program guidelines stress the importance of positive interaction between inmates and their children. An inmate must complete or be enrolled in the parent education course before she is allowed to participate in the program's interactive component.

According to the current KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines (1998) the interactive component consists of extended visitation time with a moderately structured program of activities (e.g., crafts, recreation, interactive games) and a period of unstructured time during which inmate mothers can practice parenting skills and experience interaction with their children. Program visits include activities for mothers and infants (The Bonding Program), children from three through twelve years (Kids Day), teenagers (Teen Day) and girls from six to sixteen years of age (Girl Scouts Beyond Bars).

As the inmates in this study had chosen to be involved in the KCIW Parenting Program, the context of their lives and personal experiences cannot be separated from their involvement or expectations of involvement in program visitation. Extensive inmate narratives portray their experiences. Their descriptions and perceptions of each program visitation opportunity illustrate how inmate mothers may be helped to adapt to the restrictions of parenting behind bars and practice skills important for parenting outside.

The Bonding Program

The Bonding Program for mothers and babies (up to age 3) allows 8 hours of visiting anytime during a week (no more than 2 hours per day). Bonding visits take place in a specially furnished bonding room in the Chapel. Bonding visits may only take place, as scheduled through the Bonding Coordinator, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. If an inmate gives birth and is returned to the institution from the hospital on a weekend, a newborn bonding visit can be arranged. An inmate describes her experiences and perceptions about the program.

The bonding program, I think, is newborn up to two or three. After that, they have to come to Kids Day and they have to be potty trained. I was pregnant when I came to prison. I was in AC, still in my blues and my due date was any time. It was my first time being incarcerated. So I was thinking I was going to have to give my baby up for foster care. And my Mom, she didn't want me to have the baby anyway because she didn't know how I was going to be. I'm an addict, a recovering addict and alcoholic and she knew that she would have to be the one to have to take care of her.

I heard about this program from the bonding program officer. It was a program at the Galilean Home she told me about. They don't want to take your baby away from you, they just wanted to care for your baby and make you feel comfortable about your baby being away from you while you're incarcerated. They bring the baby every week. I could have went with a bonding family. But a bonding family could take you to court afterwards if they get attached to your baby and take your baby away. I didn't want that because I wanted to keep [my baby]. But I just couldn't provide for her here. So I went over to the chapel and Chaplain gave me newsletter telling me about the home and a letter where they had got an award from the first President Bush. And so, I told them that was what I wanted to do.

I met them [Galilean Home staff] here at the penitentiary on a Tuesday, I went to the doctor that Wednesday, that Sunday night, I went into labor. They [institutional staff] took me to the hospital that Monday. Sandy Tucker [from the Galilean Home] had went to the judge and got the right papers for me to sign and came to the hospital and picked her up. It was terrible to let her go but it was better with them because I knew if I did right in prison, I could get her back. I got to know the nannies that bring her and I feel better. They take good care of her and they won't take her away from me.

The nanny is the biggest part of the program. Those young girls give up a lot of their time to take care of our children and I feel that's very special. A different nanny have the baby for the morning shift, the afternoon shift and the midnight shift. They take turn on different shifts, but she has a specific caregiver for that shift, because they don't want the babies to get too attached to just one nanny. The baby's main nanny writes me letters. I get so many letters and pictures, it's unbelievable. Everybody takes pictures of your kids. I mean, you can meet all the nannies there and get a letter and picture. They write down "Just thinking about you. Wanted you to see pictures of your baby, just to let you know she's doing okay." The nannies say they work for God. That they take care of babies that don't have a mother there. [One nanny] said she is able to take care of kids with their mothers not around because God put that love in her heart. She loves the kids because all of the kids are Gods. She taught me that. And I don't want to do anything bad again because it hurt [the nanny] for me to come back in here.

Kids Day

Kids Day is described in Parenting Program Guidelines as a program of structured events for mothers and children 2-12 years one Saturday per month from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. An inmate account describes how it was structured and what she perceived were its benefits.

When it first started in '95, it was nice and structured. We knew ahead of time that we would have a meeting before kids day and that's where you signed up. And you could talk about anything that you wanted to bring up at that meeting--anything that you might want to do, anything you wanted to address, a situation with your child that you didn't really know how to handle and you wanted some input. (The psychologist) who was here when it started would get up and he would tell us what we were going to do. You know, whether we were going to go to the ball field, if we were having a cookout or if we were having sandwiches, if we're going to go to the chapel for crafts or we're going to go to the chapel for a movie. The meeting was the Thursday before Kids Day. After you got signed up the meeting only usually took about 10 to 15 minutes.

And then you had Kids Day that Saturday. Everybody knew you were supposed to keep your kids; you watch your kids. You don't let them run wild and act insane. They told you, "you watch your kids during the time you have with them." You're a mom and they're your responsibility. And everything went really, really, really smooth. There was never any problems. As a matter of fact, there were magazine and newspaper stories about Kids Day.

When you first got up there [the upstairs of The Barn], it was pretty much time to just get settled in and hold your kids and you know, be with them because you missed them so much since the last time. At first, for a little while, you just kind of do whatever you want to do. You played board games or played cards or whatever you wanted to do. And then after a set amount of time, it was craft time. And everybody participated in crafts and it was fun stuff. [A staff person] did it and she was a ball. The kids loved her because she always thought of things that interested them. I remember one time, that we made a calendar. She had one of the camera click people come over and take a picture of us with our kid. And we glued it onto the calendar. And then they got to make the calendar and mark whatever days were special or whatever. It was good. And then after that lunch was a set time and then we went to the ball field for a set time or in the wintertime we couldn't go to the ball field, we went to the chapel at that time and watched a movie. For lunch sometimes it was cold cuts, sometimes it was pizza, sometimes it was happy meals. Sometimes we had a barbecue. We had a cookout on the ball field. I did that with my son for seven years and now they stopped it.

This inmate goes on to describe how important it was.

I am very depressed. I lived for time with him, time to be his mommy. It was obviously the most important thing in my son's life and it was definitely the most important in mine. That's all I had. And my parents live about 3 ½ hours away and you know, that's the only time I got to see him was the one time a month. I don't have incentive to stay out of trouble any more. Who cares? They had something good going and took it away. My son was making good grades but now after I told him there won't be Kids Day for a while, he's having trouble in school. And it's made it difficult. It has made me extremely depressed. Extremely.

Teen Day

Teen Day is described in Parenting Program Guidelines as a program for the 13-18 year old children of incarcerated mothers offered every fifth Saturday. Teen Day is similar to Kids Day but on occasion also includes presentations on health issues (e.g., drug abuse, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases) by outside volunteers. An inmate's description of Teen Day offers insight about developing relationships with teens as they mature even while incarcerated.

They had Teen Day once every three months and he enjoyed it. We spent the day and there weren't very many teens that came. But we could talk, play cards, play pool, eat lunch. It was just me and him. I think that's real important... to spend time with your children one at a time. Teen Day was a whole day to spend with my teenager and find out what was going on. And my son and I can pretty much well talk about anything. Just knowing that he would spend a whole day with me, and him a teenager who thinks so many other things are important, meant a lot to me....for the teen to really want to do that, you know.

It was at Teen Day that I really found out what kind of person my son was. We talked about his school day and who his friends are and what they're up to and what his main interests are. We talked about college and what does he want to do...driving, part time job, girls. Twenty-five minutes is a while to be on the phone, but when you're talking to three other people besides your teenager, that's not enough time to find out what they're really going through.

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, a cooperative effort of the Girl Scouts of America and the women's prison is a Girl Scout troop of daughters of prisoners from nearby Louisville that meets two Saturdays per month inside the prison with inmates helping with meeting plans and activities. This Girl Scout program focuses on three things: (1) helping girls reach their full potential by learning ways to cope with stress and adversity in life, (2) providing structured goal-oriented interaction opportunities for daughters, their inmate mothers, and other adult role models, and (3) increasing positive self image and esteem in both daughters and mothers. An inmate account of experiences in Girl Scouts Beyond Bars offers insight about the program and mother daughter bonding that takes place during scout meetings.

I heard about the Girl Scout Program from some other inmates and asked Mrs. Boggs how to apply for the program. I was approved but before they (daughters) could start coming to Girl Scouts a case worker went to my mother's house to ask her some questions and if my daughters could come to Girl Scouts at the prison. She told the caseworker it was OK for them to come. The Girl Scout leaders pick up the girls at their grandma's house and brings them to the meetings here. They come here two Saturdays a month and they have meeting outside the other

Saturdays. Before the meetings here start, we get to talk with our girls for about fifteen minutes in private. Then we say the Girl Scout pledge and do crafts and activities. We help our girls work on their badges and sometimes we have special programs about important subjects like teen pregnancy and drugs. The time I have with my girls is real special. I feel very close to them when they are here and it helps me get through my time here. They say coming to see me makes them miss me more and I guess it does for me too but I wouldn't stop it for anything. When I get out, I want to be a volunteer with scouts and maybe keep these good feelings between me and my girls going. I'm so proud of them. They are growing up good, I think.

Practicing Parenting

Inmates report that program visitation provides opportunities for parents to practice the parent role with their children. Program visitation can offer inmate's opportunities for fighting infantilization and prisonization and helping build or rebuild appropriate parent child role expectations.

Buying things and providing for children, meeting their physical needs is representative of feeding even for the older ones. Even simple things are important. In visiting in Kids Day, I can go buy it for (my daughter). You know, at visiting, she's got to do it for me and that's not a natural order. Our money gets sent in to us. Like (someone) sends my money in to me in a postal money order. It gets credited to my account. When I go to canteen, I buy a token card--5, 10, or 20-dollar card. Then before Kids Day I can take my card with me that day and tell her how much money I want out of that card in tokens. And then buy whatever I need out of the machines. And (my daughter), the first day she came, she had money. She had change. And I said, no, no, this is mommy's. Mommy's doing this; this is mommy's day. And she was "oh, okay." She thought it was like regular visitation where she had to do for me. She's tried to step in the shoes, or not trying, she's been forced to step into the shoes to be a mom. And that hurts so bad and the Kids Day, you could do for your child. It makes a big difference. Caring for your child.

Practicing parenting through providing physical care and understanding children's developmental capabilities reinforces parenting class instruction.

They came on visits and stuff and he knew who I was. He called me mommy and everything like that, but I had never got to really be mom. It was going to be my responsibility to clean him up and change his little pull-ups and feed him and I

had to be mom. I was mom for 5 hours. I was a real live mom for 5 hours. I was nervous. I didn't really know what I was doing. I remember on the first program visit he was having a blast. He was running around and he was chasing this other little boy. And they ended up turning around and meeting each other head on and they hit each other in their head. And he started, and he was crying for my mom, so I just started crying. I was bawling with him, because I wanted him to want me. I held him for a little while and I just rocked him and held him. And I just put his little head against my chest where he could just hear my heartbeat. I had read somewhere where that was real soothing. That was the beginning of the most awesome time I had ever had in my life.

Opportunities for participating in program visitation are an integral part of one inmate's life. She explained,

I wasn't even sure that I would get a Kids Day. You know, I didn't know how they would bring her back and forth and this and that. But once they seen that I was working on myself, then they, you know, they agreed to bring her. She sits in my lap and we talk and sing. So we cuddle at our visits, we talk and she tells me all about her days and I tell her about mine. It's similar to the other visits except there's no one else around.

The parenting program encourages inmates to maintain good behavior and model self control to their children.

I went to Girl Scouts until I got that write up. I felt bad because it was something that I did and I was telling my daughters to do good in school so you can come and see me. Keep your grades up, you know, and this and that. And Mom would do the same, but it's like I felt so ashamed of what I was trying to tell her to do and I turn around . . . But it wasn't nothing done intentionally. But they got me for it... for wearing a hat, a toboggan. That was the only write up I got and they put it on the shelf. You can wear a toboggan, but you have to wear your own toboggan, not somebody else's. I lost mine and wore another person's. So I got a borrowing and lending thing.

Another explained the importance of maintaining the privilege.

I have had my honors since the end of July of 99. One incentive to keep my honors was Kids Day. Because I didn't want to lose that. I will sit in a chair for hours, whatever it takes to do whatever it is that I got to do, so that I get to have certain privileges that I wouldn't have had otherwise.

Yet, another talked about how she controlled her behavior as opportunities for program visitation shaped her daily experiences.

I don't get any disciplinary write ups. I lived for Kids Day. There's always stuff to get into in here. And it's so easy to get into a fight. I could walk right out this door and in 5 minutes be into brawl if I took everything to heart. You know, it gave me a reason to live above this place. To live outside of the madness of this place, because I knew that if I messed up I had to be suspended from Kids Day for 3 months and I wasn't willing to give that up.

The incentive to behave was apparent when the program was lost.

[Someone I know] just lost her honors. When she lost Kids Day, she fell apart. She lost honors and lost her job. Everything just went down. Everything just started happening after that. Her daughter is having a hard time with it. She has worked so hard on this. She couldn't understand why they let all these people come in and talk about kids day and put it in the paper and magazines and on television and they praised kids day, and said it was great and then stopped it. She couldn't understand how the wardens could be so proud of Kids Day and then all of a sudden they don't care about it anymore.

Learning to deal with disappointment, adapting to life's circumstances, and new insight about developing children's ability to trust is apparent in one inmate's account of what she has learned through the parenting program.

My daughter just loves Kids Day and she's real hurt because we aren't having it for a while. I'm hurt because, you know, whenever they take things out in an institution, they'll promise that we'll get it back and we don't. And so I'm not telling her there will be another Kids Day. I told her we'll wait and see because I've lied to her in the past and I don't want to lie to her any more. You know about things I've done. I feel like we'll have to see what happens. I learned about it during the parenting classes. We had a big discussion about it. And Ms. Boggs, she told us, you know, the best thing to tell our children is that, you know, we'll see what happens. She told me... she taught me not to make empty promises to [my daughter]... that I'm coming home next month or whatever. You know, I'm not even going to tell her that I'm meeting the parole board, because I don't want to hurt her. If she thinks I'm coming home and then I don't, that's going to be another heartache for her to have to deal and she shouldn't have to deal with this, you know.

One inmate describes how the parenting program strengthened relationships with her children and gave her determination not to become involved in illegal activities that could result in her return to prison.

That was my wake up when I got her letter. At the time she was 14. She told me she still loved me and wanted me home with them and didn't want me to ever do anything to go back to prison. And every time I start to feel myself retract, I guess, it's my old way of thinking, I pull the letter out. And my youngest daughter, one of the letters she wrote was mom you never have to lie to me. She said, "I wonder about some of the Christmas', some of the things that I got, was it stolen money that you bought them with. I would be more proud of you, if it was one thing and you earned the money for it. And that says it all. My children changed my pattern of thinking. I won't come back here. I won't do that to them or to myself. I've learned my lesson and I've made some changes. Building better relationships and understanding with my girls, with me in prison, because I'm in prison and learning how buying them things was not being a responsible parent, has changed my life.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In addition to an overview of prison facilities, programs, and changes over the past six and one half decades, this chapter offers a detailed description of the world of women prisoners through the lives and experiences of inmates mothers at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women. Some assertions in the criminology literature are verified and others are not supported. Processes associated with life in total institutions (e.g., degradation, prisonization, infantilization) are illustrated. Adaptation to the restrictions, processes, and structures of prison life, particularly as associated with parenting, are illustrated through narratives of KCIW incarcerated mothers lived experiences. The following chapter offers a quantitative evaluation, a quasi-experimental design of the classroom component of the KCIW Parenting Program.

Chapter 4

Program Evaluation Design

The central question of this research is: “Can a prison parenting program change how parents see parenting and thus, potentially their parenting practices”? By evaluating a program that intends to provide parents with parenting skills and attitudes they may not have, we may be able to address the research question and provide guidance for developing a program that would change how prisoners see parenting. A pretest-posttest non equivalent comparison group quasi experimental design was selected to assess the efficacy of the parenting program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) in increasing effective parenting attitudes and skills.

Two measures, Gerard’s (1994) *Parent Child Relationship Inventory* and Bavolek and Keene’s (1999) *Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory*, were selected for administration to a treatment group of inmate mothers on the first day of a KCIW parent education course and to a comparison group of inmate mothers who had never been involved in the KCIW Parenting Program. Time two testing of the treatment group was scheduled for 12 weeks later (the length of the course). To evaluate program effectiveness matched paired *t*-tests were selected to ascertain whether change in test scores was significant. To provide additional information for developing parenting programs specifically for incarcerated mothers, time one test scores of the entire sample ($n = 161$) were compared to those of the general population norm groups used for standardizing the testing instruments to identify problematic parenting areas specific to incarcerated mothers. (Copyright laws prohibit inclusion of tests in the Appendix).

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the educational component of the KCIW Parenting Program. The second and third present research hypotheses and definitions of concepts measured in this study. Section four outlines the study design and section five presents sampling information. Methods for quantitative data analyses and the standardized testing instruments used for hypothesis testing are explained in the next sections. A discussion of the *Class Member Information Questionnaire* (Appendix E) followed by an explanation of interview techniques and research procedures completes the chapter.

PARENTING PROGRAM CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The overarching objective of the KCIW parenting program is “to support the development of parenting skills of participating inmates through education and participation in planned, supervised programs involving incarcerated mothers and their children” (KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines 1998:1). Both a classroom instruction and an interactive component are used to teach and develop parenting and relational skills that increase effective parenting and positive interaction between inmate mothers and their children.

The original plan for this study included observing and also evaluating the parenting program interactive opportunities (program visitation) on furthering KCIW Parenting Program objectives. As two of the enhanced visitation opportunities (Kids Day and Teen Day) were suspended in January 2002, and institutional and logistical constraints prohibited observation of the Bonding Program and Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, evaluating program visitation through direct observation was not possible. Thus,

evaluating the short term effects of the KCIW parenting program is limited to an assessment of classroom learning (i.e., the parent education course) rather than a combination of both program components. In depth descriptions provided in the preceding chapter through inmate accounts of experiences and perceived benefits of each of the enhanced visitation opportunities provide insight about the importance of the interactive component for inmate mothers.

The Parent Education Course

The parenting program instructional component is a parent education course taught by the Consumer and Family Life Skills Instructor. Classes meet three hours a day, two times a week for twelve weeks. The parent education curriculum used is *Rebonding and Rebuilding, (A Parenting Curriculum), Fourth Edition* by Doris Meyer and Cathy Moriarty (1995). The authors assert that as many incarcerated mothers were not adequately parented, *reparenting* is an important approach to teaching incarcerated mothers. The curriculum is intended for use in jails and is organized into free standing sections as enrollment in parenting classes in jails is seldom consistent. The five sections are: "Family and Child Development," "Discipline," "Difficult Topics," "Personal Growth," "Child Abuse," and "Special Lessons for Incarcerated Parents." Suggested instructional methods include reading children's books that introduce instructional areas to inmates; lectures; worksheets and written exercises that promote reflective self evaluation; practicing newly learned skills through letter writing and during visitation; and applying concepts learned in the classroom to life situations depicted in movies (Meyer and Moriarty 1995).

Interviews with and observations of the parenting class teacher revealed her instructional technique is direct and clear. She states that her overarching goal is to *reparent* and that her intent is to:

tell them what they need to know; teach them what is right and what isn't; attack misconceptions about responsibility, materialism, truth, and honesty; help them develop the ability to parent in difficult circumstances; teach them how to use innovative communication techniques while incarcerated; and teach them innovative discipline techniques. (C. Boggs, personal communication, March 29, 2002)

Central themes she emphasizes are exemplified in the following excerpts from lectures on *change, trust, honesty, responsibility, communication, patience and acceptance of developmental levels, and materialism* she presented in parenting classes during the research time frame.

Change: If you don't change in here, you won't change out there. If you want to change, you need to do it here. Nobody's going to "make you" take any class. All you have is time. This is the only time in your life when you have just you to think about. There is no need to worry about out there. You need to think about what you need to do to work on "you". If you make changes, you won't come back. If you don't, you will. Make sure you think about changing who you are NOW. This is your chance to make your time count for something, for "you". (January 2002)

Trust: When you keep coming in here, your children lose trust in you and other adults. Trust is hard to get back. If someone lies to you, it takes you a long time to get trust back. Your children are like that. By leaving them all the time you're teaching them not to trust you or anyone else. (January 2002)

Honesty: Don't promise what you can't deliver. Don't tell them you are getting out in a few days or weeks because you are coming up for parole. You might not get it. You need to be truthful about your incarceration. One woman says her child doesn't know she is in prison. When someone brings him for a visit, they tell him that mom works at prison; this is her occupation. Some tell their children they aren't with them because they are in the hospital, on vacation, or in the army (January 2002).

Communication: Learning to communicate is the basis of any relationship. Communication is tied to trust. If they don't trust you, if they don't have trust *in* you, they are not going to tell you anything. You must show them they can trust you. Communicate with your child on their level. Talk to them about things appropriate for a child to talk about. Don't make them grow up too soon. Don't confide your personal life to them. Don't make them be the parent and hear your troubles. Children hear your words but they put emphasis on what you do. (May 2002)

Responsibility: Everything you do impacts others. You need to teach your children to be independent and make good decisions. Parents should protect their children from abuse, unkind acts. You might pass on down to your children the way you were treated. You should spend time with your children. Your child needs you, you're the parent. Grandma is not supposed to be mom, you should be. You need to be home, making memories for yourself and for your child. They need memories of good, legal things you can do together and memories of talking and sharing with each other. If you are out running the streets, you are not home with your kids. If you are out running the streets, how do you know they aren't out running the streets.

When women come to prison they all say, "Bring my kids to me. Bring my kids to me." But why didn't they spend time with them on the outside? If you are selling or using drugs, if you're high, you are in another world; you aren't with your children. You think drugs are an escape for you... a way to deal with problems. I want you to realize there is more than one way to deal with problems.

You might say, "I take care of my kids." But to you, taking care of your kids is finding someone to watch them, to keep them. If you get someone to keep your kids so you can go out on the weekends, you might think you are taking care of your kids, but, you're not. Some of you say, "I make sure my parents are caring for my kids". That's not the same thing as, "I care for my kids". One woman said to me, "my mother takes my kids on weekends because I'm tired and need a rest, to unwind, to party." Your mother is facilitating your life style. She is making it possible for you to do what you did to end up in prison. Grandmothers are helping your children's mother (you) do things and be places that get you in trouble. The kids are your responsibility, not your parents'. You don't have to be a parent like your parent. (June 2002)

Patience and acceptance of children's level of development: Maybe you're learning patience by being locked up. They make mistakes like you do and they have to learn to make good choices. They learn when they are old enough to understand. You have to teach them but you must be patient with your children. (June 2002)

Materialism: If you don't teach your children to buy what they can afford and that it's not yours if you don't pay for it, they will end up just like you, in prison. You can't excuse yourself by saying, "what I did, I did for my child". One woman said she stole because her child needed toys. Her child was 6 months old. Your child could care less about what they have. One woman said she had to steal shoes for her child; she stole her baby a pair of *WEE BOCKS*. She wasn't stealing for that child, she was stealing for herself, for prestige of owning expensive things. Prestige is for self, not for child. If your children see you steal or know you do it, if they know you were willing to take the chance of being in prison by doing something illegal, they will do it too. Your children love you unconditionally; you don't have to buy it. For some, money talk is all you hear and all you talk. You are over concerned with money. If you make less, you must have less or end up in prison. You buy what you can within your means, whatever your means are. You can't buy status. If you put emphasis on material things, you are helping your children come to prison. Because some women had a difficult childhood, they think their child should have everything. They are tuned in on the material. They think they have to give them everything material they want. When you do your things, you are taking yourself away from your child. Your child needs you at home, not all those things you think they need. (July 2002)

The instructor supplements lectures, accounts of personal experiences, worksheets, and class assignments by occasionally showing and discussing videotapes of movies selected to illuminate a particular parenting area. For example, the movie *Liar*, *Liar* is sometimes used to teach lessons on truth. "It shows the result of empty promises when parents tell kids they will do something and then don't do it" (C. Boggs, personal communication, March 29, 2002). *Baby Boom* offers a single parent role model who faces the crisis of concurrently nurturing and providing. "You can be a single parent and still hold your standards. You have to be a good example or it hurts your child" (Boggs 2002). *A Simple Twist of Fate* is about "teaching limits through innovative discipline, unconditional love, and not giving her everything she wants. It suggests that you can raise a good child without money and extras that money can buy" (C. Boggs, personal communication, March 29, 2002). My observations of inmates viewing and discussing

classroom films indicated that inmates gained insight and learned parenting lessons from the instructor guided discussions that followed. Inmates appeared to be thoughtful and reflective as they viewed the films and were able to recognize and articulate descriptions of parenting skills and techniques previously introduced through lectures and exercises.

The Parenting Committee

A parenting committee composed of the Warden, the Deputy Warden for Programs, the Deputy Warden for Security, the Nurse Administrator, the Institutional Psychologist, the Educational Vocational and Technology School Principle, the Parenting Class Instructor, the Unit Administrator/Bonding Supervisor, the Institutional Chaplain, and an outside consultant oversees program development and operation. The guidelines state that the committee believes “all incarcerated mothers have an impact on society through interaction with their children” and that the committee desires “to provide the opportunity for incarcerated mothers to acquire parenting skills, and in many cases, to be reparented” (KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines 1998:2). Guidelines indicate that the Parenting Program Committee is responsible for insuring that the parenting program is periodically evaluated.

This program evaluation research is in response to the Parenting Committee’s task “to assess and analyze the effectiveness and results of the Parenting Program, and to make recommendations for development, changes, cessation, resource allocation and the general direction of the program” (KCIW Parenting Program Guidelines 1998:2).

Examining the long-term effect of parenting classes (e.g., reduced recidivism) on inmate mothers is beyond the scope of this investigation. However, specific program objectives

can be used to test for short term effect (i.e., learning from parent education classes). Weiss (1972: 4) supports this method by suggesting that a major objective of evaluation research is to measure the “effects of a program against the goals it set out to accomplish as a means of contributing to subsequent decision making about the program and improving future programming.”

Specific program objectives for incarcerated mothers involved in the KCIW parenting program are to (1) increase communication and communication skills, (2) increase knowledge about child development, (3) increase knowledge of appropriate discipline techniques (e.g., alternatives to corporal punishment), (4) increase the ability to maturely deal with crisis through increased knowledge about appropriate parent child relationships, (5) increase confidence in parenting ability, (6) increase feelings of emotional and social support, and (7) decrease negative parenting attitudes (e.g., ignoring the impact of their incarceration on their children).

STUDY HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses flow from the program objectives.

Hypothesis I Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in knowledge of parent child communication skills after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis II Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in knowledge about child development after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis III Participants in the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in knowledge about appropriate child discipline techniques after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis IV Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in attitudes consistent with dealing with crises in a mature manner through increased knowledge about healthy parent child relationships after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis V Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in the amount of satisfaction and pleasure derived from parenting after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis VI Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women will show an increase in feelings of emotional and social support after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Hypothesis VII Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for women will show change in negative parenting attitudes (e.g., being unaware of the impact of their behavior and subsequent incarceration on their children) by showing an increase in empathetic awareness after completing parent education training at KCIW.

DEFINITIONS

The key aspects of parenting identified in the life course literature, parenting program objectives, and the parent education curriculum are similar and provide a set of

concepts to guide this investigation. Components of effective parenting include (a) parent child communication, (b) parental involvement, (c) developmentally appropriate expectations, (d) promoting autonomy, (e) discipline, (f) boundary establishment, (g) appropriate parent-child roles, (h) parental satisfaction, (i) perceived parental support, and (j) parental empathy (Patterson, Reid, Jones, and Conger 1975; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber 1986; Meyer and Moriarty 1995). Parenting literature suggests additional concepts associated with parenting including role salience and parental concern (Fox and Bruce 1999; Fox, Bruce, and Combs-Orme 2000; Fox and Bruce 2001).

In this study, *effective parenting* refers to the actions and activities parents employ to equip their children to become productive, law abiding participants in society. Effective parents shape and nurture their children's personal values, attitudes, behaviors, and self-identity by providing socially appropriate guidance and experiences as well as by meeting their physical and emotional needs. Conversely, ineffective parents may not have or practice effective parenting skills and therefore may produce children who do not learn to be law abiding productive members of society.

Reparenting (Meyer and Moriarty 1995) is the teaching of parents who may have poor or inadequate parenting skills and attitudes. Through reparenting, an individual learns a different set of attitudes, values, and behaviors from those in their previous experience. Life course theory suggests that incarcerated women may not have been parented to conform to societal norms of behavior and that as products of deficient parenting they, in turn, may not be parenting their children in a way that promotes the development of a productive, law abiding future generation (Tremblay et al. 2001).

Reparenting offers this set of women a different model of parenting for influencing their children's development and future behavior.

Effective parent child communication

Effective parent child communication is the ability to clearly convey information or exchange thoughts and ideas with a child through words, signals, writing, or behavior. The ability to communicate with one's children in a variety of situations, a variety of settings (e.g., at home, in public, during prison visitation), and through a variety of methods (e.g., face to face, telephone, or letters) is considered crucial to effective parenting. Effective communication is necessary for identifying and teaching children their boundaries and parameters of acceptable behavior and for developing healthy parent child relationships (Vygotsky 1987; Dinkmeyer, McKay, and Dinkmeyer 1989).

Parental involvement

The physical presence of a parent is often assumed to be required for involvement in children's lives or activities. Yet, some non-custodial and military parents separated from their children are involved in their children's lives. They seek knowledge about and demonstrate an interest in their children's daily activities (e.g., school work, sports teams, hobbies, social groups) in ways that do not require physical co-presence. In this study parental involvement focuses on knowledge or interest expressed through letters or phone calls and short visits rather than sustained daily physical co-presence. This form of parental involvement requires effective parent child communication (Dinkmeyer et al. 1989; Kaplan 1998).

Child Development and Age-Appropriate Expectations

Age-appropriate expectations for children recognize the capabilities and needs of children at various stages of their physical and social development. Children should be expected to proficiently perform only those tasks for which they are emotionally, physically, and intellectually capable. Knowledge about child development (and the importance of allowing autonomous but age appropriate experiences) underlies holding age appropriate expectations (Azar and Siegal 1990).

Autonomy

Autonomy is independence from the direct control of another or others. Presumably encouraging age-appropriate autonomy promotes a child's independence, self-confidence, and ability to make socially conforming decisions independent of the direct control of a parent. Allowing children to be disappointed by not indulging their desires for material possession beyond the limitations of the family's finances (e.g., expensive toys and status symbol clothing) is also assumed to build maturity and self control (Baumrind 1971; Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts 1989).

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is the application of physical pain (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, or spanking) as a unit of behavior designed to correct or punish specific bad conduct or perceived inadequacy in children. In the absence of knowledge about or understanding of alternative disciplinary techniques, some parents rely exclusively on corporal punishment to force their children to comply to their demands. Physically abusive parents often consider physical punishment the only "proper"

disciplinary measure and strongly defend their parental right to use physical force as an expression of authority over their children. Subjected to severe forms of physical punishment, children may come to believe that the only way to solve problems is through physical force or aggression (Graziano and Namaste 1990; Straus 1991).

Boundary Establishment

Boundary establishment is the ability to set limits and communicate boundaries of acceptable personal and social behavior through effective communication and discipline. Teaching children what is expected of them, particularly in regards to socially conforming behavior is assumed to help children feel secure. They learn to understand the extent to which their behavior falls within acceptable limits and are able to recognize when acceptable bounds of social interaction are exceeded (Gordon 1970; Dinkmeyer et al 1989).

Parent-Child Role Reversal

Parent-child role reversal is the interchanging or “switching” of behaviors and attitudes expected of parents (e.g., providing, nurturing) and those tolerated in children (e.g., immaturity, irresponsibility, lack of self control). The child’s needs may be overlooked as the parent seeks to have her needs satisfied by her children. A parent who has been infantilized might engage in such behavior (Flanzraich and Dunsavage 1977; Johnston 1990).

Parental Satisfaction

Parental satisfaction is the enjoyment or pleasure one feels from being a parent and being involved in parenting activities. An individual who is satisfied with parenting

is comfortable in the parent role and sees parenting tasks as rewarding and fulfilling, and is therefore more likely to be a confident effective parent. Another assumption is that those who enjoy parenting will spend more time with their children, more time thinking about their children, and expend greater effort to learn to be a better parent (Holden and Edwards 1989).

Parental Support

Parental support refers to perceptions of the emotional and practical support for her parenting efforts that an inmate mother feels from others. Presumably, those who perceive emotional and practical support for their parenting efforts are in a better position to effectively nurture and provide for a child's physical needs than those who do not. Those who do not feel supported as parents may feel alone and overburdened in trying to accomplish parenting responsibilities. They may "give up" on parenting (Gerard 1994; Stryker 1968).

Parental Empathy

Parental empathy is a parent's ability to be sensitive to her child's needs and feelings. When making decisions, empathetic parents most often consider the needs of their children and the impact of choices they make on their children. Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives are assumed to be foundational to the development of a solid moral code of conduct, so that if children are not parented empathetically, they may fail to develop a moral compass (Rowen 1975).

Materialism

Materialism is the belief that material possessions, especially those that are thought to evoke respect and prestige (e.g., name brand clothing, expensive jewelry), are of primary importance. For example “having things” constitutes the greatest good and highest value in life. Possessing material goods may be so important that an individual may be willing to violate the law to acquire desired goods (Meyer and Moriarty 1995).

Parental Concern

Parental concern is conceptualized as the expression of worry or uneasiness associated with a parent’s perception of her abilities to perform or accomplish tasks associated with being a parent (e.g., providing care and protection, “being there” for emotional support). Parental concern may also include worries and fears of their own potential to physically harm their child. The presence of or level of parental concern is assumed to provide impetus for improving parenting skills and may therefore be associated with the propensity to seek out new ways of parenting, communicating with children, and being involved in children’s lives (Fox, Bruce, and Combs-Orme 2000).

Role Salience

Role salience is the level of commitment to and identification with a role such as parent. Presumably, it is correlated with practicing parenting skills and attitudes consistent with expectations associated with effective parenting. Level of role salience is assumed to correlate with parental concern, parental satisfaction, and parental involvement (Bruce and Fox 1999; Fox and Bruce 2001).

STUDY DESIGN

A quasi experimental design was chosen for this research as control over the research setting sufficient to accommodate a *classic* experiment for substantiating a strict inferential relationship between KCIW parenting class instruction and change in knowledge and attitudes about parenting was not possible. More specifically, exact matching and random selection of treatment group subjects was not possible because of institutional policies and restraints, small class sizes, and expected attrition rates of each of the eight parenting courses conducted during the research time frame. Lack of control over the research subjects and setting included contamination (e.g., the intermingling of the treatment and comparison group); historical effects (e.g., personal events of inmates or the class instructor, other classes attended, news reports, changes in program visitation opportunities); maturation effects (i.e., some students learning and gaining perspective about parenting from inmates not currently involved in parenting classes); and experimental mortality (i.e., early release from prison or involuntary dismissal from class for several inmates).

A pretest-posttest nonequivalent comparison group quasi-experimental design is generally recognized as appropriate when random selection and assigning of subjects is not possible (Leedy 1993) and for examining change that occurs in uncontrolled social settings such as field research (Campbell and Stanley 1963; Cook and Campbell 1979). Additional rationale for choosing this type of design are that it has been used in other evaluation research (Harm and Thompson 1997; Block 1998) and is recognized as

appropriate for providing feedback about program accomplishments to decision makers in concrete, measurable terms (F. Hagan 1997).

The *Parent-Child Relationship Inventory* (PCRI) (Gerard 1994) and the *Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory* (AAPI-2) (Bavolek and Keene 1999) were chosen to assess change that measured key concepts. (Further discussion of their selection appears later in this chapter.) Hypotheses formulated to test for treatment group change in knowledge about seven specific parenting areas were matched to correspond as closely as possible with selected subscales from these two widely recognized standardized parenting inventories. The PCRI consists of 7 parenting scales; the AAPI consists of 5 parenting scales. Both inventories were administered to treatment group participants on the first day of the course (time one) and on the last day of the course (time two). Using the same parenting inventories, a comparison group was tested at time one and again at time two (after a time period equivalent to the 12 week parenting course had elapsed.) Change between time one and time two scale scores of the treatment group was assessed through paired samples *t*-tests. Likewise, change between time one and time two scale scores of the comparison group was assessed through paired samples *t*-tests.

It was assumed that hypotheses supported in the treatment group and not supported in the comparison group were suggestive of change resulting from the parent education course if there were no significant differences between the treatment and comparison groups at time one (Cook and Campbell 1979). Thus, statistically significant change in test scores of the treatment group and no statistically significant change in test scores of the comparison group was considered an indication of the likelihood that

change in the treatment group had occurred as a result of parent education classes rather than by chance or other intervening variables assumed to be common to both the treatment and control group. Therefore, the program would be evaluated as successfully generating short term changes.

A second question concerning how the parenting knowledge of incarcerated mothers compares to that of unincarcerated mothers was also explored. Research participants' scores on each of the parenting scales at time one will be compared to the scores of the general population norm group. Thus, areas of parenting deficiency particular to mothers who are incarcerated may be identified.

A Class Member Information Questionnaire was designed for this study to gather demographic and other information about the parenting program participants. Also included in the questionnaire were two scales adapted from scales used to study fathers' concern (Fox, Bruce, and Combs-Orme 2000) and role salience (Fox and Bruce 2001). These scales were used to aid in describing incarcerated mothers and to assess the utility of these adapted scales for future research about incarcerated mothers. To supplement and enrich information provided by the questionnaire and quantitative testing and to provide verbal accounts of program effectiveness, individual, semi structured interviews were also conducted.

THE SAMPLE

A research sample of 161 volunteers was drawn from all incarcerated mothers at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women after the research project had been approved by the Kentucky Department of Corrections and the University of Tennessee

Institutional Review Board, and after appropriate KCIW staff had agreed to cooperate by allowing access to inmate mothers. The researcher could obtain access to subjects in settings (e.g., classes) and at times convenient to institutional staff (e.g., deputy wardens for programs and security; and program directors and instructors).

Sampling Procedures

A convenience sampling technique was chosen. Treatment group participants ($n = 119$) were solicited during the first week of each of the eight, twelve week parenting course sessions (two groups per quarter of 15 to 25 students) that began during the approved research time frame. Toward the end of the research period, a group of volunteers for a comparison group was recruited from KCIW inmate mothers who had never participated in KCIW parenting classes and who thought they would still be in prison in three months for time two testing.

The size of the comparison group ($n = 42$) was limited by the criterion “never enrolled in KCIW parenting classes.” Parenting classes are popular and most of the inmates made available to me had, at some time, begun parenting classes. Inmate work and educational activities further prohibited some inmate mothers from volunteering to participate and to be available for time two testing.

In an attempt to match the demographic and criminal history characteristics of treatment group participants and comparison group participants, volunteers for the comparison group were sought from a variety of settings. GED, vocational training, and new prisoner orientation instructors as well as living unit and work supervisors were asked to introduce the researcher and announce the project to their respective groups of

women. Interested inmates reported at a specified time to a designated room for a thorough explanation of the research after which they could choose to be involved in the study or not.

Attrition of the treatment group participants was anticipated as the Deputy Warden for Programs had predicted that about three-fourths of those enrolled in the parenting classes would complete the course. Due to transfers of inmates to other facilities, early release, and other administrative reasons, only 54% ($n = 64$) remained in the class to complete time two testing. Comparison group attrition was anticipated due to unexpected early releases and inmate and institutional staff work and program priorities; 62% ($n = 26$) of the women who volunteered and completed the *Class Member Information Questionnaire* and time one testing were available for time two testing.

Potential interview candidates from the treatment group were solicited from each parenting class by asking those who would like to or were willing to talk further about what they had gained from parenting classes to sign a list from which interviews would be scheduled when parenting classes had been completed. A sub sample of 35 inmates whose program schedules and supervisors permitted were scheduled for a 30 to 90 minute private, in depth, semi structured interview about their perceptions of what they had gained from the parenting program.

DATA ANALYSIS

The personal computer version of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 10.1) was used to analyze the research data. A five-stage data analysis approach was utilized to describe the sample, to assess between group equivalency, to test hypotheses,

to compare test results of the sample to general population norm scores, and for exploratory and preliminary testing of new scale reliability and between scale correlation.

First, univariate analyses were performed to describe the sample ($n = 161$) and establish overall values on standardized measures.

Second, bivariate analyses (i.e., chi squares and independent samples t-tests) were performed to determine if there were significant demographic and background differences that required statistical control between the treatment group (i.e., those who had completed both time one and time two testing) ($n = 64$) and comparison group (i.e., those who had completed both time one and time two testing) ($n = 26$). Independent samples t-tests were also done to compare the time one test scores of the treatment group to the time one scores of the comparison group.

Third, matched paired t-tests were performed on the treatment group to test the seven research hypotheses. Each of the seven areas of hypothesized change corresponded with at least one of the parenting behavior and attitude measurement scales of the AAPI-2 or the PCRI. Directional change was assessed by examining time one and time two means. To add strength to any assertions of change in knowledge attributable to the parenting course drawn from hypothesis testing, the same statistical analyses were conducted on time one and time two parenting scale scores of a comparison group of individuals who had never been involved in KCIW parenting classes.

Fourth, to explore questions about parenting difficulties specific to incarcerated mothers, time one test scores of the entire sample ($n = 161$) were compared to the normative data supplied for interpreting the two standardized parenting inventories used

in this study. Conversion charts and interpretation protocol supplied with the testing instruments converted inmates' raw scores to standardized scores when they were recorded onto a parenting profile. Frequency distribution tables of the sample's standardized test scores were then compared to those of the general population norm group for each of the testing instruments. Based on testing instrument scoring and interpretation protocol, inmates scoring one standard deviation below the mean score of the norm group are considered to be deficient in that particular area of parenting knowledge. Conversely, inmates who have a mean score equivalent to or greater than the mean score of the norm group are considered competent in the parenting area being assessed. A comparison of inmates' score distributions to norm group score distribution charts (mean score and levels of deviation above and below the mean) identified percentages of inmates who scored in the problematic range.

Fifth, the Cronbach's alpha test was employed for an exploratory and preliminary scale analysis of the Role Salience and Concern Scales. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient tests were done as an exploratory assessment for identifying relationships between any or all the scales used in this study (AAPI, PCRI, Role Salience, and Concern). Both these procedures were done primarily as precursors to future research about incarcerated mothers.

MEASURES

Bavolek and Keene's (1999) *Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory* (AAPI-2) and Gerard's (1994) *Parent-Child Relationship Inventory* (PCRI) are reliable and validated inventories used to assess parenting skills and attitudes (Bavolek and Keene 1999; Gerard

1994). The AAPI-2 was designed to assess parenting skills and attitudes about 5 specific child rearing and parenting behaviors; the PCRI was designed to assess 7 skills and attitudes conducive to developing strong parent child relationships. As the goals of the KCIW parenting program involve both learning skills and building relationships, neither instrument alone seemed adequate.

A strong consideration for choosing the AAPI was that it has been used in pretest-posttest designs to measure the effectiveness of parent education programs in other women's prisons (Browne 1989; Harm and Thompson 1997; Moore and Clement 1998). Test administration time is estimated at 20 minutes and requires at least a fifth grade reading level. The PCRI was selected to get a "quantified description of the parent-child relationship" (Gerard 1994:1). Strengthening and continuing the parent child relationship between inmate mothers and their children was strongly emphasized in the KCIW parenting program philosophy and overall objectives. Estimated test completion time is approximately 15 minutes; it is written on a fourth grade reading level.

Nine of the twelve scales that comprised the two parenting inventories were chosen to evaluate the KCIW parenting program. Descriptions of the parenting inventories' individual scales provided with testing materials were closely reviewed to match specific program objectives as closely as possible. As neither the AAPI-2 nor the PCRI was designed to be used specifically with incarcerated populations, two of the scales were not used. The Limit Setting Scale and the Oppressing Child's Power and Independence Scale assumed sustained physical presence (e.g., daily parenting) for assessing ability and satisfaction with ability in these areas.

The Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2)

The AAPI-2 measures five types of dysfunctional parent-child skills and attitudes. It is a 40 item, self report questionnaire in a 5-point Likert-type format. Individuals are asked to circle SA for strongly agree; A for agree; U for Uncertain; D for disagree; and SD for strongly disagree according to what they feel most accurately describes their parenting attitudes. There are two forms of the AAPI-2, Form A and Form B. As test protocol suggested, Form A was used for time one testing and Form B was used for time two testing. Examples of items include: “Babies need to learn how to be considerate of the needs of their mother”; “Children have a responsibility to please their parents”; “Children should be their parent’s best friend”; “If you love your children you will spank them when they misbehave”; and “Children cry just to get attention.”

For scoring, item responses are assigned a numerical value of 1 to 5 by placing a transparent plastic scoring stencil over the test form. The scoring stencil assigns appropriate values to items that require reverse scoring. The numerical values are sorted into 5 subscales by recording numerical responses in respective columns on an AAPI-2 Profile Worksheet. Subscale raw scores are obtained by adding the numerals in the columns. Raw scores for each scale are converted into standard scores (STEN scores) using norm tables for adult females provided in the AAPI-2 Handbook. High scores reflect effective parenting skills and attitudes; low scores reflect dysfunctional parenting practices and attitudes.

The *Inappropriate Expectations Scale* (7 items) examines a parent’s understanding of child growth and development and whether or not their expectations

exceed the developmental capabilities of children. Parents with low scores tend not to be emotionally supportive of their children and are demanding and controlling.

The *Parental Empathy Scale* (10 items) assesses how much a parent understands and values children's needs. The scale is built on the premise that the foundation to effective, nurturing parenting is the ability of the caregiver to demonstrate empathy toward the needs of children by being sensitive and responsive to the needs of children. By demonstrating empathy parents teach their children to be sensitive to the needs and rights of others. Those with low scores often have children to care about and someone to care about them. They are not attuned to their children's problems and needs. When they realize the demands of parenting, the worth of having children is drastically lessened (Bavolek and Keene 1999).

The *Corporal Punishment Scale* (11 items) assesses attitudes toward various methods of discipline. High scores indicate the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment and a general dislike for spanking children. Those with low scores express a strong, often exclusive preference for spanking and fear as the best way to teach children respect and "right from wrong."

The *Parent-Child Role Reversal Scale* (7 items) offers insight about the attitude of the parent toward wanting and expecting the child to be the parent. Those with low scores expect children to make life better for them by being a confidante and providing assurance and comfort. Low scores may indicate that children are perceived as objects for self-gratification or as available resources for nurturing (e.g., their parent or siblings), managing household tasks, or providing economically.

The *Oppressing Child's Power & Independence Scale* (5 items) assesses attitudes toward empowering children. Empowered children are given choices, have input in planning family activities, are encouraged to problem solve, and are allowed to express their opinions and feelings. Obedience is replaced with cooperation. Low scores generally mean parents place strong emphasis on having obedient children who do not challenge parental authority and do not express opinions except when asked. They do not encourage the development of children's problem solving skills which prepares them to make good choices.

The Parent Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI)

The seven PCRI scales identify potential problems in areas considered important for effective parenting and a healthy parent child relationship. The PCRI is a 78-item self administered questionnaire in a 4-point, Likert-type format. Response options to the 72 items are *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*; they are arranged in labeled columns. Examples of items include: "I sometimes feel overburdened by my responsibilities as a parent"; "When it comes to raising my child, I feel alone most of the time"; "Parents should protect their children from things that might make them unhappy"; "Parents should give their children all those things the parents never had"; "Children should be given most of the things they want"; and "I feel I don't know how to talk with my child in a way that he or she really understands."

The respondent is asked to circle the number on the *AutoScore Answer Form* that best corresponds to their level of agreement with test items. The *AutoScore* form produces a carbon copy of each response on a scoring sheet that automatically assigns the

appropriate response value for items requiring reverse scoring. Scores are transferred to specific scale columns that are totaled to yield 7 scale scores. Scores are then plotted on the PCRI Profile form (for females or males) for comparing scale scores with the normalized *T*-scores (i.e., standardized scores) of the normative sample. High scores on the PCRI scale indicate positive parenting characteristics and good parenting skills, and low scores indicate poor parenting skills and parent-child relationship difficulty.

The Satisfaction With Parenting Scale (10 items) measures the level of pleasure, enjoyment, and satisfaction derived from parenting. Low scores may imply dissatisfaction with a current parenting arrangement or situation or dissatisfaction with “being” a parent.

The Parental Support Scale (9 items) measures the level to which individuals feel they are emotionally and financially supported. Items are constructed to assess the absence or presence of financial strain and the absence or presence of the attention of others who help them in some way with parenting duties. A low score on this scale identifies a parent who perceives her parenting responsibilities as burdensome.

The Involvement Scale (14 items) reflects parental interest in her children’s activities and the propensity to “seek out” children (or in the case of incarcerated women perhaps initiating contact through letters and phone calls). Low scores indicate a perception of less than average involvement in their child’s activities and daily lives.

The Communication scale (9 items) measures feelings about perceived adequacy of skills and opportunities to communicate with children in a variety of situations,

including simple conversation. Low scores may indicate lack of perceived ability, frustrated communication efforts, or lack of opportunity to communicate.

The Limit Setting scale (12 items) measures a parent's satisfaction with her ability to establish limits and the effectiveness of discipline techniques. It is based on the premise that discipline typically fails when it does not establish limits and that children feel most secure and have fewer behavior problems if they know their boundaries and can tell if they exceed acceptable bounds in the intensity of their play or communication (Baumrind 1971). Low scores indicate that a parent does not feel in control, is not satisfied with her ability to effectively discipline, and wishes she could set firmer limits.

The Autonomy scale (10 items) assesses parents' ability and willingness to promote their children's independence. Encouraging autonomy is assumed to have a positive valence because children may actually need negative experiences in order to mature. Experiences that promote maturity include "not being indulgently supplied" with material possessions beyond a family's resources (Baumrind 1971; Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts 1989).

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The 33 item *Class Member Information Questionnaire* was designed to describe this group of incarcerated mothers' demographic and background characteristics, criminal history, plans for parenting after prison, and basic information about their children. A *concern scale* to describe inmate mothers' level of concern about her children, and a *role salience* scale to describe inmate mothers' commitment to a parental

self-identity were also included in the questionnaire. Choices of areas of information to include in the questionnaire were based on the literature about incarcerated mothers.

Demographic and Background Information

Closed ended questions offering mutually exclusive answer choices for respondents to circle were used to gather demographic (race/ethnicity, current marital status, number of years in school, GED completion), background information (self-reported problems with alcohol or drugs before prison, ratings of themselves as parents, ratings of their mother as a parent, and who in their childhood taught them the most about “right and wrong”), and criminal history (type of offense for current incarceration, previous incarceration, probation or parole status at the time of this offense, and parental incarceration). Respondents were asked to provide numerical responses indicating their year of birth and the amount of time served on their current conviction, longest possible amount of time left to serve on current sentence, and the number of times they had been in prison.

Plans for Parenting After Prison

Plans for parenting after prison were addressed by asking respondents to respond “yes” or “no” to a closed ended question, “Do you plan to live with your children after you are released from prison?” This item was followed by an open ended question that read “If you do not plan to live with your children after you are released, what are your reasons?” and offered respondents several lines on which to write their reasons.

Respondents were also asked to answer “yes” or “no” to the question, “If you plan to live with your children after you are released, are you anxious or worried about anything

related to being with your children?" Respondents were asked to give information about help expected after prison by circling all the responses offered under two additional questions about who would help them with their children after prison (i.e., "children's father," "your mother," "friend," and "other relative") and how they would help (i.e., "money," "a place to live," "watch the children," "teach children right and wrong," and "other").

Children

Information about inmates' children was gathered through two items organized as matrices. Respondents were asked to write the age of each of their children in the left hand column of each matrix and then circle one of the mutually exclusive, exhaustive answers about that child (current caregiver and caregiver before mother's incarceration) on the first matrix and child's school behavior and grades, whether the child had ever been "in trouble with police," on juvenile probation, or incarcerated on the second matrix. The respondents were also asked to write the number of their children both younger and older than 18 that were now or had ever been incarcerated. The amount of inmate contact with their children during the past six months was gathered through questions that asked how many times in the past six months their children had visited them or sent letters or packages and how many times in the past six months inmates had called or written their children. Response categories offered were "0," "1-2," "3-4," "5-6," "7-10," and "more than 10."

Parental Concern and Role Salience Scales

As an additional measure, a *Parenting Concern Scale* was constructed using a listing of 9 in prison concerns selected from the literature about concerns specific to incarcerated mothers (Fessler 1991) and 14 concerns adapted from Fox's (1996) *Dimensions of Fathering Survey* applicable to parents in general. Respondents were asked to circle the number that represented their degree of concern with 0 representing "no concern" and on a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" is "not much concern" and "10" is a "great deal of concern," "how much concern do you feel?" about each of the statements listed. A Role Salience Scale, also adapted from Fox's (1996) *Dimensions of Fathering Survey* asked respondents their feelings about "being a mother." A listing of 9 statements offered opportunity for a range of responses with "1" being "not at all true" to "5" indicating "very true." Examples of scale items are "I like being known as a mother," "being a mother has changed me a lot," "I spend a lot of time thinking about my children," and "I want people to know that I have children."

Parenting Program Involvement

To complete the *Class Member Information Questionnaire*, those enrolled in parenting classes (treatment group participants) were asked, "Why are you taking this parenting class?" Respondents were instructed to circle all the applicable answers listed (e.g., court ordered, extra visiting privileges, friends in the class, something to do) and were also provided space to write additional responses. An additional open ended question provided space for answering the question "How do you think this parenting class will help you?"

INTERVIEWS

A conversational format with as little referral to printed notes and questions as possible was adopted in an attempt to provide a comfortable, safe, non confrontive, and confidential setting for the women to share their thoughts. An initial goal was the establishment of a level of rapport based on common interests (e.g., our children and parenting). The “ice breaking” question was simply, “What would you like to tell me about your children?” After an unstructured conversation about their children and inmate’s perceptions of the effect of their incarceration on their children, the interview was directed toward gathering information to clarify and enrich quantitative findings about parenting program efficacy. Conversation was focused around the questions: (1) What motivated you to participate in the KCIW parenting program? (2) What are the most important things you think you have gained from the parenting program experience at KCIW? (3) How do you think participation in this program will help you parent your children when you are released? (4) How do you think this program is helping you while you are in prison? (5) After taking this class and/or being with your children for a special visitation day, do you feel more confident in your parenting ability than you did before the classes? How?

PROCEDURES

The researcher described and explained the project to participants by reading a study information sheet. Explanations of the project and planned procedures were basically the same for both groups except that comparison group participants were told

they would be retested in approximately three months (rather than after completing classes) and no interviews or observation were planned for the comparison group.

Participants were informed that participating in the parenting program evaluation involved completing a “background information” questionnaire, pre and post testing, and possibly interviews and parenting program observations for the treatment group. The voluntary and confidential nature of the information gathering and reporting process was stressed and participants were told that they would not be compensated in any way (i.e., money, credit toward good time, or influence with parole boards). Participants were informed that appropriate procedures would be used to protect their privacy and that information given in the questionnaire or through testing (e.g., specific individuals’ parenting knowledge, perceptions or practices) was confidential and that findings were to be reported as information about the entire group of research participants. After the study was explained and all participant questions answered, volunteers were asked to sign consent forms approved by the Kentucky Department of Corrections and the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board.

To ensure that the identity of all inmates was protected, research participant numbers were assigned. The numbers 001 through 199 were reserved for the treatment group; comparison group numbers were 200 and above. Research participant numbers were assigned and written on each consent form, questionnaire, and testing instrument. Pre tests were labeled with the letter “A” and posttests were labeled “B”.

After explaining the project, answering questions, and securing signed consent forms, data gathering began with respondents individually completing the self-

administered questionnaire. Assessment instrument testing began after all had completed the questionnaires. Instructions provided with each self administered assessment instrument were read to the class (e.g., there is no right or wrong answer, please answer truthfully, please complete all questions marking the best “one” response offered). Additional clarification was offered by acknowledging that these instruments were not written for incarcerated mothers and so, some of the items may not seem to apply. They were instructed to base their responses on how they were feeling or what they thought “right now” while they were incarcerated. They were also instructed that in order to provide more consistent answers when test items called for a response about a specific child, they should focus on one of their children for all these questions. It was specifically suggested that they focus on their “most difficult child.” Following the same testing procedures on the next to the last day of the twelve week course for the treatment group and after a twelve week time lapse for the comparison group, post-tests were administered to available participants. Interviews took place in a private office in the Education Center. Interview participants identified themselves on the audio tapes by participant number.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has explained the quantitative methodology used in this study to evaluate the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Parenting Program in order to explore the questions: “Can a prison parenting program change how people see parenting and thus, potentially their parenting practices”? and “How do incarcerated mothers’ parenting skills and attitudes compare to those of unincarcerated mothers”? Information

about the classroom component of the KCIW Parenting Program, hypotheses derived from specific parenting program objectives, and definitions of concepts related to effective parenting examined in this research were presented. The study design, sampling techniques, and data analysis plan were also presented. Explanation of how standardized testing instruments were used to assess classroom learning, descriptions of the participant information questionnaire and interview content, as well as research procedures completed this chapter.

Chapter 5

Findings

This chapter includes a description of the women in the sample, their children, plans for parenting after prison, parental concern, role salience, and reasons for taking the KCIW parenting class. Results of statistical comparison for equivalency in composition of the treatment group and comparison group who completed both time one and time two testing and comparison of the pre test scores between these groups is also presented. The results of hypothesis testing, parenting deficiencies and competencies revealed through the parenting scales, and selected other findings are also presented. The chapter concludes with the presentation of interview data from inmate mothers that support and clarify the quantitative findings of this research and illustrate the application of classroom learning.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

The incarcerated mothers who volunteered to participate in the parenting course evaluation ($n = 161$) are from 18 to 53 years of age (mean age = 32). As summarized in Table 1, a little more than half (58%) identified themselves as “white” and 42% as members of a minority group (36% “black” and 6% “other”). Most (80%) are single (i.e., separated, divorced, or widows). The number of years of school completed ranged from 6 to 14 (mean = 10.62) with 36% completing at least 12 years of school. Of the entire sample, 19% indicated that they had completed two years of college or vocational education beyond high school. About a third of the 64% who had not completed traditional high school, had completed the GED (15% before prison and 15% while in prison).

Table 1. Frequencies of Selected Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	n	Percentage of Sample
Race		
Caucasian	93	58
Minority	68	42
Marital Status		
Single	129	80
Married	32	20
Education (highest grade completed)		
6 th - 8 th grade	27	17
9 th - 11 th grade	76	47
high school completion	27	17
2 years beyond high school	31	19
Type of Offense		
drug related crime	77	48
property crime	27	17
violent crime	23	14
prostitution or sex crime	3	2
other	31	19
Alcohol or Drug Problems Before Prison	128	80
Previous Incarceration(s)		
self	40	25
family of origin	37	23
Plan to live with children after prison	140	87
Worried about post-release parenting	68	42
Expectations of help with parenting after prison	156	97
Parent Self-Ratings		
excellent	8	5
good	57	35
needs improvement	72	45
average	18	11
failure	6	4
Inmate Ratings of their mothers		
excellent	43	27
good	53	33
average	19	12
needed improvement	32	20
failure	7	4
absent	7	4

(N=161)

Questionnaire items related to childhood socialization and family life revealed that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of these inmates reported that a parent (61% mother, 15% father) taught them “the most about doing what is right.” Grandmothers (16%), other relatives (4%), a sister or brother (1%), teachers (1%), or someone else (2%) were also credited with teaching them the most about “doing what is right.” Almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of these incarcerated mothers indicated that at least one of their parents had served time in prison (14% fathers, 6% mothers, and 3% both). Respondents were asked “what kind of parent was your mother when you were growing up?” Most said their mothers were excellent (27%), good (33%), or average (11%). But, 19% said their mothers needed improvement, were a failure (4%), or were absent during their childhood years (4%). Inmate mothers were also asked to rate themselves as mothers. Only 4% described themselves as “a failure”; $\frac{1}{2}$ rated themselves average or above (5% excellent, 34% good, 11% average; and 45% responded that they needed improvement.

Most (80%) reported that alcohol or drugs had caused problems in their lives before prison. Criminal history information provided by these inmate mothers indicates that almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of the women (48%) were incarcerated for a drug related crime. The other $\frac{1}{2}$ indicated that property crimes (17%), violent crimes (14%), prostitution or sex crimes (2%), or crimes identified as “other” (19%) were the type of offense for which they were presently serving time. About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the mothers (48%) were on probation, parole, or pretrial release at the time of their offense. Most of the women in this study (91%) had served three years or less on their current sentence. About 54% responded that the longest possible amount of time remaining to be served was 3 years or less. Most (75%)

said that this prison incarceration was their first. But, 26 inmates (16%) said this was their second incarceration; 8 (5%) said it was their third; 3 (2%) their fourth; 2 (1%) their fifth; and 1 inmate indicated she had been incarcerated 6 times including her current incarceration.

Children

The women in this study are mothers to a total of 417 children—an average of 2.6 per mother. Most (76%) have 1 to 3 children. But, 32 women (20%) have 4 or 5 children each; 3 women (2%) have 6 children; and 3 (2%) seven children. Before prison, 70% of the children lived with their mother; their children currently live in a variety of settings. Slightly more than a fourth (28%) live with their maternal grandmother; a little over a fourth (28%) live with their father; 25% live with other kin; 8% are in foster care; 11% are living with a friend or “other.”

Mothers reported on their children’s school achievement and behavior. Almost half the children (47%) were identified as having good grades in school; 25% of the children were reported as making average grades; 4% bad grades. The grades of 16% of the children were unknown to the mother and 8% of the children were below school age. Good behavior in school was reported for 52% of the children, 27% were said to be average, and 6% were identified by their mothers as having bad school behavior. School behavior of the remaining children was either unknown to the mothers or the children were below school age.

Only 15% of the children were reported as having “ever been in trouble with the police” and 9% as ever being placed on juvenile probation. Almost three fourths (74%)

of the mothers reported that none of their children had ever been in jail; 18% of the mothers said one of their children had been in jail; 5% said 2 of their children had been in jail; 3 mothers (2%) said 3 of their children had been in jail; and one mother reported that 5 of her children had been in jail at some time.

Most (62%) of the inmates that provided information about the amount of contact they had had with their children over a six month period ($n = 107$) reported no visits from their children in the past six months and 15% more indicated only 1 or 2 visits over the same period. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ (71%) reported receiving at least one letter, card, or package from their child and 75% reported at least one telephone conversations with their children in six months. About $\frac{1}{2}$ (48%) of the inmate mothers reported making collect telephone contact to their children more than 10 times within the previous six months and 91% reported that they had mailed either a letter, card, or package to their children within the past 6 months.

Plans for Parenting After Prison

Almost all (87%) of these inmate mothers plan to live with their children after prison. Most of the few that do not, indicated they would be going to a halfway house immediately upon release. Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ (42%) of those who plan to live with their children after prison indicated that they were worried about post release parenting. Most of the “write in” fears were about how children would feel about their mother because she had been incarcerated. Predominant worries were “if they are mad at me for being gone so long,” and “if they still love me.” Only a few wrote specific survival issues (e.g., money, a job, housing, or transportation).

Most expect help with children after release. Only 3% reported they expected no help when released; 36% reported expecting help from the children's father, 48% from their mothers, 13% a friend, or 33% a relative. Almost a third (29%) are expecting help from more than one source. More than half (62%) say they will be given a place to live (at least initially); 55% expect help with child care; 47% expect help with teaching children right and wrong; and 16% report they will be "helped in other ways."

Parental Concern

The concern scale provided additional descriptive data. Table 2 offers a summary of the percentage of women who indicate any level of concern (from "not much" to "a great deal" on a scale of 1 to 10) on the 23 fears selected from the literature as pertinent to incarcerated mothers. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ (76%) of these inmate mothers worried that their children might "end up in prison" at some time in the future. Also noteworthy is the prevalence of concerns about providing for their children. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ (78%) expressed concern about their ability to support their children and themselves while in prison. Economic concerns were also among the most frequently expressed concerns about life after prison. About 65% expressed fear about "being able to provide for my children." Almost half (46%) were worried that their child would get enough to eat; 51% worried that their children would have a place to live; and 47% were concerned about paying for their child's medicine.

Level of concern about various situations was assessed by examining respondents' mean scores on each item. Mean scores above the midpoint on all the positive valence items suggest that these inmate mothers' level of concern is substantial.

Table 2. Percentages Of Inmate Mothers With Concern And Average Level Of Concern

Please tell me about some of the things that may be worrying you while you're in prison. . .	Percentage With Concern (n=107)	Level of Concern * (Mean, [SD])
. . . that I might lose any of my children.	60	7.75 (3.26)
. . . if my kids will forget who I am.	63	6.72 (3.56)
. . . how I can afford to support my kids as well as myself.	78	6.82 (3.17)
. . . if my kids have lost respect for me.	73	6.91 (3.50)
. . . if the person taking care of my kids is treating them OK	57	7.13 (3.60)
. . . if my kids still love me.	60	7.23 (3.30)
. . . if I will live to see my kids grow up.	60	6.05 (3.52)
. . . if any of my children might end up in prison someday	76	6.67 (3.38)
. . . that my kids might be taken away from me forever	54	6.38 (3.82)
Please tell me about some of your concerns when you leave prison. . .	Percentage With Concern (n=107)	Level of Concern * (Mean, [SD])
. . . that I will have enough food to feed my kids.	46	5.43 (3.79)
. . . that my kids and I will always have a place to live.	51	6.04 (3.84)
. . . that I will be able to keep my kids safe when I'm out.	58	6.42 (4.00)
. . . that I can find someone to take care of my kids when I need it	46	4.96 (3.69)
. . . that I will be able to provide for my children	65	6.48 (3.51)
. . . that my kids will tie me down too much.	29	2.58 (2.87)
. . . that I will be a good mother.	68	6.88 (3.34)
. . . that I won't be able to control my child	54	5.26 (3.28)
. . . that I could be so tired that I could physically hurt my child	26	1.82 (1.87)
. . . that I will know how to take care of my child.	28	3.63 (3.25)
. . . that my child would be so bad that I could physically hurt him or her	12	2.42 (2.62)
. . . that I will be able to pay for medicine when my child is sick	47	5.28 (3.37)
. . . that my child's father would physically hurt him/her	24	2.77 (2.67)
. . . that I might not give my child needed attention	65	5.90 (3.16)

*Response range = 1 to 10 (only those who expressed concern on the item).

In some areas (e.g., “that I might lose my children” (7.75), “if my kids still love me” (7.23), and if their children are being treated well by their current caregivers (7.13), they report a high level of concern. Consistent with high concern levels on positive valence items, low concern is indicated on negative valence items (e.g., “That I could be so tired that I could physically hurt my child sometime” (1.82) and “that my children will tie me down too much” (2.58).

Role Salience

The role salience scale provided descriptive data about “how they felt about being a mother.” Table 3 provides a summary of group responses and a role salience score on each item. The overwhelming majority of the mothers in this study strongly identify with the mother role. Almost all responded that they “like being known as a mother” (97%) and that they want people to know they have children (95%). They spend “a lot of time thinking about the well being of” their children (91%) and say that they ask if their children need anything before asking for money for themselves (88%). Few responded that they wish they had never had children (7%), that it annoyed them when people they don’t know ask if they have children (7%), or if given a choice they would rather “go out” in the evening than be with their children (16%). To assess level of role salience, negative items were reverse scored.

Parenting Program Involvement

Reasons for taking the parenting course varied. Response choices offered for this item were “court-ordered,” “extra visiting privileges,” “my friends are in the class,” and “it’s something to do.” Subjects were instructed to circle all that applied and to write

Table 3. Feelings About Being A Mother And Strength Of Role Salience (N=109).

Please tell me whether the following statements are not at all true, not very true, neither true or untrue, somewhat true, or very true by circling "1" to "5" with "1" being not all true and "5" being very true.		
	Somewhat or Very True	Role Salience (Mean, [SD])
I like being known as a mother.	97%	4.85 (.386)
Being a mother has changed me a lot.	73%	4.28 (1.02)
I spend a lot of time thinking about the well being of my kids.	91%	4.62 (.755)
Before I ask for money for myself, I ask if my kids need something more than I do.	88%	4.57 (.766)
I want people to know that I have children.	95%	4.85 (.312)
Negative Valence Items	Not Very or Not at all true	Role Salience * (Reverse Scored) (Mean, [SD])
In general, I prefer the company of adults to spending time with kids.	64%	3.86 (1.24)*
If I could choose one or the other, I would rather go out than watch my kids for the evening.	84%	4.37 (1.08)*
I sometimes wish I had never had any children.	93%	4.78 (.71)*
It annoys me when people I don't know ask me if I have children.	93%	4.74 (.77)*

*Reverse Scored for assessing positive valence

any other reasons on the line provided. Nearly three-fourths (71%) of the women simply wrote in “to be a better parent” rather than circling any of the offered responses. Only five inmates indicated they took the classes to get extra visits with their children, four had been ordered by the court to take parenting classes in prison, and two indicated that taking the classes gave them something to do. Responses to the open ended question that asked, “How do you think this parenting class will help you?” included, “Give me a different outlook on things,” “To get more confidence about being their mom,” “To talk to my children better and to be a better mother,” “Hopefully to not get so frustrated with little things and learn to talk to my children,” and “By showing me how to care and listen to my son without abuse or lack of love.”

TREATMENT AND COMPARISON GROUP EQUIVALENCY

The researcher recognizes the threats to validity associated with the research design (non random sampling and lack of control over the research setting). Statistical analysis of characteristics that could be controlled was done. Thus, before testing the hypotheses, bivariate analyses (chi squares and independent t-tests) were performed to determine whether there were statistically significant demographic and background difference between treatment group and comparison group participants who had completed both time one and time two testing.

Table 4 provides a summary of treatment group and comparison group inmates who completed both time one and time two testing and the results of comparison for difference tests between the groups. As indicated in the table, Pearson Chi-square tests for differences between the treatment group and the comparison group on categorical

Table 4. Comparison of Characteristics of Treatment and Comparison Group Participants Who Completed Study.

Characteristic	Treatment Group (n=64) Percent	Comparison Group (n=26) Percent	Test statistic	p<.05
Race			$\chi^2 = 2.77$	NS*
Minority	44	45		
Caucasian	56	55		
Marital Status			$\chi^2 = .293$	NS
Single	81	81		
Married	19	19		
Type of Offense			$\chi^2 = 8.76$	NS
drug related crime	50	50		
property crime	16	15		
violent crime	13	13		
other	18	18		
Alcohol or Drug Problems Before Prison	78	81	$\chi^2 = .433$	NS
Previous Incarceration(s)			$\chi^2 = 6.68$	NS
self	22	31		
family of origin	70	92		
Plan to live with children after prison	89	77	$\chi^2 = 2.20$	NS
Parent Self-Ratings			$\chi^2 = 1.79$	NS
excellent	6	5		
good	32	32		
needs improvement	46	45		
average	14	15		
failure	2	2		
Inmate Ratings of their mothers			$\chi^2 = 10.8$	NS
excellent	30	23		
good	36	19		
average	17	8		
needed improvement	14	38		
failure	2	8		
absent	2	4		
Age	(TG: $M = 32.61$ $SD = 7.19$)	(CG: $M = 33.69$ $SD = 6.18$)	$t(53.69) = -.673$	NS
Years in School	(TG: $M = 11.05$ $SD = 2.02$)	(CG: $M = 2.10$ $SD = 2.11$)	$t(44.68) = .179$	NS
Mo. served	(TG: $M = 14.92$ $SD = 20.32$)	(CG: $M = 20.54$ $SD = 26.61$)	$t(37.44) = -.108$	NS
Mo. Remaining	(TG: $M = 55.87$ $SD = 51.60$)	(CG: $M = 61.08$ $SD = 88.78$)	$t(32.32) = -.345$	NS

*NS Indicates No Significant Difference in Groups

variables revealed no statistically significant ($p < .05$) group composition differences in race, marital status, type of offense, alcohol or drug problems before prison, plans to live with children after prison, or parent ratings. Likewise, independent samples t-tests (Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, equal variances not assumed) on the continuous demographic and criminal history variables for differences between the groups, revealed no statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference in age, years of school, number of children, months served, months left to serve.

Independent samples t-tests also were done to reveal any significant differences between treatment group and comparison group test scores at time one. Lavene's Test for Equality of Variances, equal variances not assumed, indicated no statistically significant differences between the beginning scores of the two groups. T-test results on each of the scales were: Parental Support, $t(46.51) = 1.29, p > .05$; Satisfaction With Parenting, $t(49.42) = .87, p > .05$; Involvement, $t(42.16) = 1.03, p > .05$; Communication, $t(48.10) = .72, p > .05$; Limit Setting, $t(48.6) = 1.14, p > .05$; Autonomy, $t(48.55) = .23, p > .05$; Lack of Empathy, $t(53.19) = -.69, p > .05$; Corporal Punishment, $t(50.05) = -.12, p > .05$; Inappropriate Expectations, $t(64.21) = -1.38, p > .05$. As these tests indicated no significant difference ($p < .05$) in the composition of these groups, statistical controls were not necessary.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypotheses about change in seven parenting areas were statistically examined to see if parenting attitudes can change as a result of a parenting program. Matched paired t-tests were performed separately on the treatment group and the control group to test the

research hypotheses that there is treatment group positive direction change in test scores from time one to time in seven parenting domains. It was assumed that difference between time one and time two test scores of the treatment group of women and no difference between time one and time two test scores in the comparison group who completed both time one and time two testing would likely indicate change in parenting program participants' knowledge and attitudes about parenting resulting from the KCIW parent education course.

Hypothesis I

It was hypothesized that: Participants in the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show an increase in knowledge of parent/child communication skills after completing parenting education at KCIW.

Using the paired sample *t*-test for difference in test scores from time one (pre instruction) to time two (post instruction) on the PCRI *Communication Scale*, the analysis indicates slight (time 1: $M = 27.80$; time 2: $M = 28.41$) but not statistically significant change ($t = -1.02, p > .05$). Likewise, matched paired *t*-tests of before and after instruction scores (time 1: $M = 44.44$; time 2: $M = 43.94$) on the PCRI *Involvement Scale* showed slight negative but not statistically significant change ($t = .730, p > .05$). Inmate mothers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their communication skills may not have changed because of the lack of face to face parent child interactional opportunities. Hypothesis I is not supported.

Hypothesis II

It was hypothesized that: Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show an increase in knowledge about child development after completing parent education training at KCIW.

Paired samples t-tests indicate no significant difference ($t = -.698, p > .05$) in mean scores on the AAPI *Inappropriate Expectations Scale* from pre to post instruction (time 1: $M = 4.44$; time 2: $M = 4.58$). Paired sample t-tests to discover difference between pre instruction mean scores and post instruction mean scores on the PCRI *Autonomy Scale* produced a t value of -3.46 which is significant at the .001 level. Directional comparison of the mean scores (time 1: $M = 21.67$; time 2: $M = 23.56$) suggests that after the parenting course, this group of inmate mothers was more capable of recognizing age appropriate experiences and encouraging their child's development by allowing age-appropriate experiences. Hypothesis II is supported.

Hypothesis III

It was hypothesized that: Participants in the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show an increase in knowledge about child discipline techniques after completing parent education training at KCIW.

The results of the paired samples t-test on before and after instruction mean scores on the AAPI-2 *Belief In Use Of Corporal Punishment Scale* produced a t-value of -3.48, which was found to be significant at the .001 level. An examination of mean scores (time 1: $M = 4.55$; time 2: $M = 5.23$) indicates increased knowledge and changed attitudes about how and when to discipline children and a reduced preference for

physical force as chosen method of teaching their children appropriate behavior changed for mothers who completed parenting classes. Hypothesis III is supported.

Hypothesis IV

It was hypothesized that: Participants in the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show change in attitudes consistent with dealing with crises in a mature manner through increased knowledge about healthy parent child relationships after completing parent education training at KCIW.

The parent child relationship targeted in this study was Parent Child Role Reversal. The paired sample t-test for difference in test scores from time one (pre instruction) to time two (post instruction) on the AAPI-2 *Parent-Child Role Reversal Scale*, produced a *t*-value of -3.48 which was statistically significant at the .000 level. An examination of the direction of mean score differences (time 1: *M* = 4.17; time 2: *M* = 5.00) indicates that after parenting class instruction this group of incarcerated mothers was more likely to accept an adult role by taking ownership for their own behavior and acting like responsible parents and conversely, less likely to expect their child to “parent” them or be responsible for them. Hypothesis IV is supported.

Hypothesis V

It was hypothesized that: Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show an increase in the amount of satisfaction and pleasure derived from parenting and therefore be more likely to feel confident in their parenting ability after completing parent education training at KCIW.

A paired samples *t*-test for difference in mean scores on the PCRI *Parental Satisfaction Scale* from pre to post instruction (time 1: $M = 34.50$; time 2: $M = 34.38$) revealed no significant difference in before and after test scores ($t = .265, p > .05$). As no significant difference was found, Hypothesis V is not supported.

Hypothesis VI

It was hypothesized that: Participants in The Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show an increase in feelings of emotional and social support after completing parent education training at KCIW.

A paired samples *t*-test for difference in mean scores on the PCRI *Parental Support Scale* from pre to post instruction (time 1: $M = 22.14$; time 2: $M = 22.17$) indicate that no significant difference exists ($t = -.056, p > .05$). Hypothesis VI is not supported.

Hypothesis VII

It was hypothesized that: Participants in the Parenting Program at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women would show a decrease in negative parenting attitudes by showing an increase in empathetic awareness of their children's needs after completing parent education training at KCIW.

The paired sample *t*-test for difference in test scores from time one (pre instruction) to time two (post instruction) on the AAPI-2 *Parental Empathy Scale*, produced a *t*-value of -2.21 which was statistically significant at the .03 level. A directional comparison of mean scores (time 1: $M = 4.72$; time 2: $M = 5.25$) indicates that after parenting class instruction, these incarcerated mothers are more likely to express

empathetic understanding of their children's feelings and place the needs of their children over their own. Hypothesis VII is supported.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses II, III, IV, and VII that predicted increase in the parenting knowledge and skills of individuals who completed the KCIW parent course were supported.

Hypothesis testing on comparison group time one and time two scores indicated no statistically significant change in any of the hypothesized change areas except the PCRI *Feeling Supported as a Parent Scale*. On this scale, a t value of -2.70 was found to be statistically significant at the .01 level. A directional comparison of mean scores (time 1: $M = 20.81$; time 2: $M = 23.19$) indicates that comparison group participants felt *more* supported as a parent when tested the second time than they did when initially tested. It may be that simply being offered an opportunity to be a part of a study about parenting resulted in their feeling more supported because the institution and the researcher considered investigation about inmate mothers important. Although significant change in feeling supported as a parent was indicated in the comparison group, it was not in the treatment group.

As hypotheses II, III, IV, and VII were supported in the treatment group and change in the same hypothesized parenting areas was not supported in the comparison group, it is likely that increases in parenting knowledge and attitudes resulted from the KCIW parenting course. The research question, "Is it possible to change how people see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices" is answered in the affirmative.

PARENTING DEFICIENCIES AND COMPETENCIES

To investigate how incarcerated mothers' parenting skills and attitudes compare to those of unincarcerated mothers, the parenting skills and attitudes of inmate mothers at KCIW were compared to those considered normative for the general population. To assess inmate mothers' strengths and weaknesses, time one scores of all the inmate mothers in this study ($n = 161$) were compared to general population norm scores for each of the parenting scales. Table 5 provides a summary of the scores and the percentage of these inmate mothers that fall in the deficient and the competent range.

The AAPI-2 provides an index of risk (high, medium, or low) for practicing maladaptive parenting behaviors in five parenting domains. For the purposes of this research only high risk parents are considered "deficient" in parenting skills. Conversely, medium and low risk parents are included in the "competent" group. The PCRI is designed to "reflect major features of parenting and the parent-child relationship" (Gerard 1994) and thus identify problems in seven areas of parenting or the parent child relationship. Test interpretation protocol suggests that scores more than one standard deviation below the mean of the normative sample indicate problematic parenting in the particular domain the scale reflects. For the purposes of this research, problematic parenting and relationship areas will be reported as in the "deficient range." All others are reported as in the "competent range."

Autonomy

Over 62% of the women tested fall in the deficient range in this area. Items on the autonomy scale are related to allowing a child age appropriate independence and to

Table 5. Inmate Mothers' Parenting Deficiencies And Competencies By Parenting Domain

Parenting Domain	% Scoring in Deficient Range (n = 161)	% Scoring in Competent Range (n = 161)
Autonomy *	62%	38%
Parent Child Role Reversal	41%	59%
Involvement	36%	64%
Communication	33%	67%
Lack of Empathetic Understanding	29%	71%
Opposition to Child's Personal Power (Controlling)	27%	73%
Strong Belief in Corporal Punishment	25%	75%
Perceived Parental Support	23%	77%
Inappropriate Expectations	21%	79%
Ability to Set Limits for Children	16%	84%
Satisfaction With Parenting	5%	95%

Note: Scores in the deficient range are $\leq 1SD$ below the mean.

Scores in the competent range are those ($\geq$ mean)

* May also indicate attitudes associated with material indulgence of children

providing material items to children, low scores may suggest that the parent may be over protective or indulgent toward their children. This scale may therefore be indicative of problems in both allowing autonomy and an over emphasis on the importance of owning material possessions.

Parent child role reversal

Results of this parenting assessment scale suggest that 41 % of these mothers have dysfunctional concepts of appropriate parent child roles. This group of inmate mothers may often adopt behavior associated with helpless, needy children who seek comfort and parental care from their own children. They tend to expect their children to parent them, use their children as confidants, and fail to take responsibility for their own behavior. These behaviors parallel those described in the criminology literature as infantilization.

Involvement with children

Incarcerated mothers physical presence in their children's everyday activities is obviously restricted by the circumstances of incarceration. Being involved in children's lives and having knowledge of children's activities is possible through prison visitation, telephone calls, and letters. Results of testing in this parenting area revealed that only 36% of this sample perceive personal inadequacy or deficient opportunity for involvement with their children.

Communication

Only about a third (33%) of these mothers fall one standard deviation below the mean score of the norm population. They may feel inadequate in their abilities to

communicate with their children. These scores may represent lack of opportunity more than lack of capability.

Parental Lack of an Empathic Awareness of Children's Needs

Deficiencies in this nurturing skill suggest that the parent feels their children's needs are in direct conflict with their own desires. The test scores of this sample suggest that 29% of the inmate mothers are in the high-risk group for practicing unempathetic parenting. They do not understand or have not considered their child's well being over their own. Children raised without empathetic parenting are at risk for not developing of a set of values conducive to knowing and following acceptable norms of behavior. Often, right and wrong, kindness, and cooperation are not recognized as important values by unempathetic parents.

Strong Belief in the Use and Value of Corporal Punishment

Results of the Belief in Corporal Punishment Scale suggests that 25% of these inmate mothers fall in the high risk range for the abusive use of corporal punishment; they lack knowledge of alternative discipline techniques or may be unwilling to use forms of discipline other than corporal punishment. The children of this ¼ of the inmate mothers sample are at risk for developing a pattern of aggressive behavior to manage their own frustrations or insecurities.

Parental support

Only 23% of these inmate mothers do not feel supported in their parenting efforts and concerns. Interpretation protocol suggests that this fourth of the sample probably feels overburdened and alone, that the amount and quality of contact (i.e., visits, phone

calls, letters) with family (especially children) is inadequate, and they may be concerned about the adequacy of the care their children are receiving in their absence.

Inappropriate Parental Expectations

Results of the comparison in the inappropriate parental expectations area suggest that only 21% of these inmate mothers perceive that they expect behavior and attitudes of their children that are beyond their child's emotional, social, or development capabilities.

Satisfaction with parenting

Only 5% of this sample scored less than one standard deviation below the mean on the parental satisfaction scale. It may be that these scores suggest that most of these women like being a mother, do not regret having children, and receive pleasure from "being" a parent rather than suggesting that they are satisfied with being a parent and in prison.

Summary of Parenting Deficiencies and Competencies

The most noteworthy results from this comparison of incarcerated mothers parenting skills and attitudes to those of the norm populations is that for most of the scales, only about ¼ of the incarcerated mothers score in the problematic or deficient range. More specifically, scales that assess inappropriate parental expectations, lack of empathy, strong belief in corporal punishment, oppressing children's power and independence (i.e., being controlling), and feeling supported as a parent suggest that approximately ¾ of these women fall within the average or above range of parenting behavior and attitudes of the general population norm group.

On two of the scales, involvement and communication, about a third fell within the deficient range. On the autonomy scale which previously has been identified as possibly indicating attitudes associated with being materialistic as well as over protective, well over half (62%) scored in the problematic range. The low percentage (5%) of inmates falling in the problematic range on parental satisfaction may suggest that most (95%) are pleased that they are mothers and derive pleasure from the mother status and role.

OTHER FINDINGS

As the purpose of this research was to assess the short term impact of the KCIW Parenting Program on incarcerated mothers, few other statistical analyses were performed. A very limited scale analysis on the Role Salience and Concern Scales and a cursory assessment of correlation between scales add understanding to a study of incarcerated mothers and stimulate ideas about future research.

Concern Scale and Role Salience Scale Reliability

To assess the reliability of the scales constructed specifically for this research, the Cronbach's alpha test was performed on the Concern Scale items and the Role Salience Scale items. The Cronbach's alpha test for reliability on the Concern Scale revealed an alpha level of .912 suggesting high internal-consistency reliability for this measure across all items. On the role salience scale, ninety or more percent of the respondents reported that 3 items were true of them and 2 of the 4 items were not. Such limited variation in responses raises questions about the utility of this measure. A Chronbach's alpha of .346

suggests that these items do not form a good scale. Further analysis and modification of the items are needed.

Scale Correlation

To see if there was any linear relationship between time one scores on any of the scales (PCRI, AAPI-2, Role Salience, and Concern) Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients were obtained. Parental Concern is negatively correlated ($-.295, p = .002$) with Parental Support; Involvement ($-.301, p = .002$), and Communication ($-.303, p = .002$). These correlations can be interpreted to suggest that for inmate mothers with high levels of concern, the level of perceived support as a parent, perceived involvement with children, and perceived adequacy of communication is lower.

Based on the measure used in this study, Role Salience is negatively correlated with Parental Satisfaction. This may suggest that the more inmate mothers identify with their “mother” role, the less satisfied they are with being a parent and in prison. Additionally, Involvement ($.384, p = .000$) is positively correlated with Satisfaction with Parenting ($.528, p = .00$) and Communication ($.255, p = .001$). These correlations suggest that as inmates’ involvement with their children increases, mothers’ satisfaction with parenting (while in prison) and perceived adequacy in their ability to communicate increases.

INTERVIEWS

To complement quantitative findings a set of semi-structured, in depth interviews was conducted with parenting class participants ($n = 35$) whose work and program schedules were compatible with scheduled use of an interview room in the education

building where parenting classes are conducted. In these interviews the incarcerated mothers, like most mothers, liked to talk about their children. Interview participants were eager to tell me about their children and seemed genuinely pleased to provide information. They positively described their children by talking about “how smart they are,” “good grades,” prettiness, and athletic accomplishments.

Verbalized Reasons for Enrolling in the Parent Course

When asked why they were taking parenting classes, written responses they had provided on the questionnaire were reiterated. All the women verbalized their primary response on the questionnaire that they wanted to be a better parent. Several said, “to get more visiting time” and “to be more involved with their children” were among their primary reasons for taking parenting classes. All the inmates spoke of the importance of program visitation to them and to their relationship with their children. Several inmates said they had heard positive comments about the parenting course from other inmates and that the instructor acted interested in them as individuals.

I heard it was fun and interesting. Mrs. Boggs tells it like it is. She’s a good teacher; she’s up front with you; ain’t no beating around the bush; she’s honest. She tells us what is really going on and makes us wonder why we did certain things to our children and how they must have felt.

Many expressed that the instructor’s methods had made them “be honest” with themselves, “quit making excuses” for themselves, and realize “that being a good parent is being with my child and doing what I am supposed to do--be a responsible person and a responsible parent.”

Reparenting

Progress toward the parenting program goal “to reparent those who may not have been appropriately parented” can be illustrated through interview data. Several inmates mentioned that their mothers’ had not had a positive influence on them or that they had not learned good parent child relationship from their mothers.

My mother is not an affectionate person. I try to show my kids love, to tell them I love them, My mother never told me that. I got attention from her when I was very bad. I don’t want to be like my mom was to me. Mrs. Boggs (the parenting class instructor) guides you in the right direction. When I was growing up, I needed that, but, I didn’t get it. My mother might have done that some but I didn’t listen; I overlooked it. I did what I wanted to do. I was thinking about what I wanted and not about anyone else.

Role Salience

As suggested by the role salience scale, inmate mothers at KCIW strongly identify with the mother role. With no prompting, all the women interviewed stressed at some point in the interview that “being a mother” was very important or “the most important thing in life” to them. When queried about how they would describe a “good mother” they talked about comforting; assuring children that mommy was safe and has the things she physically needs; guiding and teaching; emotionally supporting; being involved in their lives; and encouraging them by mail, telephone, and through visits. Their perceptions of “being a mother” are not markedly unlike those commonly associated with the mother role.

Fears and Concerns

Inmate narratives support levels of concern measured in the Concern Scale; they verbalized their fears. Many of the women feared that their children had lost respect for

them, were “mad at them,” did not love them anymore, would not want them “back in their lives,” or that they would come to love the person that was taking care of them more than they love their mother. Several women described difficulty in financially supporting their children before incarceration and being concerned that their children were adequately clothed and fed in their current living situation. Primary among the fears of the mothers interviewed was that their children would “end up in prison like me.” They expressed that they wanted their children to be afraid they will end up in prison. “I don’t want them to come down this road. I want them to learn by my mistakes.”

Parental Support

It is unclear if these inmates genuinely feel supported by families outside. In general, inmate mothers who were interviewed were very appreciative of their children’s caregivers. It may be that this appreciation translates into “feeling supported.” Family members who took time and money to bring their children for visits are perceived as supporting the inmate. One inmate related,

My sister supports me when she brings my kids to see me. It’s a lot of trouble for her. She has to take off work. I thank her when she can accept my calls. The calls are expensive, they don’t get any money to pay for the calls.

Others felt little support for themselves or their parenting efforts. One inmate said “I feel left for dead.” Others expressed fear or frustration that their children’s caregivers “won’t let me write them or won’t let them read my letters.” “They don’t ever come to visit, it’s too far” as related by one inmate expressed the feelings of some. For some inmates, emotional support is gained from peers in the parent education course. One

inmate said, "Being in a discussion about parenting with other women that are going through some of the things I am going through with my kids helps me."

Confidence, Satisfaction with Parenting and Group Support

All of the women expressed that they felt more comfortable and confident in their parenting skills after the parenting class. Yet, several acknowledged the difficulties they would face when parenting after prison. "I feel like I can do better now, but it's hard. It will be harder to be a parent to them when I get out because I've been away, they may not trust me, and we'll have to learn about each other again. Being a good parent is not easy. Mrs. Boggs taught us that." Most of the women expressed feeling "good about themselves" because they were trying to learn to be a good or a better parent and because they were making efforts to adapt to parenting while in prison. The general consensus was that they were more confident in their parenting ability. But, the reality of effectively parenting outside coupled with the fact that parenting class had made them more aware of their children's needs was very frightening.

ADAPTIVE PARENTING: SKILLS LEARNED AND PRACTICED

Conversations were guided toward exploring some of the things "you do and have learned about being a mom while you're in prison." Adaptive parenting through involvement in program visits, letters, telephone conversations, and as much as possible during regular visitation were revealed as the primary activities involved in their parenting "behind bars."

Effective Communication

Communication skills and the importance of communicating with children is stressed in parenting classes. Adaptive parenting through writing letters, short telephone conversations, and through visitation (particularly program visits) is encouraged by teaching inmate mothers specific skills and techniques for positive communication with their children. Brief statements about improved communication include, "We used to just shout and holler at each other. Now we are talking"; "We talk about school, things she needs to know like honesty"; and "I give them advice." "I learned it's important to listen as much as you talk and to use your telephone time wisely, like how to ask good questions so they don't just say yes or no." Some said they had learned that even when they can't contact their children by phone, they can write them a letter or send them pictures they have drawn.

Several inmates provided evidence of parenting class learning by saying, "You have to communicate honestly with them. They need to know that I'm in prison, not somewhere else" and relating "I was parenting like 'do what I say not what I do' but what I was communicating to them was to do what I do. Communication is more than talking; its your actions; what you do good and what you do bad."

Although statistical analysis revealed no significant change, most of the inmates said that the most beneficial aspect of the parenting course was learning better communication skills and techniques (e.g., writing, calling, making things and sending to them, and learning how important it is to communicate with them).

I'm trying to build the relationship through communication, telling them the truth, and giving them advice. When we make cards in class to send them, I like to hear

how excited they are about getting something from me. I like to see their faces when they come to visit after I send them a card.

One inmate expressed feeling more confident and empowered to communicate and forge a relationship with her children through communication.

My first letter to my kids, I just opened up and communicated with my kids. My mom was surprised because my mom, she knows that I love my kids, but she also know that I just don't know what to do. Because I've never had to be a Mom. You know I always was not taking on responsibility. It was like I was having kids for her and my stepfather. So before prison, I couldn't communicate very good with my kids. But now I'm communicating, building that relationship especially with my son (he's almost a teenager). I want to be a good parent to him but sometime I think I don't know how 'cause I never did learn.

Another inmate feels more comfortable communicating with her child even in the presence of other adults. She relates practicing communication skills learned in the classroom at Kids Day.

But I feel that we have more... we're closer when we're having that time together. It's a lot more special. He's opened up to me and wants to spend more time with me. Kid's Day has helped basically. At Kids Day I have time to tell him that he doesn't want to end up in prison. Prison isn't a good place. When we talk face to face, I can find out what he's doing and encourage him or tell him what will happen to him if he breaks the law.

Yet another expresses the importance of practicing communication skills learned in the classroom.

I told my son I would be going to my parenting class so I could be better. You know, at first, I'm like I didn't know how to open up to my kids. I mean, I didn't know how to... but it's like he's opening me up. My son is and it's kind of weird. He's like, "Mom I want to know"... he's like, "this is what I do day by day." He writes at the bottom, "write me back and let me know what your daily routine is." That's what he put. I'm like, "oh my goodness." That's good. Yeah, I just cry. He's growing up and I tell him what I do day by day.

Involvement

Quantitative findings suggested no change in feeling involved with children as a result of the parenting program but, most of the women interviewed expressed that they had learned the importance of being more involved in their children's lives both while in prison and after release. They related that they were frustrated and sad about the amount of contact they were able to have with their children because of distance, finances, or caregivers' attitudes. When asked how they had learned to be involved and build the relationship in prison, most spoke about learning to communicate by telephone or through letters.

Because we have a huge phone bill right now, you know those charges add up, I write all 3 of them (my children). I just got a letter back from my son yesterday. He was sending me a copy of what he was doing in school, his reports. Academic, you know, what he's doing. When I write him, I tell him, first of all I want to know how you're doing. What's he doing, every place he goes. I give him some advice. And he loves to play basketball. I mean, it's a lot he talks about. And it's good.

Barriers to communication complicate inmates' efforts to be involved with their children. One mother shows interest in her child's activities and future through letter writing.

I talk to her about what I think she ought to do in life. We were talking on the phone a lot. The bills started getting real, real high. So right now, there's like a block on it. But I still write to communicate with her. I want to be involved with her and want her to let me be involved. I want her to write and tell me things too.

Empathy

Increased parental empathy suggested by hypothesis testing is supported by qualitative findings. When speaking of learning to be aware of and attempting to understand their child's feelings (i.e., empathetic awareness), most of the inmates who

volunteered to be interviewed responded briefly and with emotion about the pain they had caused their child by behavior that had resulted in their incarceration.

I think one of the hardest things for kids who are in this situation is the fact that they think they're never going to get to see their mom again. And also, my children had no idea what a prison would look like. Would it be steel bars and officers walking around with guns. I try to let them know I'm okay. I try to allay their fears as much as I can. I tell my children, "Mommy's safe. I get enough food and I'm warm in the winter." They worry about inmates hurting me but I tell them I am all right and not to worry.

Another inmate expresses awareness of her children's feelings and relates efforts to comfort and reassure them.

Some people might think, my goodness, why are you bringing those kids there, and letting them think that it's a happy time in prison. Well, I don't think there is any mom here that hasn't told their child this isn't a happy place, but the children need to know that mom is okay. I don't think the children need to always be thinking that mom is walking around in chains all day, or something. Kids have to know you're okay. At Kids Day they just come in and do fun things with me, and seeing that it is a clean place, and there isn't guards standing around in guns. They can know that Mom isn't scared all the time and know they don't have to be scared for me. They have to know I am safe. My children, it has helped them with the adjustment of me coming. Them coming here at Kids Day has helped me understand how they feel

Parent Child Role Reversal

Learning about appropriate parent child roles supportive of quantitative findings was evident in the comments of several inmates.

Through parenting (classes), I realized that my teenage daughter had been doing the things I should have been doing like opening the mail and finding the bills and worrying about how we were going to pay for things. I was letting her do things the parent should do. I didn't have that "right" mother child relationship. She would ask me, "mom when are you going to stop what you're doing and come home"?

One mother realized the importance of being her son's parent rather than his friend.

When I was with him before, we just hung out. I don't feel close to him like a mother. I was trying to be his friend and he didn't respect me for a friend or a mother. Now I know I've gotta be the parent and he's gotta be the child.

Developmentally Appropriate Expectations

Absorption of child development curriculum as presented was supported primarily through expressions about specific age appropriate parenting. "It's important to tell a six year old that you are proud of her. That makes her feel good about herself."

Another said, "I'm learning things you need to know to teach your teenagers to take care of themselves, like being safe and not getting pregnant, things I didn't do." One inmate said, "I learned that children make mistakes and that sometimes they're not old enough to understand what they're supposed to do or what you want them to do. You have to consider how old they are."

I was asking her on my visit about school and she was telling me that she knows how to put an H behind a W by blowing on her hand. And she blows and then says what. And she knows to put an H there. Because if it's an H, she can feel it on her hand. And she made a 100 on her spelling test. I mean, she made a 100% improvement. She came 3 times to Kids Day. I got here in September and she started coming to Kids Day October, November and December. My grandparents and my family believe in me having this strong relationship with her. They want me to be the mother, you know, to her. We bonded. We rebonded on Kids Day. She didn't really want to do much. She wanted to sit, she wanted me to hold her and love on her, whisper in her ear, talk to her. We done crafts and all this together. She really seeks my love, my attention. Even though I know I've got love for her, she wants that love. She is happy little girl with sitting in my lap and talking to me. Sometimes she wants to talk about grown up things that I'm not ready for her to talk about but when I think she's ready I will. I have to just pay attention to what it should be for her age.

A concerned mother expresses increased awareness of challenges associated with being a teenager.

Conversations are important. Open conversations I think are the most critical without freaking out your child. They've got to know that it's okay to talk about

anything. Whether it be, “Mom I’m pregnant. Mom, I’m scared of dating this boy but I kind of like the thrill of how he is” and so forth. Whatever it is. My teenager comes up and talks to me more freely than I really want to hear sometimes, but I’ve got to let her know that she can do that, even with me in here with the phone. I want her to enjoy being a teenager before she gets all the adult responsibilities, but I want her to be careful.

Discipline and Setting Boundaries

Interviews supported quantitative findings of change in attitudes and knowledge about corporal punishment. “I learned you have to let them know what they can do and what they can’t. Two inmates related “I wish I had learned that” and “there are other ways than whipping to make them do what you want.” Knowledge about discipline techniques other than corporal punishment was apparent in the statement,

When they need to be punished, you can put them in time out or take things away from them or talk to them to make them understand that what they did was wrong and what will happen if they keep on. But, I tell the good things that can happen if they obey the rules and do what their teachers tell them.

Many inmate mothers stress teaching children that prison is not a good place to be and that they should not do anything that might result in their incarceration.

When you don’t follow rules, you could come to this place when you grow up. Then you can’t go to McDonalds or Chucky Cheese or anywhere. You have to follow the rules. You don’t want to come here. I tell them this place might look like a park or somethin’ but it’s no picnic and they shouldn’t think it easy. This is not a place anyone want to live. People tell you when to get up, when to go to bed, when to eat, who you can talk to, and even that you can’t help out other people by giving them things. You can’t share anything with anyone. You’re supposed to share.

Another inmate says,

I try to teach my children that there are bad people in here and bad people out there. Some people in here made mistakes that you wouldn’t think would make them be in prison but they are. But there are a lot of bad people out there that will try to get you to do things bad. Stay away from them or you’ll end up like your mamma and that’s not good.

Yet another relates,

I tell her sex and drugs will get her in trouble. I tell her she best stay away from those people out there. She don't want to be here; it's a rotten place. If she keeps with this crowd she will be here—like me. Why can't she understand that would be awful?

Interview Evaluation Of The Parenting Program

Every woman queried about the “good parts,” “bad parts,” and “what could be better” about the parenting classes verbalized that in their opinion, the class was perfect and that nothing needed to be changed. They expressed a strong allegiance to the parenting class instructor. Several referred to her as “Mrs. Boggs, the legend” indicating that they had heard about her and her class while in jail and from many other inmates.

This excellent rating by inmate mothers of the parenting course must be understood within the context of the fact that only those who volunteered for interviews were queried. There may have been some who chose not to be interviewed because they did not want to or were concerned (in spite of assurances of confidentiality) that their responses would be revealed. From interviews with the 50 women who volunteered to talk with me (35 from the parenting course and 15 visitation program participants) and casual conversations with many others, it appears that the parenting course is very popular and that the inmates perceive many benefits from taking the course.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A description of the sample and other information from the *Class Member Information Questionnaire* and group equivalency comparison has been presented. The results of hypothesis testing, parenting deficiencies and proficiencies revealed through

the parenting scales, and selected other findings were also presented. The chapter concluded with the presentation of interview data from inmate mothers ($n = 50$) that illustrates and clarifies the quantitative findings of this research as well as offers narrative accounts of improved attitudes and abilities to apply classroom learning.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions

With increasing incarceration rates of women and concomitantly the growing number of mothers who are incarcerated, exploring and assessing the parenting knowledge and attitudes of incarcerated mothers and programs that teach skills and strengthen parent-child relationships is of pressing importance. As most incarcerated mothers will return to parenting responsibilities when released, increasing incarcerated mothers' parenting abilities while they are in prison may increase their potential for practicing effective parenting both inside and outside the prison context.

The benefits of teaching prisoners parenting and helping them maintain or develop parent child relationships have been noted. Improved mental health of incarcerated women (e.g., less depression, anxiety, fear, and guilt) has been associated with maintaining relationships with children outside (Pollock 2002; Baunach 1985; Fessler 1991; Hairston 1991; Acoca 1998). Improved relationships with children have been shown to motivate women to "follow the rules" (both in prison and outside) (Finkelstein and Piedade 1993; Finnegan 1988). Post release success is higher among inmates who have maintained or strengthened bonds to family (e.g., children) during incarceration (Hairston 1988). Inmates who maintain relationships with their children are better prepared for societal reentry and dealing with the multiplicity of responsibilities they face when released and are therefore less likely to return to prison (Fishman and Alissi 1979; Carlson and Cervera 1991). Recidivism rates are lower for inmates who complete programs designed to improve parenting skills (Rudel and Hayes 1990).

In addition to directly benefiting incarcerated mothers, parenting programs benefit their children. Prison programs that teach parenting skills may encourage inmate mothers to address their children's needs and potential for disruptive behavior (Dumas 1989; Kazdin 1987). The impact of the trauma children experience when a parent is incarcerated can be mediated by the inmate mother's ability and inclination to communicate with children and relate to children's fears and feelings. Prison parenting programs address these needs (Johnston 1991). Effective prison parenting programs also may help interrupt the transmission of anti social family patterns from one generation to the next (Lewis and O'Brien 1987).

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Parenting Program in changing the parenting skills, knowledge, and attitudes of incarcerated mothers. Unlike most other parenting programs, KCIW uses both classroom instruction and an enhanced visitation component to teach, develop, and enhance parenting and relational skills while increasing positive interaction between inmates and their children. By identifying if and what short term change occurs in inmate mothers' parenting attitudes and skills as a result of this parenting program, insight for modifying the KCIW program and for developing or enhancing parenting programs in other prisons is provided. Also to aid program development, comparing the pre parent education skills of this sample of incarcerated mothers to those of unincarcerated mothers provides additional insight by identifying areas of parenting that may be particularly difficult for incarcerated mothers. This chapter provides a summary and interpretation of the results

of quantitative research within the context of life at The Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women.

CONTEXTUALIZATION: LIFE AT KCIW

As there have been recent changes to the organization of the KCIW Parenting Program, contextualizing the parenting efforts and needs of the inmate mothers in this study provides a qualitative backdrop for discussing quantitative findings related to program effectiveness and development later in this chapter. KCIW inmates lead fairly regimented lives and have limited activities to occupy their time. They appear to have developed various features of an indigenous culture that focuses on who likes whom. At the same time, relationships with those outside influence the prison culture in that visitation with and plans to reunite with their children appear to be a goal around which many inmate mothers organize their programs (e.g., choice of classes and activities).

Prison Programming

At KCIW substance abuse and mental health programs are more available now than previously. A wider variety of chapel programs, classes, and services are provided. Education programs have improved; course offerings are more attuned to necessities of self support after release from prison. Life skills classes to improve productive functioning in the outside world continue to be offered. A well established parenting program teaches incarcerated mothers effective parenting skills and attitudes through both classroom instruction and interactive program visitation. The importance of parent education that combines classroom learning and parent-child relationship building as a reentry preparation strategy is emphasized in prison programming objectives.

Providing programs and services in women's prisons within budgetary and security constraints presents challenges for prison administrators across the United States. Contemporary correctional objectives and demands for parity between women's and men's prisons in educational, industry, health, and mental health services influence programming decisions. In some cases, *parity* is being used as impetus to modify program priorities to *equalize* programming in women's and men's prisons. Some institutions (both men's and women's prisons) have eliminated or reduced parent education programs in order to increase services in areas considered more important. KCIW continues to have a strong parenting program and no steps have been taken to eliminate the program. The program has, however, been modified. Staffing and parity needs have been suggested as reasons for indefinitely suspending one interactive component (Kids Day) and eliminating another (Teen Day).

The life

A common theme throughout conversations with these inmates is a need to be loved, cared about, and valued as well as to have someone to love, to care about, and to value. They want to belong, to matter, and to be significant. Wanting to belong, to matter, to be significant to someone and finding ways to pass the time result in a prison culture that is, as the literature suggests, characterized by a quest for meaningful relationships both inside and outside prison.

The inmate culture at KCIW appears to be different than those described in the literature as "the women's prison culture of pseudo families" in which women organize their lives by assuming various family roles (e.g., husband, wife, father, mother, child).

Prison life at KCIW looks more like a sub-culture of adolescent cliques than a society of pseudo families. Many of the women resembled junior high school girls (and boys) who pass notes and flirt with anyone who might be interested in their attention and affections. Many of the women in the groups I observed and some of those I interviewed seemed very immature, childish, and unlikely candidates for effectively parenting their children. Other relationship patterns that emerge include mentoring relationships to facilitate survival in prison, “platonic” individual and group friendships for mutual support, and primarily short term homosexual relationships.

The literature suggests that homosexual relationships in prison are similar to a committed “marital relationship” or even courtship coupling deriving from the pseudo family organizational structure. The women I interviewed described homosexual behavior among inmates as “casual sexual relationships” or “recreational sex” rather than the pseudo family “marital relationships.” For example, several inmates related that they (or someone they knew) might “play” (i.e., prison slang for sexual activity) for something to do, to break the boredom, to address hormonal instincts, or for the thrill of breaking prison rules and “outsmarting” correctional officers. For some, wanting to belong, to matter, and to be significant results in the formation of a relationship but for most, breaking through the boredom of prison life by discovering ways to pass time or amuse themselves appeared to be key in homosexual activity.

For the subset of women that chose to discuss this aspect of their prison lives, homosexual activities in prison are not preferable to or evidently do not replace plans for heterosexual relationships when released. Expressions of continuing commitment to

marriages, engagements, and family outside while homosexual activity or relationships are developed with women inside provide evidence for the intermingling of both indigenous and imported forces that shape prison culture.

Contextualizing Parenthood

It was apparent that KCIW inmates must learn to “get along” and “do their time” in the prison world. Yet, as most are mothers and not incarcerated for life, they remain conscious of the reality of returning to life and children outside. Given this reality, learning parenting skills and techniques that enhance the parent-child relationship in prison that carry over into life after prison is of utmost importance. Almost all the inmates in this study say their children are of primary importance in their lives. They want to be better parents. Most KCIW inmates choose to take the parent education course at some time during their incarceration. The parenting course allows and stimulates intense concentration on their children outside, at least for a time.

Maintaining healthy relationships with their children while managing their lives within the context of inmate life is a struggle. Most inmate mothers interviewed said they want their children to love them, care about them, and “not be angry” with them because of what they have done. They want to be important and valuable to their children. The parenting program helps them acknowledge their feelings and fears and learn the skills for developing healthy, loving relationships with their children. Parenting programs that not only change how inmate mothers see parenting but also offer opportunities for developing relationships and practicing skills are more effective than parent education or visitation alone. Examining the efficacy of the KCIW Parenting Program designed to

combine parent child interaction opportunities and parent education provides insight for improving or developing parent education programs for prisoners.

KCIW PARENTING PROGRAM EFFICACY

Weiss (1972) suggests that a major purpose of program evaluation research is to assess a program's effectiveness in meeting its specified objectives. Results of hypothesis testing using paired samples *t*-tests suggests significant positive change likely resulting from the KCIW Parenting Program in inmate mothers' parenting knowledge and attitudes in four of the seven specific program objectives. Thus, the KCIW Parenting Program is a success. This research suggests that a prison parenting program can change how inmate mothers' see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices.

Four of the seven hypotheses about positive change in the parenting knowledge and attitudes of KCIW inmate mothers were supported. More specifically, test scores and comments indicate: (1) increased child development knowledge (Hypothesis II) useful for enhancing their potential to recognize and allow age appropriate, autonomous experiences that promote and teach responsible behavior in their children; (2) changed views of corporal punishment (Hypothesis III) in that inmates are more aware of and willing to practice forms of discipline other than spanking or hitting; (3) changed attitudes toward parent child role reversal (Hypothesis IV) which may be related to infantilization and inclinations to deal with crises maturely; and increased empathetic awareness of their children's needs (Hypothesis VII). After parent education, these mothers are more likely to understand their children's feelings and needs (especially as associated with incarceration) than they were before the parenting course.

Test scores indicate that three specific program objective hypotheses were not met. There was no increase in feeling supported in their parenting efforts (Hypothesis VI); they were no more satisfied with being a parent in prison after the parent education course than before (Hypothesis V); and there was no statistically significant change in perceived communication ability or the adequacy of communication opportunities (Hypothesis I). Although there was no statistical evidence of improvement on the communication scale, interviews with inmates revealed increased knowledge about how to communicate with children. Interviews also revealed that inmates placed a high level of importance on program visitation components that offer extended visitation opportunities with their children.

Lack of significant change in these three areas may be attributable to the lack of availability of face to face parent child interaction opportunities. It may be that program visitation makes parenting in prison more palatable, less devastating, and more satisfying for some and that with the discontinuance of Kids Day and Teen Day, there were few opportunities for extended parenting involvement with children. Further, lack of feeling supported in their parenting efforts may be associated with changes in program visitation opportunities as few opportunities for extended parenting involvement with children remain. Kids Day has not resumed. The possible positive impact of program visitation should be evaluated if Kids Day and Teen Day are resumed.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE KCIW PARENTING PROGRAM

Both quantitative and qualitative findings of this program evaluation provide information for suggestions about maintaining and improving the KCIW Parenting Program. Based on an analysis of if and how the current state of the parenting program accomplishes goals originally set for the program, specific recommendations include the following

- (1) Continue to endorse the parenting course instructor's initiatives to reparent and teach effective parenting skills and attitudes.
- (2) Consider the resumption of Kids Day and Teen Day.
- (3) Investigate updating the current curriculum to include more emphasis on practicing communication and problem resolution skills in the classroom.
- (4) Designate one particular KCIW employee as Parenting Program Coordinator. This individual would be responsible for coordinating and scheduling all four parenting program visitation components. Although various program elements (e.g., therapeutic observation; planning and supervising short craft projects or group games; and general supervision of mothers and children at free time) would not necessarily be the responsibility of any one person or one staff section (e.g., recreation, psychology, chaplain services) the Parenting Program Coordinator would enlist necessary support from various personnel and correctional service sections to provide a consistent, organized plan for the interactive component of the KCIW Parenting Program.
- (5) Support the parenting Program Coordinator and parenting program goals by appropriately and sufficiently staffing program visitation (e.g., Kids Day and Teen

Day). Appropriate staffing includes qualified personnel to plan, supervise, and observe the parenting behaviors of inmates for the purpose of giving feedback about needed change or affirmation of skills learned.

- (6) Seek assistance from the KCIW Volunteer Coordinator for recruiting, screening, and scheduling volunteers from outside prison to assist with providing structured activities for program visitation.
- (7) Provide flexible work schedules to program staff who provide supervision and support for program visitation scheduled on weekends.
- (8) Investigate the possibility of recruiting a Master's level psychology, social work, or child and family studies student knowledgeable about effective parenting from the University of Louisville, University of Kentucky, or other colleges in the area to do an applied practicum that includes assisting with program visitation.
- (9) Initiate and sustain contact and conversation with Girl Scout Councils in surrounding areas (e.g., Lexington) to encourage them to use the Parenting Behind Bars model currently used by the GSA Council in Louisville to bring girls from their areas to the prison to participate in scouting programs with their mothers.
- (10) Investigate the availability of "outreach" programs offered by youth organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, The "Y") in nearby areas that can be brought to the prison in a Kids Day or Teen Day type program of supervised mother and child activities.

PARENTING DEFICIENCIES AND COMPETENCIES

An additional purpose of this research was to explore incarcerated mothers' pre-parent education attitudes and skills. Comparison of parenting competencies and abilities of the entire research sample of incarcerated mothers ($n=161$) to general population norms provided information about parenting deficiencies and proficiencies that may represent the needs of other groups of incarcerated mothers. Findings may be helpful when developing parenting programs specifically for incarcerated mothers.

Test scores revealed that encouraging children's autonomy as measured by the scale used in this study is problematic for a substantial number of the women tested. Experiencing incarceration may contribute to protective and cautious attitudes; inmate mothers may be concerned that children's activities and choices may eventuate in crime and involvement with the criminal justice system. Or, as several items on this scale ask opinions about excessively providing children with material possessions, the problematic area represented in this scale may be materialistic or over indulgent attitudes of some inmate mothers. As the crimes for which many women are incarcerated are property or drug crimes for obtaining money for purchasing desired items, and some say they committed their crime to provide for their children, this explanation seems plausible.

Only about a third of the sample scored in the deficient range on the *Lack of Empathetic Understanding, Strong Belief in Corporal Punishment, Communication, and Involvement With Children* scales. Less than a fourth of this group scored in the deficient range on the scales used to measure inappropriate expectations and ability to set limits for children's behavior.

At first glance one might conclude that test scores of a substantial portion of this group indicate parenting competency. Another conjecture about test scores is that this group of inmate mothers may have unrealized parenting deficiencies in that they lack understanding of effective parenting expectations in these areas. These testing instruments measure *perceived* rather than actual competencies. These inmate mothers may not *perceive* that they inappropriately punish, lack understanding of their children, fail to set behavioral boundaries, or have unrealistic expectations of their children. The scales may not accurately represent the proportion of the group that actually has problems in a particular skill area. Parent education may raise their consciousness of the impact of their parenting behaviors.

Statistically significant change or improvement in attitudes about corporal punishment and empathetic understanding after parent education supports suggestions of “consciousness raising.” Before classes they did not perceive difficulty, but after classes they did. It may be that before parent education, many in this sample did not recognize some aspects of the impact of incarceration on their children or their relationship with their children. After children’s need for empathy and understanding was brought to their attention and they were taught the importance of being more sensitive to their children’s needs, their level of empathetic awareness increased as their perception of children’s feelings increased. Likewise, they may not have been aware of other discipline techniques or that alternatives to spanking, hitting, or punching are appropriate and effective. Therefore, more than a third (about 50 women) may have, but are unaware of, problems with child discipline or be aware of their children’s feelings.

Communication and Involvement With Children were perceived to be unsatisfactory by a little more than one third of the sample (a little more than 50 women). Conversely, one might assume that about two thirds did not perceive that their communication and involvement skills or opportunities were deficient. One conjecture is that about two thirds of these women may have adjusted their expectations of being able to communicate or be involved with their children, resigning themselves to the constraining effects of their incarceration. Another, more likely possibility is that, as suggested in other parenting areas, the women who scored in the adequate range on these scales may not be aware of creative communication and involvement methods or the importance of communication and involvement during incarceration and therefore perceive their efforts as adequate. Or, they may need opportunity (as provided in parenting program goals) to develop relationships with their children and practice communication skills through involvement with them in program visitation opportunities.

Results on the *Satisfaction With Parenting* scale also call for comment. Test results suggests that only 5% of these incarcerated mothers fall in the deficient parental satisfaction range. But, as this scale is designed to measure the amount of pleasure derived from “being a parent” it may be that these results are more an expression of the importance of children in their lives and thoughts about life after prison. They may view their children as one of the few “good” things that has resulted from their lives; their children are worthy of their love, affection, and attention. Parenting programs may build on this sentiment in many incarcerated mothers. As “being pleased to be a mother” is a feeling many incarcerated mothers express, parenting programs may be an important tool

for helping them understand the impact and realities of effective parenting (or ineffective parenting) on their children and themselves. Facilitating the development or maintenance of healthy relationships may be a particularly effective strategy for aiding societal reentry, adjustment to responsibilities outside prison, and for reducing recidivism.

IMPLICATIONS

Both quantitative and qualitative data support the assertions of this program evaluation. Improved test scores indicated statistically significant change in several parenting areas that likely result from the parent education course. Interviews with 50 women offer narrative evidence of how extended visitation with their children gave inmates opportunity for practicing parenting class lessons and strengthening relationships with children. Strong relationships could very possibly encourage the pursuit of conforming lifestyles after prison.

Narrative evidence suggests that programs that allow extended visits and time for extended parent child interaction, involvement, and communication may help alleviate some of the problems associated with regular visitation (e.g., lack of privacy for parent/child communication; inadequate space; time restraints; rigidity; and practices that encourage parent-child role reversal). Extended visitation opportunities in settings appropriate for children may help address some of the issues often confronting children of incarcerated mothers (e.g., concern and fear about the safety of living circumstances of their mother, guilt, unanswered questions, anger, missing the person who has been primary parent). Inmate narratives also indicate that program visits provide motivation

for inmates to maintain good behavior in prison and contribute to positive emotions and good mental health.

This research supports that correctional facilities direct resources (both staff and program dollars) toward parenting programs for incarcerated mothers, that can prepare women to deal with some of the problems they will confront on release. Accomplishing parenting responsibilities after an extended absence would be stressful even for mothers who do not carry the stigma of incarceration and its negative implications for employment and future involvement with the Criminal Justice System. Parenting programs that encourage awareness of effective parenting practices, teach skills, improving parent child relationships, and help them understand the impact of criminal behavior on others, may aid socially conforming reintegration into society and help reduce their chances of returning to prison. Parenting their children more effectively may reduce their children's chances of criminal behavior that eventuates in incarceration.

This research supports assertions that prison parenting programs are an important and viable strategy for changing inmate attitudes and behavior. The value of continuing to see parenting and parenting programs as a priority for meeting needs in the lives of incarcerated women in spite of budgetary and staff constraints has been documented in this research. As rhetoric on parity, equality with men's prison programming, and punitive attitudes continue and increase, parenting programs may be in jeopardy. Policy and decision makers should be cognizant that rehabilitation programs offer something more important than a "quick fix" to the current crime and incarceration problem. If we

reduce or eliminate parenting programs, we may be addressing current problems while undermining programs that may offer long term rehabilitation benefits.

Based on this program evaluation, prison parenting programs have the potential to change incarcerated mothers and their children. From a life course theoretical perspective, increasing incarcerated mothers' social capital (i.e., stores of knowledge, skills, and relationships), may aid their reintegration into society and reduce recidivism by encouraging and equipping them to choose pro social pathways. Equipping them to transfer and create stores of social capital in their children (e.g., through effective parenting) may aid in preventing their children from following the criminal pathway set by their parents. It is important to help maintain, enhance, and reinforce effective parenting skills of those who show a reasonable amount of parenting competency. It is *very* important to reparent those who may not have been effectively parented and are at high risk of passing on their ineffective parenting practices to their children who in turn will ineffectively parent yet another generation.

LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and implications drawn from this study are from inmate mothers who chose to participate in a study about parenting. Therefore, the opinions and revelations in this study represent women who were interested in parenting and talking about their children. Most of the 161 women in the total sample were recruited because of their involvement with the KCIW Parenting Program (n=119); these women's stories are presented in qualitative findings. The other women (n=42) had never chosen to be involved in the parenting program. Thus, their feelings about their children are not

included in qualitative findings. They may be different than those of inmate mothers involved in the parenting program. Insight about the lives of women at KCIW not involved in the parenting program, as reported in Chapter 3: Incarcerated Mothers at KCIW: The Context, results only from observation and short conversations in the presence of prison staff.

Another limitation is that, as revealed earlier in this dissertation, my observations and involvement in prison life at KCIW was a “surface experience.” I did not participate in their lives with them; I was an outsider looking in, trying to understand. I was privy only to information that inmates and the staff allowed. Although everyone involved (e.g., inmates and staff) was extremely helpful, very forthcoming, and frank, what I was allowed to know and see was most often tempered by my outsider and researcher status.

Methodological limitations must also be expressed. Lack of control over the research setting was expected as research in field setting is most often not controllable. Limitations to random sampling due to the availability of only relatively small numbers of program participants at any one time, contamination of the groups, historical effects, and other threats to validity made findings only suggestive rather than conclusive. The most frustrating limitations of this research were the high attrition rates in both treatment and comparison groups and suspension of Kids Day and Teen Day the month after I began research. Asserting that program visitation affects learning and attitudes in specific areas is therefore only conjecture rather than findings supported by research data (either observational or differences in test scores of those who participated in program visitation and those who did not).

Even with the limitations outlined in this section, illumination of the impact and effectiveness of a prison parenting program on changing how incarcerated mothers see parenting and thus potentially their parenting practices has been provided. Exploring parenting attitudes and knowledge of this group of incarcerated mothers (some who were involved in the parenting program and some who were not) has provided a brief look at parenting areas that may be particularly problematic for incarcerated mothers and which can thus be targeted in developing programs specifically for them. Documenting the efficacy of the KCIW Parenting Program on improving parenting knowledge and attitudes identified in the life course literature as important for producing socially conforming adults provides information and insight for correctional program priority and program development. By developing and providing effective parenting programs that involve both parent education and opportunities for extended parent child interaction, we may impact the futures of children of incarcerated parents and aid in rehabilitating incarcerated mothers who enter life after prison with a new vision and tools for responsible parenting and increased impetus for pursuing a non criminal pathway.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Approval To Do Research Letters



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Department of Corrections
Division of Administrative Services
Information & Technology Branch
P. O. Box 2400
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-2400
502-564-4360
Fax: 502-564-5642

Paul E. Patton
Governor

Vernier L. Taylor
Commissioner

Gary L. Dennis, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

Gerry Howard
Director

September 24, 2001

Jacquelyn L. Sandifer
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice
Division of Social Sciences
Campbellsville University
1 University Drive
Campbellsville, KY 42718-2799

Dear Ms. Sandifer:

Kentucky Department of Corrections will be pleased to assist you in completing your research project, *evaluating KCIW's parenting program*, by providing you with the necessary access to inmates, institutions, and staff, as outlined in your research proposal. Please note that any substantive changes to your research proposal (e.g., methodology, start/completion dates) will require the additional approval of this office prior to implementation.

Please read the enclosed Corrections Policy and Procedure 5.1, then sign and return the Research Agreement (Form CC-1033) to this office. We must receive the original signed form in this office prior to the intended start date of your research project in order to allow you access to any Department of Corrections institution(s). The enclosed Research Agreement form requires that a copy of your completed research be forwarded to this office. The Department of Corrections reserves the right to share this information further with the affected institutions, accreditation bodies, future researchers in this or other topic areas, and others at its discretion.

Your institutional contact for any operational questions/issues is Janice Joslin at Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women. She may be reached directly at P.O. Box 337, Pewee Valley, KY, 40056, 502/241-8454. Prior to visiting the institution(s) specified in your proposal, please contact Ms. Joslin to make specific arrangements for access to the facility(ies). Ms. Joslin may also specify additional requirements for your access to the facility(ies) in keeping with institutional safety and security policies (e.g., materials you may bring with you).

We are pleased to assist researchers in their endeavors and look forward to working with you. If this office can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Tanya L. Dickinson, Manager
Information & Technology Branch

Attachment

cc: Carol Williams
Doris Deuth, KCIW Warden
Janice Joslin, KCIW
KCIW ACA Accreditation Manager



An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D

Location: Health Services Building, G20: 275 East Main Street: Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-2400



12/17/2001

IRB#: 6116B

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
865-974-3466
Fax: 865-974-2805

TITLE: Parenting Behind Bars: An Evaluation of the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women
Parenting Program

Sandifer, Jacquelyn
Sociology
50 Lanai Lane
Campbellsville, KY 42718

Kurth, Suzanne
Sociology
901 McClung Tower
Campus

The points of clarification you submitted to this office regarding the above-captioned project satisfied the concerns of the reviewers, thus your project has been approved.

This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Lawson', written over a horizontal line.

Brenda Lawson
Compliances

APPENDIX B: Study Information Sheets

Study Information Sheet for Control Group Participants

My name is Jackie Sandifer and I'm a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Tennessee. I am inviting you to participate in a research study I am doing about the parenting program at KCIW. What I am asking you to do is simply answer some questions about being a mother and about what you think and feel about your children and being a parent. There is a general information questionnaire and two other sets of questions that look like tests that I am asking you to complete for me today. In about three months I will again come to the prison and ask you to repeat the tests. If you want to participate in my study, I am asking you to sign two consent forms. One from my school and the other from the Kentucky Department of Corrections.

Please do not put your name on any of these papers I ask you to fill out. I will give you a research number to write on all your papers. Even though I will have a list that says what name goes with what number, your name won't be on your paper and I'll keep the list (and the consent forms and all your papers) locked up in my office in a city south of here. I am the only person who will have direct access to the information I get from you. I am doing this to protect your privacy. In fact, when I am looking at the answers, I will not know whose paper I am looking at. All your answers are confidential. **No one** will see the information but me.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate at any time without getting into trouble or upsetting anyone. You need to be aware that being involved in this study will not affect parole board decisions and, as well, not being involved will not affect parole board decisions. If you have questions about the study you may ask me, Ms. Boggs, or Ms. Janice Joslin (the Prison Information Officer), or contact the Compliance Section of the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee.

Study Information Sheet for Treatment Group Participants

My name is Jackie Sandifer and I am a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Tennessee. You are invited to participate in a study I am conducting on the parenting program at KCIW. I will need you to answer some questions about being a mother and about how you and your children act toward each other. I will also be using the tests that you take in your classes and the observations at the special visitation that are part of the class. If you want to participate in my study, I am asking you to sign two consent forms. One from my school and the other from the Kentucky Corrections Cabinet.

I may also talk with some of you at another time asking you some questions about things like why you are participating in the program and how the parenting program has helped you. You don't have to talk to me if you don't want to. If you do, I will probably tape record our conversations. You don't have to say anything that you don't want recorded. After I type our conversations from the tapes, I will erase the tapes. I will protect your privacy. I am the person that will be looking at your answers and listening to tapes of our interviews. I won't even know who you are when I am looking at your papers because rather than putting your name on the paper, I'll put a number on it. Even though I will have a list that says what name goes with what number, your name won't be on your paper and I'll keep the list locked up in my office at work. I will keep all these things locked up where I work in a city south of here. I am the only person who will have direct access to the information I get from you.

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate at any time without getting into trouble or upsetting anyone. You need to be aware that being involved in this study will not affect parole board decisions and, as well, not being involved will not affect parole board decisions. If you have questions about the study you may ask me or Ms. Joslin (the Prison Information Officer) and she will answer them, contact me to answer them, or contact the Compliance Section of the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee.

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT

(University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

I agree to participate in the research project called, "Parenting Behind Bars: An evaluation of the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women Parenting Program" It is my understanding that by signing this paper, I am saying that I understand that my rights, welfare, and privacy will be maintained in the following ways:

- I have had the details of the research project explained to me by the project director.
- I understand the procedures (tests, taped interviews, and observations) to be used and have been made aware that there is very little risk involved.
- I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue my participation in the project at any time without penalty
- The information I give to the researcher will be kept confidential with information specifically about me not being told to anyone else. Project information will be kept in a secure place. Should the results of this research be published, I will be referred to only by a fictitious name (a pseudonym).
- In signing this consent form I have not waived any of my legal rights
- I understand that being involved in this study will not affect parole board decisions and, as well, not being involved will not affect parole board decisions

I have been informed of this information in (a) written _____ or (b) oral _____ form. All of my questions have been answered. If further questions arise about the research, I can talk with Ms. Sandifer, Ms. Boggs, or Ms. Janice Joslin (Prison Information Officer) here at KCIW. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

CC-1032

CORRECTIONS CABINET

Attachment

I

(Rev. 7/84)

CPP 5.1

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Issued

10/17/84

I freely agree to participate in the research project entitled _____ I fully realize that my participation is of my own choosing and I agree not to hold the Kentucky Corrections Cabinet responsible. The project has been satisfactorily explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered.

Signature of Resident

Date

Signature of Staff Witness

Date

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviews will be fairly informal and will focus around the following questions:

- (1) What motivated you to participate in the KCIW parenting program?
- (2) What are the most important things you think you have gained from the parenting program experience at KCIW?
- (3) How do you think participation in this program will help you parent your children when you are released?
- (4) How do you think this program is helping you while you are in prison?
- (5) After taking this class and/or being with your children for a special visitation day, do you feel more confident in your parenting ability than you did before the classes?
How?

APPENDIX E: Class Member Information Questionnaire

CLASS MEMBER INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Participant ID# _____

Please answer the following questions by filling in the blank or circling the appropriate response.

1. In what month and year were you born? Month _____ Year _____

2. Your race/ethnic group? (Circle number below)

1
Black/African American

2
White/Caucasian

3
Other

3. Are you currently (Circle number below)

1
Single

2
Married

3
Separated/Divorced

4
Widowed

4. How many years of school have you completed? (Circle number below)

0 1 2 3 4 5
Elementary
School

6 7 8
Middle
School

9 10 11 12
High
School

13 14
College/Trade School after High School

5. If you did not complete high school, have you received your GED? (Circle below)

1
No

2
Yes, before prison

3
Yes, while in prison

6. What other prison programs have you been involved in?

7. Did alcohol or drugs cause problems in your life before prison?

1
No

2
Yes

3
Not sure

8. Please circle the type of offense for which you are presently serving time (Circle below)

1
Violent Crime

2
Property Crime

3
Drug Related Crime

4
Prostitution or Sex Crime

5
Other _____

9. How long have you been incarcerated for your present conviction? _____

10. What is the longest possible amount of time you have left to serve on your present sentence? _____

11. Is this the first time you have served a prison sentence? (Circle Below)

Yes No If no, how many times have you served time in prison including this sentence _____?

12. At the time of your present offense, were you on probation, parole, or pretrial release for any other offenses? (Circle Below)

1 2
No Yes

13. Have either of your parents ever served time in prison? (Circle Below)

1 2 3 4
No Yes, my mother Yes, my father Both my mother & father

14. On the following lines please list your children's age and circle who they live with now and before this incarceration. Use the back of this page if you have more than five children.

Child	Age	Where does this child live now?						Before this sentence?
1 ST		Child's father	My mother	Other Kin	Friend	Foster Care	Other	me someone else
2 ND		Child's father	My mother	Other Kin	Friend	Foster Care	Other	me someone else
3 RD		Child's father	My mother	Other Kin	Friend	Foster Care	Other	me someone else
4 TH		Child's father	My mother	Other Kin	Friend	Foster Care	Other	me someone else
5 TH		Child's father	My mother	Other Kin	Friend	Foster Care	Other	me someone else

15. Please tell me more about your children.

Child	Age	Child's Behavior in School				Child's School Grades				Has child ever been in trouble with police?	Has child ever been on probation?
1 ST		Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Yes No Unk	Yes No Unk
2 ND		Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Yes No Unk	Yes No Unk
3 RD		Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Yes No Unk	Yes No Unk
4 TH		Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Yes No Unk	Yes No Unk
5 TH		Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Good	Ave	Bad	Unk	Yes No Unk	Yes No Unk

16. Are any of your children (both younger and older than 18) now serving or have they ever served time in a jail, juvenile facility, or group home?

No Yes How many? _____

17. Do you plan to live with your children after you are released from prison?

Yes No

18. If you plan to live with your children after you are released, are you anxious or worried about anything related to being with your children?

Yes No If yes, what are some of the things you worry about? _____

19. If you do not plan to live with your children after you are released, what are your reasons?

20. Who will help you with your children after you are released? (Circle all that apply)

children's father your mother friend other
relative _____

21. How will they help you? (Circle all that apply)

money a place to live watch the children teach children right and wrong other

22. How would you describe yourself as a mother? (Circle one)

Excellent Good Average Needs Improvement A Failure

23. What kind of parent was your mother when you were growing up? (Circle one)

Excellent Good Average Needed Improvement A Failure Absent

24. When you were a child who taught you the most about doing what is right?

Mother Father Grandmother Sister/Brother Other relative Teacher Other _____

25. Why are you taking this parenting class? (Circle all that apply).

Court ordered extra visiting privileges my friends are in the class it's something to do

Other reasons for taking the class: _____

26. How many times in the past six months have any of your children visited you here?
(Circle one)

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-10 More than 10 times

27. How many times in the past six months have you called any of your children on the phone? (Circle one)

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-10 More than 10 times

28. How many letters, cards or packages have you sent to any of your children in the past six months? (Circle one)

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-10 More than 10

29. How many letters, cards, or packages have you received from any of your children in the past six months? (Circle One)

0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-10 More than 10

30. Have you ever taken parenting classes before-- either outside of prison or in prison?

1 2
Yes No

31. How do you think this parenting class will help you?

32. Please tell me whether the following statements about how you feel about being a mother are not at all true, not very true, neither true or untrue, somewhat true, or very true by circling the number under the column under your answer

HOW I FEEL ABOUT BEING A MOTHER	Not at all true	Not very true	Neither true nor untrue	Somewhat true	Very true
		2	3	4	5
a. I like being known as a mother	1	2	3	4	5
b. It annoys me when people I don't know ask if I have children	1	2	3	4	5
c. In general, I prefer the company of adults to spending time with kids	1	2	3	4	5
d. Being a mother has changed me a lot	1	2	3	4	5
e. If I could choose one or the other, I would rather go out than watch my kids for the evening	1	2	3	4	5
f. I spend a lot of time thinking about the well being of my kids	1	2	3	4	5
g. Before I ask for money for myself, I ask if my kids need something more than I do	1	2	3	4	5
h. I sometimes wish I had never had any children	1	2	3	4	5
i. I want people to know that I have children	1	2	3	4	5

33. Please tell me about some of the things that may be worrying you while you're in prison.

	No=0	IF YES, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not much and 10 is a very great deal, how much concern do you feel?
CONCERNS WHILE YOU'RE IN PRISON		
a. Worrying that I might lose any of my children	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
b. Wondering if my kids will forget who I am	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
c. Worrying how I can afford to support my kids as well as myself	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
d. Wondering if my kids have lost respect for me	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
e. Wondering if the person taking care of my kids is treating them right	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
f. Wondering if my kids still love me	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
g. Wondering if I will live to see my kids grow up	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
h. Worrying that any of my children might end up in prison someday	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
i. Worrying that my kids might be taken away from me forever	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
CONCERNS WHEN YOU LEAVE PRISON		
j. That I will have enough food to feed my kids	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
k. That my kids and I will always have a place to live	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
l. That I will be able to keep my kids safe	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
m. That I can find someone to take care of my kids when I need it	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
n. That I will be able to provide for my children	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
o. That my kids will tie me down too much	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
p. That I will be a good mother	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
q. That I won't be able to control my child	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
r. That I could be so tired that I could physically hurt my child	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
s. That I will know how to take care of a child	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
t. That my child would be so bad that I could physically hurt him/her	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
u. That I will be able to pay for medicine when my child is sick	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
v. That my child's father would physically hurt him/her	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
w. That I might not give my child as much attention as he/she needs	0	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME WITH MY RESEARCH!

Vita

Jacquelyn (Von Schaaf) Sandifer was born April 18, 1948 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. After graduating from East Ridge High School in 1966 she attended Carson Newman College for two years. In 1986 she completed a Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in Sociology and Religion at Methodist College in Fayetteville, North Carolina. She earned her Master of Arts in Sociology at Middle Tennessee State University in 1992. Her Ph.D. in Sociology with specialties in criminology and family was earned at the University of Tennessee. While pursuing doctoral work she served as Teaching Assistant in the Department of Sociology at the University of Tennessee.

Sandifer's academic honors include the Religion Departmental Award and the Religion in Life Award at Methodist College. Honor society memberships include Phi Kappa Phi, Pi Gamma Mu, and Alpha Kappa Delta. She maintains scholarly interests in women's correctional facilities, cultures, and programs as well as the relationship between crime and family. Sandifer began an appointment as Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Campbellsville University in Kentucky in January 2000.

Other work experience includes co-parenting three children beginning in 1969 and continuing through 2001. She also was involved in several part time employment and volunteer endeavors with community, school, church, and military family groups. She was a Department of Defense employee from 1987-1993 managing Army community and family programs at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey and Ft. Drum, New York. Professional awards include several letters of commendation for Army family support during military conflicts in Grenada, Iraq, and Somalia and the Department of the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service.