



Washington State Department of Corrections **PARENTING SENTENCING ALTERNATIVE FACT SHEET**

The Parenting Sentencing Alternative, Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 6639 was enacted in June 2010. This law allows some incarcerated individuals who are parents of minor children the opportunity to avoid prison or transfer from incarceration in order to parent their children. The law has two components:

Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA) – Judicial Sentencing Option: Judges have the option to waive a sentence within the standard sentence range and impose 12 months of community custody along with conditions for treatment and programming for eligible individuals facing a prison sentence. Individuals must meet the following criteria:

Individual must:

- Have physical custody of his/her minor child(ren) or is a legal guardian or custodian with physical custody of a minor child at the time of current offense.
- The high end of the individual's sentence is more than one year (presumptive prison sentence).
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

Individual may not:

- Have current or prior convictions for a felony sex and/or violent offense.
- Be subject to a deportation order.

Community Parenting Alternative (CPA) – *Prison based option:* allows the Department of Corrections to transfer an incarcerated individual home on electronic home monitoring for up to the last 12 months of his or her sentence. Incarcerated individuals must meet the following criteria:

Incarcerated Individual must:

- Have physical custody of minor child(ren), or have legal custody of a minor child,
- *Has a proven, established, ongoing, and substantial relationship* with his or her minor child that existed prior to the commission of the current offense; or is a legal guardian of a minor child at the time of the current offense.
- Have up to 12 months remaining on their prison sentence.
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

Incarcerated Individual may not:

- Have any *current* convictions for a felony sex and/or violent offense.
- Be subject to a deportation order.

Statistics and Outcomes

Percentage of women/men on the program: 59%/41%

Percentage of cases shared with DSHS: 85% Open cases: 10-13%

Percentage of participants returned to prison on a new felony after successful completion as of: June, 2018

*CPA: 12%

*FOSA: 5%

*Combined: 9%

**Percentage of successful completion

CPA: 84%

FOSA: 70%

Combined: 77%

**Percentage of participants who were terminated or revoked:

CPA: 16% terminated

FOSA: 30% revoked

Combined: 23%

**Total participants: 760

CPA: 418

FOSA: 340

**Successful Completions: 591

CPA: 353

FOSA: 238

**Terminations/Revocations: 167

CPA: 65 terminated

FOSA: 102 revoked

**as of October 31, 2018

*Does not include active cases or active warrant status

Department of Corrections:

- Determines that such placement is in the best interest of the child.
- Considers nature of harm, visitation, infractions, and overall programming while incarcerated.

When establishing the alternative, DOC recognized that working with incarcerated individuals, their children and family more directly created a need to interact differently and more intensely. DOC operates from a strengths perspective and utilizes Solution Based Case Management in working with this population. We adopted as the foundation within the program two operating principles:

Present Parenting – meaning that each incarcerated individual is first clean and sober and second, learning skills and abilities in order to put their kids as their first priority in managing daily living.

Use of the five protective factors for strengthening families' model:

1. **Parental resilience** – A parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.
2. **Social connections** - Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build positive relationships.
3. **Concrete support in times of need** - Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.
4. **Knowledge of parenting and child development** - Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.
5. **Social and emotional competence of children** - A child's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Each of the participants are required to:

- read with their children each day for at least 20 minutes and/or doing homework
- Have family dinners without distraction of television or other technology and electronics

DOC works with Division of Child, Youth and Family Services in child and community safety and works together on reduction of duplicative services as well as development of case management plans and conducting home visits together quarterly.

A screening committee was developed made up of professionals who work with children and family systems in order to determine the "best interest of the child" when transferring cases onto the Community Parenting Alternative. This committee meets monthly and reviews transfer plans in order to make decisions regarding approval, community supports, and incarcerated individual's responsibilities while completing their prison sentence on electronic monitoring in their homes.