

# **APPENDIX A TO REPORT ON PRISONS**

**Sample Inter-agency Protocol for Department of Corrections &  
Child Welfare Agencies**

Response to the Periodic Report of the United States  
to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination  
of Racial Discrimination

**February 2008**

**Appendix A:  
Sample Inter-agency Protocol for  
Department of Corrections & Child Welfare Agencies<sup>1</sup>**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of reasonable reunification efforts Congress should require child welfare agencies and departments of corrections to make to aid families with incarcerated parents:

**Parental Self-Improvement**

Child welfare agencies and corrections departments shall develop a protocol to facilitate a parent's self-improvement while in prison and following release.

- (1) Agencies shall identify the problems leading to parental incarceration.
- (2) Agencies shall facilitate expedited access to appropriate rehabilitative programs.  
Where programs are not available in prison, efforts shall be made to establish the necessary programs or provide alternatives to such programs.
- (3) Where programs needed for self-improvement are not available, through no fault of the parent, the inability to access rehabilitative services shall not be held against the parent, but shall be held against the agency in any determination of the reasonableness of the agency's reunification efforts.
- (4) Agencies shall aid parents to develop a transition plan from prison to their communities that can enable successful reunification with their children and that does not conflict with any existing service plan with the child welfare agency.

**Parental Involvement**

To facilitate incarcerated parents' involvement in planning for the future and well-being of their children, corrections departments and child welfare agencies shall develop a protocol that addresses the following:

- (1) Agencies shall implement procedures to locate the parents of children in the foster care system to facilitate immediate efforts towards reunification.
- (2) Agencies shall implement procedures to facilitate incarcerated parents' communication with their children's caseworkers and the adults caring for their children.

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<sup>1</sup> Allard, Ibid at 40.

- (3) Agencies shall implement procedures to facilitate parents' participation in Family Court hearings and case planning reviews.
- (4) Agencies shall develop procedures so that parents' absences from prison for Family Court hearings or case planning reviews will not detrimentally affect their participation in rehabilitative programs.

#### Parent-Child Bond

Agencies shall establish procedures to facilitate meaningful contact between children and their parents.

- (1) Agencies shall provide at least one monthly visit, provided it is in the best interest of the child.
- (2) Agencies shall establish visiting policies sensitive to the needs of children and their caregivers.
- (3) Agencies shall provide visiting rooms that are child-friendly.
- (4) Agencies shall facilitate weekly telephone calls.