

# IDAHO CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

"Collaborating for a safer Idaho"  
Established 2005  
C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
Governor

## Children of Incarcerated Parents Guiding Principles Adopted September 2009

The Idaho Criminal Justice Commission, through the collective efforts of our members and community partners, are committed to improving the lives of Children of Incarcerated Parents and their families by building private/public partnerships to identify opportunities to increase communication, improve collaboration and develop good public policy.

"On any given day in America, it is estimated that more than 1.5 million children have a parent incarcerated in a state or federal prison. And more than 10 million children are living with a parent who has come under some form of criminal justice supervision at some point in the child's life" (*Annie E. Casey Foundation, Children and Families with Incarcerated parents, 2008*). **In a 2004 study conducted by the Urban Institute of offenders incarcerated by the Idaho Department of Correction, 55 percent of males and 81 percent of females had at least one child.**

The guiding principles are designed to create awareness and act as a reminder to those agencies serving Children of Incarcerated Parents that when parents are sent to prison their children's fundamental needs for safety, belonging and security need to be considered.

### Guiding Principles:

1. Public policies and systems should be guided by principles that acknowledge the needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents.
2. Children and caregivers need support, safety, security and the opportunity to reconcile their feelings about their family member's incarceration.
3. Agency policies and interventions should focus where appropriate on the needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents. These policies and interventions should strive to minimize trauma and help to facilitate healthy connections among children and family members using safe and appropriate methods.
4. Children of Incarcerated Parents and their caregivers need systems and resources in place that help to facilitate the child's personal needs, family stability and reduce the economic strain caused by incarceration.
5. Children of Incarcerated Parents benefit from services and supports that reduce the stigma, shame and trauma of parental incarceration, bolster healthy child and adolescent development and increase their likelihood of school success.
6. Incarcerated Parents and their families benefit from services provided to parents before, during and after incarceration that help build stronger family relationships, constructively manage conflict, strengthen parenting skills and prepare parents to be responsible and pro-social members of their community.

