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If we have that creativity within us then there must be other prisoners who have it too.
What effect does a prison sentence have upon a family?

This question was the catalyst for a life-changing two-year community theatre project by Barlinnie prisoners, and members of the Garthamlock Community Group, led by the Citizens Theatre in partnership with New College Lanarkshire and SPS.

To mark the 2016 Year of the Dad (www.fathersnetwork.org.uk/year_of_the_dad) the Citizens’ Theatre and New College Lanarkshire created a 12 month theatre programme exploring positive parenting for prisoners and their families. This project was delivered in the Learning Centre at HMP Barlinnie and in the Garthamlock community in Glasgow. It was produced and delivered in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service and explored how incarceration affects family relationships, particularly those between fathers and their children and how arts education in prison can successfully explore and influence prisoners’ attitudes to gender, family life and their role as a father.

This resource aims to provide a legacy for the project and extend its reach by inspiring further engagement with A Family Sentence in an educational context. Intended as a resource pack for use in learning centres throughout Scotland’s prison estate, it is intended to be useful to teachers of a range of subjects including creative writing, drama, visual art, communications and citizenship. The resource pack is aimed at lecturers across all 13 learning centres and can be utilised to compliment and enrich class-room studies and/or project work.

Activities and prompts contained within these pages can be tackled by individuals, used for group work and/or adapted by subject specialists. Inside there are ideas for class discussion, visual art prompts and creative writing tasks. Your students can also try their hand at acting and dip their toes into the world of script writing. The prompts are also intended to generate ideas for teaching staff working with prisoners. Many are designed to unlock the creative potential of students as well as inviting some deeper contemplation about subjects such as the role of a parent and how we define ‘family’ in a modern-day society.

Funding was provided by Creative Scotland. The project also benefited from advice and support from Families Outside and other agencies working to support families affected by imprisonment.

This resource booklet may also be useful for family contact officers in their work to support family visits and maintain family bonds. Some of the exercises actively encourage prisoners to strengthen their bonds with family members by doing ‘homework’ exercises which involve partners and children.

As well as being a learning resource for students and teachers, our booklet outlines briefly the aims and objectives of the project and explains the role and responsibility of family contact officers and other agencies working in criminal justice. These agencies worked closely with the Citizens Theatre on various aspects of A Family Sentence and you can read their thoughts and reactions to the project. The personal journeys of prisoners who wrote and acted in the final show and the thoughts and feelings of members of the community in Garthamlock, many of whom have direct experience of relatives being imprisoned, are also documented here.

Providing a lasting legacy to A Family Sentence, this educational resource pack aims to continue the conversation about how imprisonment affects Scotland’s families by encouraging dialogue and reflection on the impact of imprisonment on fathers and their families.

Indeed it is prisoners and their families whose engagement in such discussions must be encouraged. In this way their voices will continue to be heard and their reflections, ideas and insights will help shape the services offered by the various agencies working to support them in criminal justice and community settings.
Agencies Supporting Families in Prison

Families Outside is Scotland’s only national charity, set up to support families affected by imprisonment.

www.familiesoutside.org.uk

Working to mitigate the effects of a prison sentence upon children and families, Families Outside also raise awareness and campaign on behalf of families dealing with imprisonment.

Every year in Scotland it’s estimated that around 27,000 children lose a parent to imprisonment.

Research has shown that prisoners who maintain family ties are up to six times less likely to re-offend and cope better during imprisonment.

Families can play an important role in helping prisoners through their sentences and lecturers can help strengthen these ties by linking the curriculum to family. The aim of Families Outside is to support families to maintain these bonds while in prisons.

What is the overall result of Families Outside?

Families Outside is a national Scottish charity that works exclusively on behalf of children and families affected by imprisonment. Through direct support to families, training for professionals, and development of policy and practice, we work to improve outcomes for families so that, ultimately, they can live healthy, active lives free from stigma and impediment.

In what ways, if any, have the two shows, A Family Sentence Barlinnie and A Family Sentence Garthamlock, helped inform and develop the dialogue around issues impacting upon Scottish families affected by imprisonment?

Shows like these are excellent for informing the dialogue for those who see the productions. The more difficult question is whether (and how) the dialogue extends beyond this. If such productions can get more exposure, they have a better chance of demonstrating the issues families affected by imprisonment face.

On another level, the opportunity of such productions to develop a shared experience between the participants is invaluable. It helps people think about difficult issues in depth; think about how they share these issues with an audience that may understand little or nothing, how they share these issues with an audience that may understand little or nothing, how they share these issues with an audience that may understand little or nothing. So, we can guess that the number of families affected is fairly high. But it is a guess.

Are there any policy areas or issues highlighted by the shows which your organisation is looking at taking forward and lobbying for change on?

The shows highlighted a number of issues we are already working on, but they give useful examples to help us do this. For example, our national conference on 31 May focused on how we can improve families’ experience at the point of arrest – something we are taking forward with Police Scotland.

A speaker from the San Francisco Police Department said they have a policy of avoiding arrests in front of the family where possible (e.g. home raids); why did the police need to choose a person’s wedding as a place to make an arrest?

What difference would it have made to wait until they were in a less public place? It would have made a great deal of difference to the bride if the memories of her wedding were not scarred by the groom being arrested in the middle of it. Searching of children and provisions for young people generally are an ongoing issue for us, and, on the basis of a question from the audience about what happens when a child turns six, our next conference is likely to focus on the 6–16 age group.

Do you agree that more Scots should have access to these unique theatre shows in order to further inform the discussion around these issues?

I would be delighted if more people had access to these shows. Stigma is one of the biggest barriers for families in terms of getting the support they need to cope so raising awareness of people’s experiences and opening up the dialogue about it makes a huge difference. The issue is so hidden otherwise and we need to do as much as we possibly can to bring it ‘out of the shadows’ (the name of one of our awareness-raising courses for professionals).

Family Sentence is grateful for the advice and support it received from Families Outside in the course of the project and would recommend that teachers working in prisons familiarise themselves with the work of the charity and promote its work to students and their families.

The following is an interview with Professor Nancy Loucks OBE, Chief Executive of Families Outside.

Can you give us an idea of the number of families in Scotland (or perhaps a percentage) who are affected by imprisonment?

Well, that would be nice, but no. Despite the fact that the UN Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners 2015 (Nelson Mandela Rules) requires prison services to record this information, it is something we don’t do in the UK beyond “next of kin”. As far as we are aware, only Cornton Vale asks people whether they have children, and then it’s recorded on their individual file rather than in a way that allows us to aggregate the information.

The current estimate of the number of children affected by imprisonment each year in Scotland is 27,000.

This figure was extrapolated by Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services from the 2011 SPS Prisoner Survey, which asked how many children under the age of 18 each person in prison had on the day of the survey. We know that the daily prison population is about 25,500 at present, with annual receptions into prison of about 34,000. So, we can guess that the number of families affected is fairly high. But it is a guess.

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FCOs are prison officers given the specific remit of helping male and female prisoners to maintain and strengthen family contact whilst they are in prison.

Among the most well-known faces in Barlinnie is FCO team member Peter Daley, family and community liaison officer. Peter works alongside a further three FCOs.

Dealing with very young and vulnerable children is never easy but it has its rewards, says: “An FCO’s remit can sometimes be silly shenanigans. For example, having to sing nursery rhymes so children can work on their voice tone, which is so important in a child’s development. They need to be nurtured, to feel safe and to experience quality time together. Getting them to do play activities and engaging with their child is important in a very real and all very relevant to the attachment and why play is so important in a child’s development.

Ultimately we hope that when the dads do get out of jail they will continue to engage with their child or children, put their family first and think twice about reoffending.”

Peter says: “As well as Twinkle Twinkle we also sing Incy Wincy Spider and the Wheels on The Bus. When singing the songs it is important that you count ‘1,2,3’ before you start as this enables small children to start counting. And you do the actions during the songs and encourage the children as this allows them to be active and most of all sing out loud and have fun!!

When reading stories it is important that dads engage the children by way of voice tone and allow them to point out the characters they see in the book.”

FCOs help fathers to maintain attachments with their children and families throughout their sentence and beyond.

Since the programme was launched in August 2016, the team have noticed big changes in terms of men really stepping up in their approach to fatherhood.

Peter says: “I am seeing dads being much more confident when doing play activities and engaging with their child. It used to be the case that dads thought looking after the kids was just for mums. But that’s changing. More and more are changing nappies now and really engaging with the kids.

Ultimately we hope that when the guys get out of jail they will continue to engage with their child or children, put their family first and think twice about reoffending.”

With the current focus upon very young children, SPS hope in future to develop initiatives, supporting bonds between offenders and children aged five and over.

To find out more about programmes supporting parenting for male and female offenders, speak to a Family Contact Officer in your prison.

www.sps.gov.uk/Families/WhereCanIGetSupport/Family-Contact-Officers.aspx

SPS Family Contact Officers (FCOs)

Based in prisons across Scotland, Family Contact Officers (FCOs) work with prisoners and their loved ones to keep families attached and connected. There is at least one FCO in each of Scotland’s 13 Scottish prisons.

Specifically aimed at creating a bond between prison-based dads and children under the age of five, the dads’ programme teaches fathers how to play with their kids in a way that will nurture and enhance their development.

Members of the Dads’ Programme are entitled to a weekly two-hour visit with their young child. Taking place in the relaxed family visit room, sessions usually involve playdough, paints, rhymes, songs, and books. Men are encouraged to engage in hands-on play sessions, facilitated by Early Years Scotland, over a ten-week period.

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Early Years Scotland

The leading third sector organisation working with children from pre-birth up to age five. Early Years Scotland is committed to ensuring every child in Scotland gets the best start in life.

www.earlyyears-scotland.org

How important is the bond between a parent and a child and how do you help maintain this in a prison environment?

The bond between any parent and child is very important. When imprisonment affects families, the attachment can be affected straight away. The GIRFEC Framework aims to provide every child in Scotland with the best start in life. Children have the right to be nurtured, to feel safe and included. Keeping their attachment/relationship strong with their dads whilst in prison allows them to still be cared for by their dad. We give them a safe comfortable environment where they can enjoy quality time together.

Tell me about your day-to-day job and remit within Barlinnie and the other prisons you work in?

We provide the families with a fun, relaxed environment, give the children an opportunity to stay attached to their dad and keep the family together as a unit. The fathers’ programme covers topics such as brain development, staying connected, attachment and why play is so important in a child’s development.

What are the overall objectives of the organisation Early Years Scotland?

Early Years Scotland aims to provide opportunities for families to stay connected and attached and to break the cycle of reoffending.

What challenges do you face in your role?

A minor challenge I find is when the dads feel embarrassed at song time or not being confident when feeding/ changing their children. I am there to make the dads aware of the benefits of singing/ playing with their child and providing them with support and advice to face their challenges.

Apart from getting to play with children regularly... what do you find most rewarding about your role?

When I see the dads being more confident and actually playing with their child and using the techniques and role modelling behaviours that I have displayed throughout our sessions.

Are there early years workers based in non-prison settings across Scotland?

We work in communities providing stay, play and learn, baby massage courses, PI activity sessions, one-to-one sessions and messy play sessions. We also provide help to local authority nurseries and their staff.
A Family Sentence began life in September 2016, culminating in a series of devised theatre and multi-media performances in HMP Barlinnie and secondly by members of the Garthamlock community who have coped with the incarceration of relatives.

September 2016 marked the official start of the project. It was then that Elly Goodman and Neil Packham of the Citizens Theatre began the research which would underpin the delivery of A Family Sentence. Although it represented a unique and challenging subject matter, the theatre makers weren’t quite starting from scratch. In fact Elly and Neil have a proud record of making theatre with imprisoned men and women, having worked in partnership with New College Lanarkshire since 2010. This includes a successful three-year residency in HMP Barlinnie from 2012–2015. Their experience of working with male prisoners provided them with an insight into how men cope with feeling isolated from their families. During the research phase they forged relationships with family contact officers and organisations such as Families Outside, The Croft Visitor Centre and many more.

With the help of family and community liaison officer Peter Daley, Elly and Neil also attended meetings of the Dads’ Programme and drew heavily on these sessions to generate material that featured in the final performances.

In September 2016 Elly and Neil also had their first meeting with Garthamlock Community Group. A strong and formidable force, the group had previously agreed to participate in A Family Sentence, despite the majority of their members never having acted before. It was the subject matter which convinced them to do it. They had a lot to say: about what it’s like to raise your children whilst your partner is inside; about the stigma around disclosing your situation to neighbours and teachers, and many other issues.

Regular drama and script development sessions were held in Garthamlock Parish Church from September 2016 until the final weeks of May 2017 when a more intensive rehearsal schedule helped prepare them for the shows in late June 2017. There were many challenges along the way but a core group prevailed and several members demonstrated a real flair for improvisation which was evident in the final shows. Buoyed by the success of these shows, the Garthamlock cast have now decided to establish themselves as a permanent community theatre group.

Meanwhile a group of men had started writing a show from within Barlinnie’s prison walls about their experiences of serving a sentence away from their families. Also supported by Elly and Neil, in partnership with a lecturer from New College Lanarkshire, the men attended weekly drama and writing sessions, from January to April 2017. Together they created memorable scenes about the emotional rollercoaster that a prison visit with your family represents; how a phone call home can wreck your head and what to tell the kids about your absence from their lives.

Being a short-term prison there were dozens of individuals in Barlinnie who made valuable contributions to A Family Sentence during early and interim rehearsals. Many of these men were unable to see the project through because they were either liberated or transferred to other prisons. Indeed three of the actors who appeared in the final shows had only joined the cast a few weeks beforehand. But audiences would never have guessed this due to the high calibre performances and engagement with the issues, shown by all five actors involved.

As well as presenting the issue of incarceration from two separate perspectives: that of the imprisoned men and that of partners, children, parents, brothers and sisters, the project also wanted to ensure that each of the two perspectives was heard and responded to by the other group – to create a dialogue between the two. This was achieved through use of audio recordings of certain scenes by one group which were played back to the other who would then formulate a response. These responses would often generate a need for a new scene: for example: one recording explored how prisoners ensure they have enough money to survive inside. This recording soon inspired a similar piece about relatives’ battles to make ends meet on the outside. In the end the two pieces featured across both shows. Presiding over the two projects along with Elly and Neil was theatre maker and audio specialist Rikki Traynor. It was thanks to his creative and technological input that the audio recordings facilitated this two-way conversation. He also created some stand-out soundscapes featured in the two shows.

Another medium which played an important role in these two-way conversations was animation. Film-maker and New College Lanarkshire lecturer Inigo Garrido ran a six-week animation course within Barlinnie from January to mid-February 2017. During these workshops a series of animation clips were created by art students. These bold thought-provoking animations were shown at both performances using a projector screen.
What follows is a series of activities which prison teaching staff can use as a starting point for building the theme of family into lesson plans or projects devised and developed with prisoners. The ideas outlined are intended as a starting point only and can be built on and enhanced by teachers. The activities are grouped under different subject headings but many of the themes and issues addressed are cross curricular in nature.

**What is Family?**

Families come in all shapes and sizes these days. No longer confined to mum, dad and their two children, there are a multitude of family units in existence today. From single dads and single mums to couples with adopted/foster children, LGBT families, extended families, friends who live as family; a community of individuals living in supported accommodation: there are endless modern variations of the family unit.

How would you define a family?

Do you agree with the definition below?

A group of people who care for each other and work hard to nurture and support each other in their day to day lives.

The image on the next page shows a theatre family: a group of 13 individuals who came together during the summer of 2017 to work on A Family Sentence Barlinne. Only six of the group are actors including two professional actors. Many of the remainder are employed in theatre support roles including stage management and costume, lighting and audio technicians. Did you know that it takes so many people to put a theatre show together?

Here’s a list of some of the shared experiences which this theatre family enjoyed during rehearsals, along with a host of everyday moments taken from family life. Can you tell the difference between the two?

**Communications, Citizenship**

- Having a blether over a cuppa
- Getting the giggles whilst rehearsing a serious scene
- Fighting over the last biscuit
- Giving advice to someone who is having a bad day
- Making tea for the family
- Coming up with an idea for a sound effect
- Everyone taking part in a sing-a-long
- Warming up your voices with some vocal exercises
- Requesting urgent access to the bathroom
- Actors have a group hug in order to ease nerves and support each other before taking to the stage
- Picking up someone’s creased clothes from the floor and folding them neatly
- Being there for each other

**Family Moments**

When you have finished ask your teacher for feedback. Now come up with five everyday family moments of your own. Focus upon shared activities or experiences which involve the whole family or at least the majority. You can tap into your own family memories as well as adding those which you would like to experience with your family in future.

Write them down in the space below.

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**Homework Task**

Consult with your partner and child or other members of your immediate family and create five more moments which you would all like to enjoy together after your release from prison. Below are two examples to get you started.

- A family dog walk
- Sitting down to a meal together
Drama, Script-Writing, Communications

**FAMILY MATTERS**

The photograph opposite is taken from A Family Sentence, Babelsberg. What do you think is going on in this frozen scene? The image shows a father (pictured left) visiting his son, in prison (pictured right) while an officer keeps watch in the background.

Take a closer look at the image. The dad’s arms are outstretched as though in frustration at his son or something his son has said to him. What about the son? What can you tell about how he is feeling from his body language and the way he is holding himself? Note that he’s holding a packet of crisps. Can you imagine what the conversation between the father and son might be?

There are two different ways to approach this task. Choose which one you’d like to participate in and find a partner if it’s method one.

**Method One: Improvisation**

In theatre and film directors sometimes utilise a technique called improvisation. This involves the director presenting actors with an idea for a particular scene. i.e. two estranged lovers bump into each other in a lift.

Actors will take the initial idea and place themselves as characters in the scene. Using a combination of instinct, life experience, and an understanding of the emotions involved, they go on to build the scene. The objective is to work together, creating action and dialogue for their respective characters.

Now try this technique in response to the frozen image on the page. Decide whether you will play the prisoner or the visiting dad. Take a few minutes to think about what your character could say or do, and crucially, what might transpire to upset him. Now play the scene through a few times with your partner, discussing what works and what doesn’t. Decide on the final version of your scene and voila: you have improvised your first scene!

**Method Two: Dip your toes in script-writing!**

Write your first scene working independently or in a group. You may find it easier to write in Glaswegian vernacular. This will also make the scene more authentic. As well as writing dialogue you can add some action if it’s appropriate i.e. ‘Character A gets up and storms out of visit room.’ But remember if this happens too early it may close the scene down.

**Dad Visits Son in Prison.**

**Visit scene (from frozen image)**

- **Prisoner:** We there yer there, awright how you doin, ye awright, good to see ye, good to see ye.
- **Dad:** Aye, aye, right.
- **Prisoner:** Aw see this, a hate these visits. Ma hands are sweating and ma heart’s pure poundin, a don’t know why a get like this was visits, ye know.
- **Dad:** How ye been?
- **Prisoner:** What’s this, a bag a crisps? Is that all you got us?
- **Dad:** Am skint. Aw ma money goes oan they weans.
- **Prisoner:** A wiz lookin forward tae a couple a bars as well, know wit a mean?
- **Dad:** So how have ye been, a asked ye?
- **Prisoner:** Pissit, look, look where a um. Am in the jail, know what a mean, a mean that’s a daft question, is it no? There’s nothing tae dae in here, am dubbed up aw the time.
- **Dad:** Ae it’s hard you, eh? You’ve got it aw hard then int ye. (to kids)
- **Prisoner:** Gonnae get oor here. (to son)

They’re no listenin to me, neer they ur. (to others)
- **Son:** Sorry mate! (to kids)
- **Prisoner:** Gaunny get our here! (to son)
- **Dad:** See it’s only they tae listen tae.
- **Prisoner:** It’s only two wee weans, ye must be able to tell them wittaedaean that.
- **Dad:** A tell them wit tae dae! So tell me will dae you dae aw day? Ye sit in yer pitch aw day, ye get yer bedding done, yer dinner gets done, everythin gets brought tae ye.
- **Prisoner:** Am washin their clothes, am putting them oot tae school nice n dressed, am makin sure their comin hame tae food on the table, am the wan who’s daein everythin.

**Class Discussion Prompts**

Once you’ve read the actual scene you can take part in a class discussion. Explore the following four questions:

1. What kind of problems is the prisoner’s dad experiencing?
2. What is the prisoner’s perspective of the situation?
3. Which of the two characters do you feel most sympathy towards and why?
4. Thinking more generally, in what ways does a prison sentence affect children?

Discover the actual scene

Are you curious as to how the real script played out in A Family Sentence? Here you can read the scene as it was performed in the play.

Don’t worry if your work bears little or no resemblance to the scene in the play. In the world of theatre, there is no hard and fast formula for developing a storyline. In this particular scene several different approaches are worthy of exploration.

**Officer:**

**Dad:** Did ye want tae be in here? A don’t want tae be in here.

**Prisoner:** Right, right………..fair enough but am here noo aren’t ah?

**Officer:** What am a supposed tae dae. Am here noo, what am a supposed tae dae ah?

**Dad:** You think it’s easy fir me, know what a mean. See when that door shuts at night, know what a mean.

**Officer:** TIME!

**Dad:** Joost remember, they’re your weans.

**Prisoner:** Aye a know but their your grandweans Da.

**Officer:** ‘Two minutes folks.’

**Prisoner 2:** We’re gulping down juice. I feel gutted.

**Officer:** Right finish up!

**Prisoner 2:** A hug and a handshake then it’s back to the hall.
Art and Creative Writing Activities

PRISON VISITS/ HAPPY FAMILIES

Anticipation of the all-important visit, the longest for some to sit down and talk to a loved one face to face, can induce many different emotions from the children including anxiety, excitement, happiness and disappointment if things don’t go as well as expected.

Art Prompt

– Paint a real or imaginary scene set in a prison visit room in which you convey some of the emotions which prisoners and/or their families may experience during this time.

Prison Visit Room

– Begin by sketching the visit room.
– Now think about conveying facial expressions and body language in your characters. Consider using speech bubbles.
– Now introduce colour to convey the emotions of your characters.

Happy Family

– Try a pencil sketch of a happy family. You can build an idea around your own family/support network or create an imaginary one.
– Choose a non-prison setting, perhaps – an imaginary one.

You could use coloured pencils or sketch ask your art teacher for a picnic in the park or even a beach.

Choose a non-prison setting, perhaps – an imaginary one.

You can build an idea around your own family/support network or create an imaginary one.

Now think about conveying facial expressions and body language in your characters. Consider using speech bubbles.

Begin by sketching the visit room.
– Now think about conveying facial expressions and body language in your characters. Consider using speech bubbles.
– Now introduce colour to convey the emotions of your characters.

Creative Writing Task 2

What is a happy family? What does a happy family look like? Write a short poem in which you describe one day in the life of a happy family, real or imaginary.

Discuss with your creative writing teacher how to use the five senses (image, sound, taste, touch and smell) to help create your poem.

Creative Writing Task 2

Keeping the Wean Happy

Write a poem about a mother's/grandmother's/uncle's/aunt's/dad's/son's/daughter's day. Write about the things that they need to make them happy.

Drama, Communications and Creative Writing Prompts

WHAT CHILDREN NEED

Just like adults every child is unique. Each one comes with his/her own set of individual character traits, demands and challenges. For parents comes the unenviable task of nurturing their child’s physical and mental wellbeing as they reach different stages of personal development. To say that this is not always easy is something of an understatement...

Drama Task

The following is an extract from A Family Sentence. In this imaginary dream-like scene the prison-based Dads programme gives permission for one dad to look after his two children whilst serving a sentence in the jail.

Working in pairs, ask your partner to read the extract to you, acting out the role of the prison-based dad. Now swap over and do the same again. At the end you can provide some commentary on what you thought of each other’s performances. Try to be helpful and encouraging.

Creative Writing Task 2

Keeping the Wean Happy

Write a poem about your son/daughter; niece/nephew; grandchild/grand-daughter and the things that they need to make them happy.

Drama Task 2 Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing

Which items did Andrew say his children needed? Read the extract through once more and try to name as many as possible from memory. Can you get to 15?

In the scene the prison-based dad identifies a number of potential barriers which would prevent his children from flourishing in a prison environment. He comes up with solutions for some but not all of the challenges. How many problems can you find? Once you’ve identified all the problems try to identify the dad’s suggested solution.

And if no remedy is offered you

Or if no remedy is offered you can write ‘none.’ Can you think of any more potential problems with children staying in prisons? Try to add a few of your own. Is there anything that could be done to resolve the issues?

Problems for Andrew’s kids Noise Solution Ear protectors
WHAT IS A DAD?

In days gone by, a father’s role within the family unit and in the context of wider society, was somewhat different to what it is today. Always in charge of the household, dad was someone to be feared if his rules were not adhered to by kids. ‘Just wait till your father gets home!’ This was the phrase dreaded most by children growing up in Scotland during the 1970s and 1980s and many decades gone before.

However things have changed a lot since those days. Thankfully mothers are no longer expected to stay home and raise children single-handedly whilst fathers work excessively to pay the bills. Couples aim to work together to bring up their little ones, often sharing childcare arrangements.

The modern Scottish dad doesn’t sit in his arm-chair shouting the odds at everyone. These days he is much more hands-on, playing with his kids, reading bedtime stories and taking them to soft play and swimming lessons.

But every child is unique and every dad also. The following is a piece of devised theatre by Barlinnie prisoners created during early rehearsals of A Family Sentence. Participants started off with the theme ‘What is a dad?’ They worked together to explore their own ideas about the diversity of a father’s role.

Read their finished script which was performed for guests during International Prison Education Day at Barlinnie. Afterwards make some notes about how you would define the role of a dad under the headline ‘What is a Dad?’

Task 1 Art Prompt

Using some of the ideas in the script and your own notes as inspiration, illustrate the varied roles of a modern-day dad.

Your visual artwork should include the following:

– A modern Scottish dad, his appearance.
– Setting i.e. is he at home, in the city?
– His duties and responsibilities.
– His concerns and challenges

The process:

– Begin with rough pencil sketches
– Refine once you’re happy with these, perhaps using fine-line pen.
– Render it using some or a combination of the following media: colour pencil, pastel, ink pen, watercolour, acrylic.
– Or why not use collage?

Note for art lecturers: the visual art prompt can be adapted for use in a women’s prison by examining the role of a modern-day mum.

Task 2 Class Discussion/Family Visit Task

For many people parenting or looking after nieces, nephews, grandchildren and friends’ children, is instinctive. Nobody gives you a rule-book on how to do it. So many people look after young people to the best of their abilities without really thinking about the qualities and skills they bring to the job.

This task asks you to split up into two groups and work together to identify five examples of qualities or values which people use to care for young people.

For each of the five, think of an activity in which a parent/carer would put this skill into practice. One answer is given to get you started.

OR

Alternatively this could be a ‘homework’ task for use by individuals during or prior to family visits. Prisoners could team up with their partners to tackle this exercise, supported by family contact officers.

Parental skill/attribute: Being very patient.
Used when: Child is learning to walk.

What else does a dad do?
Have we missed anything?
Handy-man, taxi driver, bad dancer
Puncture repair man, electricity top-up, a helper
A super-hero
He’s a spell-checker, a sounding board
He’s the boss, the breadwinner, the dude
Teacher, taxi driver, yor world, yer mate
Wait a minute. A dad is, a cuddle.
(Actors embrace.)

It’s official. 2016 is Year of The Dad. But what exactly is a dad?
Well...
A dad is somebody who... takes you to football matches.
He’s always got your back.
He looks after you.
He’s the guy who won your mum’s heart
Gives you money.
Gives good advice.
Helps unravel the mysteries of the universe... (actors examine night sky) and DIY. (then hammer an imaginary nail in)
Shows you how to rock (actors do some air guitar)
How to live Someone you listen to
Someone to look up to.
Someone who
(actor playing dad gets a gentle boot on the bum)
Give you a kick up the bum when you need it most...
He sets examples of life choices
The guy who’s always there for you
Or a magician who is always disappearing.
A figure of authority
Funny guy
What else does a dad do?
Have we missed anything?
Handy-man, taxi driver, bad dancer
Puncture repair man, electricity top up, a helper
A super-hero
He’s a spell-checker, a sounding board
He’s the boss, the breadwinner, the dude
Teacher, taxi driver, yor world, yer mate
Wait a minute. A dad is, a cuddle.
(Actors embrace.)
PRISONERS' VIEWS

Andrew B

Haji A

Charlie R

Billy McA

James B
In this section you can read comments from the five actors who wrote and starred in A Family Sentence Barlinnie alongside professional actors Martin Docherty and Ian Bustard. James B, Charlie R, Billy McA, Andrew B and Haji A, were asked for their views on the role of art education in prisons in the context of making projects like this possible. They also discuss their personal journeys with A Family Sentence and how they feel about some of the issues raised by the multi-media performance.

Andrew B

“At first I was scared and didn’t think I would have done it. But a lot of people could associate with it. People will open their eyes to a family sentence noo. It brought me out of my shell, made me more confident and willing to do more things that I may not have done in the past.”

Andrew was released on the tag in June 2017 and is now focusing upon being a dad to his sons. Along with his partner, Andrew attended a performance of A Family Sentence, Garthamlock, at the Citizens Theatre. He seemed relaxed and was looking forward to spending time with his family.

James B

“I now have taken part in the project it has made me question my own relationship or lack of relationship with my own children who are grown up now. It has made me think of how much better I could have been as a father. Even though the project didn’t look at a father’s role in everyday life for their children, I couldn’t get away from thinking about my boys when they were little. And how much of a bad dad they must think of me”

James said he felt very strongly that projects like this should happen in prisons.

“No one wants to jump about on stage. But we did. And if we have that creativity within us then there must be other prisoners who have it too. Being able to tap into that was a big thing for me. And I want to continue to do it. When I finish this sentence I will go to the Citizens Theatre and join their community collective. I was going to start a shed for drama and we could do it every day. Why don’t they do that?”

Billy McA

“I felt on top of the world. I would chop down any door to do this again. Now they have the play in their minds hopefully the authorities or the powers that be will take a different look at how prisoners and their families are treated.”

Billy continues to battle against the cycle of reoffending and has recently started working on Barlinnie’s radio station, Barbed Wireless.

“For me it’s the confidence you get from doing something like this. I felt amazing. It also made me think about how important family relationships are. I’m getting regular visits now from my mum and my cousins. Last night my cousin brought her kids up to see me, all three of them. It’s nice to hear them say ‘Uncle Billy.’ I also liked that we were on stage teaching the audience something. Then they were able to discuss the issues in it. And they took it seriously. We were worried that they wouldn’t.”

Charlie R

“A really rewarding thing to have been involved in with good reviews from everyone. It was difficult to get over the nerves but working with the whole team it became easier. And I would love to be involved in more performances. I found it really beneficial with speaking in front of people.”

Charlie is due to be released at the end of 2017 and intends to return to his job as a joiner with a renewed confidence gained from acting.

“Working on A Family Sentence opened my eyes to the opportunities that exist in education such as the prison magazine and the radio station. I’m now working full time in the prison radio and I’m getting so much out of it. I feel valued. When I started my sentence I was working in the bike sheds. The difference is like night and day. I ended up in A Family Sentence because I knew James. I really think the Citizens Theatre did a brilliant thing for us. Imagine if they made a shed for drama and we could do it every day. Why don’t they do that?”

Haji A

“It was interesting to focus on this theme - working with men and their opinions and experiences of parenting. Looking back, the project went from scary to liking it. It was hilarious; we made people laugh even about a serious subject such as the family. I liked that we had ownership of the material and its content although I struggled learning my lines.”

Due to be liberated in December 2017, Haji is keen to spend more time with his five-year-old daughter as part of getting his life back on track.

“My daughter is five. She is about to turn six. From working on A Family Sentence I found out all about the family visits. And I have recently been asking the governor of Barlinnie to change the rules so that all kids can get two-hour family visits during the summer holidays. Not just the ones under five. I can’t wait to get out and spend time with my daughter. This has been my longest sentence and being away from her has been so hard.”

**It has made me think of how much better I could have been as a father**
Creative self-expression, personal empowerment, improved confidence and self-esteem, the experience of actively participating in a team or community and crucially, feeling that your contribution is valued.

This is a summary of the main benefits reported by the core group of actors and writers who took part in *A Family Sentence* in Barlinnie. Surely, there is a direct correlation between all of these benefits and a reduction in the risk of reoffending.

We hope that this short resource will act as a lasting legacy for the Family Sentence Project and the work of the Citizens’ Theatre at HMP Barlinnie. We hope that the material contained in this booklet will provide some useful information and prompts for prison teachers wishing both to better understand the impact of family separation on their learners and to develop their learners’ skills by designing lessons on the theme of family.

In this way we hope that prison education can reinforce the important work being carried out by the agencies and services highlighted in this publication and support families as a force for good and desistance from crime.

Wendy Miller
Lecturer, Creative Writing, New College Lanarkshire who also supported the Citizens Theatre during their three-year residency in HMP Barlinnie.
Family Sentence

"Working on a Family Sentence opened up my eyes to the opportunities that exist in education."