

Outcomes Evaluation of the Long Distance Dads[©] Program

Conducted by:

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Center for Organizational Research & Evaluation
(CORE)

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Outcomes Evaluation of the Long Distance Dads[©] (LDD) Program Executive Summary

Background

In the summer of 2001, Penn State Erie's CORE submitted a proposal to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) to conduct an outcomes evaluation of the LDD program at SCI Albion. CORE was awarded a contract in the amount of \$141,887 in September of 2001. The 18-month evaluation was conducted from October 1, 2001 – March 31, 2003 for an actual cost of \$139,236.

Methods

This outcomes study utilized a time series, matched control design including proxy measures and archival data, to measure baseline and post-program changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors among LDD participants. This study had 4 components: survey of inmates; caregiver telephone interviews; face-to-face inmate interviews; and institutional data collection. We collected quantitative and qualitative data via survey from participants in 3, 12-week LDD sessions. All inmates and caregivers signed written consent forms prior to their study participation.

The primary analytic test used was General Linear Models (GLM) Repeated Measures to measure within-group and between-group differences over the subsequent time periods. We also used t-tests, Pearson's correlation coefficients, chi-square, McNemar's, and linear regression to analyze the data.

Results

We collected pre-test data on 84 experimental inmates, 60 controls, and 37 caregivers. At post-test, we collected data on 42 experimental inmates, 47 controls, and 18 caregivers for retention rates of 50%, 78%, and 49% respectively. The control group was matched to the experimental group and there were no statistically significant differences between the 2 groups on the 5 key matching variables at pre-test: race/ethnicity; age; marital status; education; and sentence length (minimum and maximum).

To answer the primary research question: "Does the LDD program have any effect?" we first compared the data from the pre-post tests between the experimental and control groups and found 5 differences. At pre-test, the control group's average score was higher for: 1) involvement (26.6 vs. 15.5 out of 40); 2) awareness (30.7 vs. 26.1 out of 40); and 3) ICAN Fathering Profile total score (122.7 vs. 101.7). At post-test, there were 2 differences where the experimental group mean was higher/better than the control group: 1) average number of letters father reported sending home to children (5.0 vs. 3.0) and 2) total contact with child per year on average (92.2 vs. 50.9) and 1 difference where the control group scored higher than the experimental group ("involvement" 25.7 vs. 18.9 respectively).

We combined the series of follow-up data into one group and averaged the scores. We then compared the combined follow-up data to the pre- and post-test data via the GLM repeated measures procedure (multivariate statistics Wilk's Lambda was used for computation). Results from these tests indicated only 1 significant difference between the experimental and control groups: the control group indicated higher "involvement" than the experimental group. There were trends of increasing means over times for both the experimental and control groups for: anger & frustration; skills & consistency; LDD content test sum; and parental locus of control. However, the post-test mean for "awareness" was significantly higher than the pre-test and follow-ups. We tested the interaction of time and group effects and found only 2 significant associations: "awareness," and "ICAN Fathering Profile total score."

In a further attempt to examine the data, we fit a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models for each of the 20 outcome variables (data not shown here). Each of the models included 3 independent/predictor variables: the pre-test; post-test; and group variable (experimental vs. control). The group variable was not a significant predictor of any of the outcome variables.

We combined all caregiver data over all three of the LDD sessions for analyses which resulted in a sample of 18 caregivers who completed both the pre- and post-test interviews. There was 1 significant research finding for the outcome variables: caregivers stated that the number of calls fathers made to their children decreased significantly from pre to post-sessions (3 calls/month vs. 2.1/month).

In order to provide an in-depth assessment of the impact of the Long Distance Dad's Program, CORE conducted face-to-face audio-taped interviews with LDD participants. Six inmates ultimately participated in both the pre- and post-LDD interviews. The interview questions covered a multitude of fathering topics that related directly to the curriculum taught in the LDD program. For example, there were questions dealing with: anger; nurturing skills; children's needs; the definition of defense mechanisms; child development stages; consistency with parenting habits, etc. In summary, of the three main analytical domains (skills, knowledge, anger), there were 68 occurrences of post-session change out of 132 opportunities (52%). When asked if the LDD program met their expectations, 5 out of 6 fathers answered in the affirmative.

Discussion

In answer to the primary research question: "Does the Long Distance Dads program improve inmates' fathering knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or behaviors?" our outcomes evaluation found minimal evidence.

Both the experimental and control groups were identically matched on demographics and virtually identical at pre-test on the outcome variables. At post-test, of the 20 possible measured outcomes, there were only 2 variables that

showed the experimental group performing better than the comparison group: number of letters sent to the child (self-report) and total contact with the child (self-report). Because this self-reported contact was *not* corroborated by the caregiver data (i.e., the caregivers reported no significant improvement in father contact with the child from pre-post interview; in fact, the 1 significant difference was a reported *decrease* in number of times father telephoned the child), it is reasonable to believe that at post-test, the inmates participating in the LDD program may have felt obligated to report more evidence of positive fathering with the child. However, it is also possible that the caregivers underestimated the number of letters sent to the child/children during that time.

Furthermore, upon conducting the GLM repeated measures with the pre-, post-, and combined follow-up tests, we found only 1 significant group effect: the control group reported more involvement with their children than the experimental group. However, the involvement domain of the ICAN scale is tenuous since many of the questions are not applicable to an inmate population. Hence, interpretation of this domain is troublesome. Nonetheless, the LDD program participants' lower scores in this involvement domain may be a function of their introspection and hence desire and motivation to improve their degree of involvement via enrollment in the program. However, it remains the case that OLS regression modeling also failed to show that LDD program participation was associated with any of the outcomes.

While quantitative analyses indicated that the LDD program may not be reaching its potential, the qualitative results suggest that this fathering program has some promise. The program is quite popular with the inmates as evidenced by an extensive waiting list and the inmates appear to be satisfied with program and hold it in high regard. In addition, based on the random sample of inmates interviewed, approximately half gained knowledge and skills from the program and nearly 70% learned about dealing with anger. Thus, there is a solid framework of inmate support for the program. SCI Albion and other institutions that are using the program might consider the recommendations in this report as a way to increase desired programming outcomes.

Institution-specific recommendations

- 1) establish an LDD steering committee with the goal of monitoring program administration issues (e.g., curricula, training, dissemination, outcomes)
- 2) create a new training program policy so that all DOC staff have at least a basic understanding of the variety of programs offered with the goal of creating institution-wide support and encouragement of programming
- 3) list the LDD program in the psychology and education programming materials
- 4) promote and increase contact between inmates and their children
- 5) improve training for LDD program administrators and peer leaders

- 6) improve the environment of the group sessions (to allow for easier group communication)
- 7) improve the environment of the family visitation area by reinstating a child play area and/or by allowing inmates to change into “street clothes” or non-institutional attire for visits
- 8) investigate providing programming to inmates’ children
- 9) standardize programming across the state

Program-specific recommendations

- 1) enhance the curriculum/programming (e.g., include components on personality profiling, psychological assessments, and/or “criminal thinking errors” as risk factors for incarceration)
- 2) increase subject matter retention via reviews/exams
- 3) streamline the material in order to increase learning (e.g., encourage the father to connect the information from the “child development” section directly to their child/children)
- 4) meet more than once/week or increase each week’s session length
- 5) group inmates based on the similar ages of their children
- 6) teach specific communication skills (e.g., phone conversations and letter-writing)
- 7) incorporate actual letter-writing in the course
- 8) make arrangements for fathers’ reading level/translation needs
- 9) increase the amount, quality, and variety of resources fathers can send home
- 10) implement an internal evaluation system (e.g., improve data collection and tracking with the goal of examining the data for gaps in knowledge, attitudes, or skills)
- 11) ask for structured feedback from the inmates on the program
- 12) provide additional/follow-up LDD sessions
- 13) implement multi-faceted programming (i.e., guest speakers, multi-media presentations, cognitive therapy, role-playing, etc.)
- 14) bring children and fathers together (e.g., family day at the end of the program)
- 15) reduce the drop-out rate (e.g., provide make-up classes for those who miss the class due to mandatory call-outs)
- 16) enhance the milieu for the class (explore other rooms for meeting)
- 17) better utilize peer leader meetings
- 18) link the LDD program with community programs such as pre-release planning

Outcomes Evaluation of the Long Distance Dads[©] (LDD) Program

Introduction

In the fall of 1999, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College's Center for Organizational Research & Evaluation (CORE) was awarded funding by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD) to conduct a process evaluation of the LDD program at State Correctional Institution at Albion (SCI Albion). The 18-month process evaluation was conducted from January 1, 2000-June 30, 2001 at a cost of \$135,560 (award amount was \$145,208).

The purpose of the process evaluation was to understand how the LDD program was being implemented. This type of evaluation "verifies what the program is and whether or not it is delivered as intended to the targeted recipients" (Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey, 1999). The process evaluation consisted of four phases: 1) semi-structured, key informant interviews with Department of Corrections (DOC) staff and administration at SCI Albion, 2) semi-structured interviews with inmate fathers, 3) direct observation of the LDD group sessions, and 4) a statewide inventory of all parenting programs being used throughout the DOC system (at the request of the DOC). Data were also gathered via chart/record review.

The results of the process evaluation indicated a general overall positive inmate response to the program. A number of institutional and programmatic recommendations were made including: incorporating a standardized training protocol for staff orientation to inmate programming; incorporating policies that facilitate rather than discourage contact between inmate fathers and their children; enhancing and updating the curriculum; reducing drop-out rates; improving programmatic record-keeping; and developing a Phase II LDD follow-up program.

Once learning *how* the LDD program was run, CORE could begin to investigate *whether* the LDD program was having the kind of impact that was desired via an *outcomes* evaluation. In the summer of 2001, Penn State Erie's CORE submitted a proposal to the PCCD to conduct an outcomes evaluation of the LDD program at SCI Albion. CORE was awarded a contract in the amount of \$141,887 in September of 2001. The 18-month evaluation was conducted from October 1, 2001 – March 31, 2003 for an actual cost of \$139,236.

This report details the findings from the outcomes evaluation that sought to answer the question: "Does the Long Distance Dads program improve inmates' fathering knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or behaviors?"

Background

Nationwide Trends

There were 2,019,234 persons incarcerated in the United States as of June 30, 2002 (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). While the Department of Justice reports that crime rates are down, the prison population continues to rise. Pennsylvania state prison officials and many penologists cite stricter sentencing guidelines, reduced parole opportunities, and a crackdown on drug cases as the reason for this trend (Hahn, 2000).

Longer prison sentences and reduced parole opportunities mean that there is an increased amount of time available for rehabilitation. The concept of inmate rehabilitation appears to have public support. A survey of 1,000 Ohio residents found that most (83%) felt that rehabilitation was “important” or “very important” in correctional policy and 41% stated that rehabilitation “should be the main emphasis” compared to 20% who indicated that punishment was most important (Applegate, 1997). Rehabilitation in prisons has important implications for families and children. A reported 1.5 million - 2 million children in the United States have a mother or father in a federal or state prison – a figure that has grown in step with the swelling of the nation’s prison population (Crary, 2000; U.S. Department of Justice, 2000; The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 2001). Poor parenting and/or neglect of a child has been shown to be associated with delinquency and criminal behavior (Blankenhorn, 1995). Statistics show that 70% of juveniles incarcerated in state reform institutions are from homes with no father or without natural parents (U.S. Department of Justice, 1988) and children from single-mother households are 8 times more likely to go to prison and 20 times more likely to exhibit behavioral problems than children from two-parent households (Knight, 2000).

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC)

The PA DOC consists of 26 correctional institutions. Along with the 26 prisons, the Department operates 14 community corrections centers. The total inmate population is nearly 41,000 and there are nearly 15,000 employees who work within the department (Kemerer, 2000). The mission of the PA DOC reads: “Our mission is to protect the public by confining persons committed to our custody in safe, secure facilities, and to provide opportunities for inmates to acquire the skills and values necessary to become productive law-abiding citizens; while respecting the rights of crime victims” (PA DOC, 2003).

The PA DOC Annual Statistical Report for the year 2000 detailed that the average age of DOC inmates was 35 (50% within the ages of 25-39) and most inmates (95.7%) were male. In 1999, African-Americans comprised 55.3% of the PA DOC population, 33.9% of inmates were white, 10.1% were Hispanic, and 0.7% were categorized as “other races.” In terms of marital status, the majority of inmates were listed as single (69.9%), 16% were married, 9% were divorced, 4% separated, 1%

widowed, and 0.2% had a marital status that was “unknown” (Kemerer, 2000). The 2000 report further documents that 34% of inmates indicated they were Protestants, 18% Catholic, 19% Muslim, 0.4% were Jewish, 13% were listed as having a religious affiliation of “other,” and 15% were listed as having “no preference.” Additional data from this report indicated that the majority (73.9%) of inmates with the PA DOC were born in Pennsylvania, 23.2% were born elsewhere in the United States, and 3.0% were “foreign-born.”

The PA DOC has made parenting a core program element for inmates and offers a number of parenting programs throughout the state such as LDD and “Parenting Skills Training.” The department invested \$350,000 in Fiscal Year 1998/1999 in parenting programs designed to increase inmate understanding and acceptance of parenting responsibilities. In Fiscal Year 1999/2000, the PA DOC increased their investment to \$500,000 to fund parenting programs department-wide.

In March of 1999, the PA DOC conducted a family background survey of 638 newly-incarcerated inmates (PA DOC, 1999). The survey found that more than half (55%) of the inmates had one or more children who were under the age of 18 and 42% had two or more children under the age of 18. Most inmates (81.8%) indicated that the mother of their child/children was their primary caregiver while they were incarcerated. Nearly 7% stated that the primary caregivers of their children were the children’s grandparents while 5% indicated that the father or stepfather of the child/children was primary caregiver. Results from this survey found that nearly half of the male inmates (45%) were raised in a traditional two-parent household while 43% were raised by a single parent (88% of these inmates were raised by their mothers while 6% stated that they were raised by their father).

Study Site - SCI Albion

SCI Albion in Erie County was opened in July of 1993 as a medium-security institution for men. The 2000 facility budget for SCI Albion was \$41 million. There are approximately 525 employees and 2,000 inmates at the institution. SCI Albion utilizes civil service-type employment procedures and operates in a union environment. Turnover is much lower than the national average of 14% (Joinson, 2000). Of the 36 employees who left SCI Albion in 1999, 20 were transferred (mostly promotions and transfers), 13 resigned, and 3 retired, resulting in a 2.5% dissatisfied turnover rate. Pennsylvania has a 4.3% turnover rate for Correctional Officers (Criminal Justice Institute, 2000; PA DOC, 2003). The PA DOC, SCI Albion link also detailed that the facility has an 11% minority staff (non-white, females not included).

SCI Albion is one of several state institutions that has specialized units for sex offenders, drug and alcohol offenders, and inmates with special physical and/or mental health needs. In addition to the LDD program, SCI Albion offers programming on topics including: inmate release; geriatric needs; AIDS; programming for inmates sentenced to life in prison (“lifers”); religious programming;

academic courses; and vocational training. SCI Albion also has a unit for inmates who read below the fifth-grade level, offering the assistance of tutors (PA DOC, 2003). The prison also offers recreational activities, provides psychological services including casework/counseling, and has a health care program (PA DOC, 2002)

As of January 31, 2002 (one day after data collection began), 2,036 inmates constituted the total (official) population at SCI Albion; which is 100% of the institution's capacity. Most of the inmates (1,598 or 78.4%) were housed in the "general population." Four percent (86) of the total inmate population were in one of two forms of "restricted housing" (34 in AC and 52 in DC). No inmates were being housed in "Mental Health Units." Of the total, 12% (239) were in "Drug/Alcohol/TC/Units." At the time of the "Physically Present Population Breakdown" assessment, 4% (85) were being housed in the "Special Needs Unit," and less than 1% (8) were in the "Infirmary." Two of the 2,036 inmates were in a local hospital and 18 were on "Authorized Temporary Absence" (PA DOC, 2003).

African-Americans comprised 53.9% of the SCI Albion inmate population (PA DOC, 2002); 32.9% of inmates were white, 12% were Hispanic, and 1.2% were listed as "other." SCI Albion inmates' average age (as of January 31, 2002) was 33 years. The average minimum sentence was 66.22 months (5.52 years) while the average maximum sentence was 158.73 months (13.23 years). SCI Albion had 137 inmates serving life sentences (lifers) as of January 31, 2002. Almost half (49.2%) of the inmate population was incarcerated for a "Part I" offense. Part I offenses include: murder; manslaughter; homicide by vehicle; forcible rape; robbery; aggravated assault; burglary; theft/larceny; and arson. "Part II" offenders account for 26.2% of the prison population at SCI Albion. Part II offenses are defined by the PA DOC as: "other assaults; forgery; fraud; receiving stolen property; weapons; drunken driving; prison breach; kidnapping; statutory rape; deviate sexual intercourse; other sex offenses; narcotic drug laws;" as well as additional offenses. Lastly, 24.6% of the inmate population was incarcerated at SCI Albion due to different types of parole violations.

In terms of custody level, 32.4% of SCI Albion inmates were listed as Level 2 (minimum custody). Inmates housed within a Level 3 (medium custody) comprised 47.5% of the prison population. The Level 4 (close custody) population percentage was 19.1%, while 0.4% of inmates were housed under a Level 5 custody title (maximum custody level or Restricted Housing Unit). A rise in custody level number corresponds with a decrease in institutional privileges (PA DOC, 1993).

Research on Prison Parenting Programs

Researchers have examined the cyclical effect of poor parenting/fathering on a child's subsequent criminal behavior. Some research has found that poor parenting is a major predictor of a child's subsequent criminal offending up to the age of 32 (Wilczak & Markstrom, 1999). This cyclical nature of poor parenting is reflected in Rudel and Hayes' comment (as cited in Wilczak and Markstrom, 1999:91) that

“many inmate fathers have been recipients of ineffective parenting and therefore lack the necessary skills for appropriate interaction with their children.” The authors state that “teaching inmate fathers parenting techniques may have the potential for reducing criminal activity among the next generation of potential offenders” (p. 90). Recognition of this cyclical nature of poor parenting has resulted in the growth of prison-based, rehabilitative parenting programs.

There are few recent, rigorous evaluations of prison-based parenting programs. Many of the existent evaluations are either outdated, have poor study designs, and/or are limited by their small sample sizes. The most popular study design has been the pre-post survey with or without a comparison group. Harrison’s study investigating the effects of a 6-week parent education program on the parenting attitudes and abilities of 30 U.S. male inmates and on the self-perceptions of their children found that the inmates’ child-rearing attitudes improved but neither the inmates’ self-esteem nor their children’s perceptions were affected (Harrison, 1997). Caddle’s (1993) interviews with 30 Norwegian male youth offenders before and after a parenthood training course found increased knowledge of child development and positive changes in family relationship attitudes. In research examining the impact of a 12-week parent education program on an experimental group (n=30) of incarcerated mothers’ parenting skills, knowledge, or attitudes, Spring (1999) found that the program had no effect in comparison to the control group (n=30). In their study of the impact of a family life education program on 54 inmates, Bayse, Allgood, and Van Wyk (1991) found that at post-program, narcissism was significantly lowered and the experimental group (n=27) inmates’ perceptions of present and ideal family functioning had improved. Landreth and Lobaugh (1998) found that inmate fathers who took a child-centered play therapy skills course for 10 weeks scored significantly higher than the control group on both their acceptance attitudes and empathic behavior toward their children. The experimental group fathers also scored lower on parenting stress than the control group. Furthermore, as would be expected, their children’s self-concepts increased significantly as a result of interacting with their fathers. In their research on an 8-session parenting course offered at a minimum security federal correction institution (n=21), Wilczak and Markstrom found that the experimental group increased their test scores from pre-test to post-test on content/knowledge, certain subscales of a parental locus of control scale, and a parent satisfaction scale (Wilczak & Markstrom, 1999).

Research in this field offers some evidence that prison-based parenting programs have the potential to have a positive impact on inmate fathers’ parenting ability, knowledge, and skill. To our knowledge, our outcomes evaluation is the first of its kind to employ a sophisticated longitudinal design with relatively large sample sizes that included survey pre-tests, post-tests, and follow-ups with 3 consecutive groups of program enrollees supplemented by: inmate-to-inmate matched comparison groups; face-to-face interviews with inmates; pre-, post-, and follow-up telephone interviews with caregivers; and archival institutional data collection.

The Long Distance Dads Program

According to the Father's Workshop, The Long Distance Dads (LDD) Program is a character-based educational and support program developed at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at the State Correctional Institution at Albion (Turner & Eichenlaub, 1998). The LDD program is designed to assist incarcerated men in developing skills to become more involved and supportive fathers. Trained inmate peer leaders facilitate the program in 12 weekly group sessions. The sessions are structured in a small group format (8-10 inmates per group) with at least one peer leader per group.

The primary focus of the LDD program is on the following issues: 1) promoting responsible fatherhood and holistic parenting; 2) empowering fathers to assume emotional, moral, spiritual, psychological, and financial responsibility for their children, both during and upon release from incarceration; 3) accentuating the psycho-social development of both father and child; 4) meeting the challenges of being an incarcerated father; and 5) increasing the knowledge base concerning fatherhood (The Father's Workshop, 2000).

The long-term goal of the LDD program is to create a shift in paradigms. It is believed that an investment in education, time, and peer leadership will produce more responsible fathers who are less likely to draw upon the resources of local, state, and federal tax dollars as "deadbeat dads." The anticipated results will be families who contribute to the community, reversing the cycle of poverty and dependency due to absentee fathers. Ultimately, the goal is that children will reap the greatest benefit – a father who is there for them (The Father's Workshop, 2000).

Methods

This outcomes study utilized a time series, matched control design including proxy measures and archival data, to measure baseline and post-program changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors among LDD participants. This study had 4 components: survey of inmates; caregiver telephone interviews; face-to-face inmate interviews; and institutional data collection.

During the course of the 18-month evaluation, we collected quantitative and qualitative data via survey from participants in 3, 12-week LDD sessions. We matched each LDD participant father with a control inmate father on: race/ethnicity; age; marital status; education; and sentence length (minimum and maximum). Both the LDD participants (experimental group) and the comparison inmates (control group) completed pre-test questionnaires, post-test questionnaires, and at least 1 quarterly follow-up (Table 1). We conducted telephone interviews with the caregivers of the LDD participants' children on the same interview cycles (i.e., pre, post, and follow-ups), conducted face-to-face interviews with a randomly selected sample of LDD participants from session 1, and also regularly collected DOC data.

Table 1. Data Collection Timeline
(Project Period: 10/01-03/03)

	Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up #1	Follow-up #2	Follow-up #3
LDD Session #1	01/02	04/02	07/02	10/02	01/03
LDD Session #2	06/02	08/02	10/02	02/03	X
LDD Session #3	10/02	12/02	03/03	X	X

This project was approved by the Penn State University, Institutional Review Board, Office for Research Protections (IRB# 01B1174). All inmates and caregivers signed written consent forms prior to their study participation. Caregivers received \$10.00 in cash for every completed interview and mid-way during their participation, each caregiver was also sent a Penn State coffee mug, and a tablet of paper. Fathers received certificates of completion.

Instrumentation

The experimental and control group participants completed two questionnaires during each data collection session. The first of these questionnaires was an original instrument designed by CORE: the Father’s Questionnaire (see appendix). The Father’s Questionnaire was designed to measure fathering knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors, as they related directly to LDD program curriculum. There are 4 fathering/parenting scales in the Father’s Questionnaire: 1) the LDD Content Test that we developed using the LDD curriculum; 2) Parental Locus of Control (Campis, Lyman, and Pentice-Dunn, 1986); 3) Index of Parental Attitudes (IPA) (Hudson, 1982); and 4) Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi (C-G) Parent Satisfaction Scale (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985). We also incorporated 2 global parenting questions that asked the inmate to rate himself as a father and asked how his child/children would rate him as a father. The questionnaire also included a number of scales measuring subjective health, anxiety, self-esteem, mastery, morale, personality disorders, and a host of socio-demographic variables. The other “questionnaire” was the Involvement, Consistency, Awareness, & Nurturing (ICAN) scale used internally by the LDD program as a pre- and post-test (The National Center for Fathering, 1997). We had access to these ICAN scores for the LDD participants and asked the control group inmates to complete this scale/questionnaire along with the Father’s questionnaire.

The Caregiver Telephone Interview was very similar in content to the Father’s questionnaire and also included questions pertaining to the number of times the inmate father contacted/saw both his child/children and the primary caregiver via letter, phone, visits, etc. (see appendix). The major component of the interview was a modified version of the LDD Content Test that was used in the inmate father questionnaires. The chief modification to the Content Test was the adjustment with the item wording. For instance, the questionnaire item “being a dad is very important to me,” was amended to read, “being a dad is very important to him.” The

caregivers were also asked the 2 global parenting questions asking for their rating of the inmate as a father and their perception of the child's rating of his/her father.

As a supplement, we conducted pre and post face-to-face, audio-taped interviews with 6 LDD participants from the first session. As was the case with caregiver calls, the purpose of the inmate personal interviews was to attempt to capture more detailed, qualitative information that may have been missed by the self-report questionnaire (see appendix for interview script).

The fourth component of this study involved the collection of PA DOC data. Data were regularly collected on a number of variables including: medical limitations/needs; the offense committed; IQ; reading score; drug/alcohol needs; various problems; institutional behavior, etc. (see demographic and background variables in Table 3).

Analytic Design

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 11.5 for Windows and SAS 8.02 for Windows. CORE employed a double-data entry method to ensure data accuracy. For the telephone interviews with the caregivers, the data were entered directly into an Access database during the telephone interview and then transferred into an SPSS data file.

The primary analytic test used was General Linear Models (GLM) Repeated Measures to measure within-group and between-group differences over the subsequent time periods. We also used t-tests, Pearson's correlation coefficients, chi-square, McNemar's, and linear regression to analyze the data. Cronbach's Alpha was used to calculate the internal consistency of the scales (i.e., anger, knowledge, skill, goals, LDD content test sum, locus of control, index of parenting attitudes, C-G parenting satisfaction scale, and ICAN fathering profile). All scales had acceptable alphas (ranging from .50 to .86) except for "Parental Locus of Control" which was in an unacceptable range (.29 and .33 for pre and post-tests respectively). An alpha/significance level of .05 was used as the cut-off for all statistical tests.

Results

The results reported here are overall results for all LDD sessions combined and for all caregiver interviews combined. In the interest of brevity, only significant results are discussed.

Participant Recruitment & Retention

In summary, we collected pre-test data on 84 experimental inmates, 60 controls, and 37 caregivers (Table 2). At post-test, we collected data on 42 experimental inmates, 47 controls, and 18 caregivers for retention rates of 50%, 78%, and 49%

respectively. As was observed during the process evaluation, there was again a relatively high LDD program drop-out rate. Forty-two of the inmate fathers (50%) who began the program and the study did not complete the program; thus, these fathers subsequently dropped out of the study. Data were collected from some of the drop-out participants from sessions 1 and 2. Some of the reasons that these fathers dropped out included the following: 6 fathers had either been sent to the restricted housing unit or were placed on cell restriction therefore missing too many LDD meetings; 3 fathers stated that they had a time conflict with another group or mandatory appointments (“call-outs”); 1 father was moved to a different institution; another father simply mentioned that he had missed too many LDD classes; and another father stated that he dropped out because he did not like the way his particular group was being facilitated (i.e., the review of “a bunch of” paperwork and discussion about that paperwork). On the contrary, there was a relatively high retention rate among the comparison group (78%). We were able to contact and interview only half of the caregivers 12 weeks after the pre-interview; many of the caregivers’ phone numbers had been disconnected or could not be reached after at least 3 attempts.

Table 2. Participant Recruitment & Retention (Summary)

Type	Pre-test	Post-test	Retention rate	Follow #1	Follow #2	Follow #3
Experimental	84	42	50%	31	18	3
Comparison	60	47	78%	26	12	2
Caregivers	37	18	49%	12	8	0

Results #1: Experimental vs. Control Group Matching

The control group was identically matched to the experimental group; that is, there were no statistically significant differences between the 2 groups on the 5 key matching variables at pre-test (Table 3). However, there were 7 significant differences between the 2 groups on other miscellaneous additional background and independent variables (Tables 3 and 4). These findings included the following: control group fathers had older children on average than did the experimental fathers (10.5 years of age vs. 7.1); experimental group fathers indicated that they made more money per hour when working before incarceration (about \$11/hr. vs. about \$8/hr.); the control group of fathers were listed as having more medical limitations or needs than did the experimental group (41.3% vs. 19% respectively); the IQ of the experimental fathers was detailed as being statistically higher than the control group’s IQ (96.4 vs. 88.9 respectively); and control group fathers were listed in the DOC database as has having more problems with suicide than did the experimental group (15.2% vs. 2.4%). In addition, the control group had both a slightly higher average for misconducts between the past 3 and 6 months measured at pre-test than the experimental group (.38 vs. .10) and were more likely to not be involved in institutional violence (100% vs. 87.5%).

Table 3. Demographic & Background Variables – Fathers

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89	
	Experimental n = 42	Control n = 47
<u>Age</u>		
Mean (SD)	32 (7.6)	33 (8.3)
<u>Race/Ethnicity (#/%)</u>		
African-American	15 (35.7)	24 (51)
Hispanic	11 (26.2)	7 (14.9)
White	16 (38.1)	16 (34)
<u>Marital Status (#/%)</u>		
Single	27 (65.9)	33 (75)
Married	11 (26.8)	8 (18.2)
Separated	2 (4.9)	0
Divorced	1 (2.4)	3 (6.8)
Widowed	-	-
<u>Highest grade completed</u>		
Mean (SD)	11.2 (1.5)	11 (1.4)
<u>Minimum sentence in years</u>		
Mean (SD)	3.8 (2.5)	4.3 (2.9)
<u>Maximum sentence in years</u>		
Mean (SD)	9.1 (5.7)	10.4 (5.8)
<u>Religious (#/%)</u>		
Yes	30 (81)	36 (80)
<u>Primary Language (#/%)</u>		
English	34 (91.9)	41 (89.1)
Spanish	3 (8.1)	5 (10.9)
<u>Employed - at SCI Albion (Number/%)</u>		
Assigned a job	34 (81)	33 (70.2)
Not assigned a job	1 (2.4)	0
Receiving an allowance	7 (16.7)	14 (29.8)
<u>Employed during the last 6 months (before incarceration)</u>		
Yes	17 (41.5)	13 (29.5)
Unknown/no	24 (58)	31 (70.5)
<u>Number of children</u>		
Mean (SD)	2.7 (1.5)	3 (2.3)
<u>Age of children</u>		
Mean (SD)	7.1 (4.1)	10.5 (6.9) ^{‡‡}
<u>Distance fathers live from children</u>		
Mean (SD)	9.9 (11.7)	8.2 (7.1)
<u>Father mostly raised by (#/%)</u>		
Mother & father	17 (53.1)	18 (45)
Mother	13 (40.6)	17 (42.5)
Grandmother & grandfather	-	2 (5)
Grandmother	2 (6.3)	1 (2.5)
Foster-parent(s)	-	1 (2.5)
Other	0	1 (2.5)

[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)
[∇] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{∇∇} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 3. Cont.

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89	
	Exp. n = 42	Control n = 47
<u>Hourly wage (before incarceration)</u>		
Mean (SD)	10.6 (6.9)	7.6 (3.0) [‡]
<u>Total annual income (before incarceration)</u>		
Mean	30,012	27,882
SD	21,295	31,436
<u>Number of marriages: (#/%)</u>		
1	12 (70.6)	11 (73.3)
2	4 (23.5)	3 (20)
3	1 (5.9)	1 (6.7)
<u>Number of relationships resulting in children (#/%)</u>		
0	0	1 (2.3)
1	22 (52.4)	26 (59.1)
2	16 (38.1)	7 (15.9)
3	3 (7.1)	8 (18.2)
4	1 (2.4)	2 (4.5)
<u>Length of relationships (Averaged – in years)</u>		
Mean (SD)	5.5 (3.6)	5.1 (4.0)
<u>Gender of children (%)</u>		
Female	.50	.49
<u>Has father ever participated in a parenting program (#/%)</u>		
Yes	6 (15)	7 (15.9)
<u>Medical limitations/needs (#/%)</u>		
Yes	8 (19)	19 (41.3) [∇]
<u>Total medications taken (#/%)</u>		
0	28 (87.5)	23 (62.2)
1	3 (9.4)	8 (21.6)
2	1 (3.1)	5 (13.5)
3	0	1 (2.7)
<u>Mental Health/Mental Retardation Status (#/%)</u>		
Yes	7 (16.7)	11 (23.9)
<u>Other Emotional Needs (#/%)</u>		
None	35 (83.3)	35 (74.5)
Some form of impairment	7 (16.7)	12 (25.5)

[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test);
[∇] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{∇∇} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 3. Cont.

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89	
	Exp. n = 42	Control n = 47
<u>Number of prior commitments</u>		
Mean (SD)	2.85 (2.1)	2.97 (2.2)
<u>Offense committed (#/%)</u>		
Drug conviction	12 (28.6)	10 (21.3)
Drug (general)	-	1 (2.1)
Aggravated assault	2 (4.8)	7 (14.9)
Criminal trespass	1 (2.4)	1 (2.1)
Received stolen property	3 (7.1)	2 (4.3)
Murder (1 st degree)	1 (2.4)	1 (2.1)
Murder (2 nd degree)	-	1 (2.1)
Murder (3 rd degree)	1 (2.4)	1 (2.1)
Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse	3 (7.1)	-
Aggravated indecent assault	-	3 (6.4)
Criminal conspiracy	1 (2.4)	-
Forgery	1 (2.4)	1 (2.1)
Harassment by communications	1 (2.4)	-
Indecent exposure	-	1 (2.1)
Theft (general)	1 (2.4)	-
Burglary (general)	3 (7.1)	4 (8.5)
Rape	1 (2.4)	-
Statutory rape	-	1 (2.1)
Escape	1 (2.4)	-
Retail theft	-	1 (2.1)
Robbery	10 (23.8)	8 (17)
Criminal attempt	-	3 (6.4)
Prohibited offensive weapons	-	1 (2.1)
<u>IQ</u>		
Mean (SD)	96.4 (13.4)	88.9 (12.7) ^{‡‡}
<u>Reading Score</u>		
Mean (SD)	11.5 (14.2)	8.3 (3.4)
<u>Institutional adjustment (#/%)</u>		
Poor	7 (17.5)	3 (7)
Marginal	4 (10)	3 (7)
Satisfactory	7 (17.5)	9 (20.9)
Good	22 (55)	28 (65)
<u>Drug and/or alcohol needs (#/%)</u>		
None	7 (16.7)	6 (13)
Drugs	11 (26.2)	16 (34.8)
Alcohol	4 (9.5)	3 (6.5)
Drugs and alcohol	20 (47.6)	21 (45.7)
<u>Drug and alcohol recommendations (#/%)</u>		
Yes	31 (73.8)	31 (66)

[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)
[∇] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{∇∇} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 3. Cont.

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89	
	Exp. n = 42	Control n = 47
<u>Sexual problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	7 (16.7)	8 (17.4)
<u>Alcohol problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	25 (59.5)	29 (63)
<u>Escape problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	13 (31)	14 (30.4)
<u>Psychiatric problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	8 (19)	11 (23.9)
<u>Drug problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	33 (78.6)	40 (87)
<u>Suicide problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	1 (2.4)	7 (15.2) [∇]
<u>Assault problem</u> (#/%)		
Yes, verified	29 (69)	34 (73.9)
<u>Escape history</u> (#/%)		
None	21 (50)	23 (50)
Actual attempt walkaway	6 (14.3)	13 (28.3)
Walk-off > 3 yrs. ago	4 (9.5)	1 (2.2)
Walk-off < 3 yrs. ago	8 (19)	6 (13)
Escape < 3 yrs. ago	3 (7.1)	-
Actual escape attempt	-	3 (6.5)
<u>Attempted suicide</u> (#/%)		
Yes	1 (2.4)	6 (13)
<u>Severity of current offense</u> (gravity scores: rated 1-10)		
Mean (SD)	6.8 (1.7)	6.6 (1.8)

[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)
[∇] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{∇∇} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 4. Independent Variables - Fathers

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89			
	Pre Exp. n = 42	Post Exp. n = 42	Pre Control n = 47	Post Control n = 47
<u>Global health score (#/%)</u>				
Poor	-	-	2 (4.3)	2 (4.3)
Fair	2 (4.8)	2 (4.8)	2 (4.3)	3 (6.5)
Good	12 (28.6)	16 (38.1)	13 (27.7)	13 (28.3)
Very good	16 (38.1)	15 (35.7)	19 (40.4)	16 (34.8)
Excellent	12 (28.6)	9 (21.4)	11 (23.4)	12 (26.1)
(1-5 scale) Mean (SD)	3.9 (0.9)	3.7 (0.9)	3.7 (1.0)	3.7 (1.1)
<u>Modified SF-12 score</u> (Total possible = 21)				
Mean (SD)	15.8 (2.2)	15.1 (2.3)	15.8 (3.5)	14.4 (3.4) [*]
<u>Social Anxiety Subscale score</u> (Total possible = 24)				
Mean (SD)	15.7 (4.8)	17 (4.8)	16.1 (5.4)	15.4 (5.7)
<u>Self-Esteem Scale</u> (Total possible = 50)				
Mean (SD)	39.5 (7.0)	40.2 (6.1)	37.6 (6.6)	39.5 (8.1) ^{**}
<u>Mastery Scale score</u> (Total possible = 35)				
Mean (SD)	27.2 (4.7)	28 (4.9)	27.2 (5.5)	28.1 (6.8)
<u>Morale (Agitation) Scale score</u> (Total possible = 8)				
Mean (SD)	5.3 (2.3)	5.7 (2.6)	4.8 (2.3)	5.8 (2.1) ^{**}
<u>DSM-IV score</u>				
Mean (SD)	29.5 (4.3)	30.3 (3.8)	28.2 (5.6)	29.1 (5.4) [*]

^{*} p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ^{**} p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test)
[†] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{††} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)
[‡] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 4. Cont.

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89			
	Pre Exp. n = 42	Post Exp. n = 42	Pre Control n = 47	Post Control n = 47
Values (#/%)				
<u>Most important</u>				
Honesty	8 (22.2)	5 (12.5)	12 (34.3)	9 (23.1)
Responsibility	7 (19.4)	8 (20)	2 (5.7)	7 (17.9)
Education	1 (2.8)	2 (5)	4 (11.4)	2 (5.1)
Family	16 (44.4)	19 (47.5)	9 (25.7)	14 (35.9)
Self-control	1 (2.8)	-	1 (2.9)	-
Spiritual leadership	2 (5.6)	5 (12.5)	5 (14.3)	3 (7.7)
Caring for others	-	-	-	2 (5.1)
Promise keeping	-	-	2 (5.7)	-
Creativity and optimism	-	-	-	-
Sexual responsibility	-	-	-	-
Other	1 (2.8)	1 (2.5)	-	2 (5.1)
<u>2nd most important</u>				
Honesty	8 (22.2)	9 (22.5)	8 (22.2)	12 (31.6)
Responsibility	13 (36.1)	14 (35)	10 (27.8)	11 (28.9)
Education	6 (16.7)	1 (2.5)	5 (13.9)	5 (13.2)
Family	6 (16.7)	13 (32.5)	8 (22.2)	5 (13.2)
Self-control	1 (2.8)	-	1 (2.8)	2 (5.3)
Spiritual leadership	1 (2.8)	2 (5)	1 (2.8)	1 (2.6)
Caring for others	1 (2.8)	-	1 (2.8)	-
Promise keeping	-	1 (2.5)	1 (2.8)	1 (2.6)
Creativity and optimism	-	-	1 (2.8)	-
Sexual responsibility	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	1 (2.6)
<u>3rd most important</u>				
Honesty	11 (28.9)	9 (23.7)	4 (11.1)	7 (17.9)
Responsibility	7 (18.4)	7 (18.4)	12 (33.3)	12 (30.8)
Education	3 (7.9)	8 (21.1)	5 (13.9)	5 (12.8)
Family	4 (10.5)	5 (13.2)	5 (13.9)	7 (17.9)
Self-control	2 (5.3)	2 (5.3)	1 (2.8)	-
Spiritual leadership	2 (5.3)	-	1 (2.8)	5 (12.8)
Caring for others	7 (18.4)	2 (5.3)	4 (11.1)	-
Promise keeping	1 (2.6)	4 (10.5)	2 (5.6)	2 (5.1)
Creativity and optimism	1 (2.6)	-	1 (2.8)	-
Sexual responsibility	-	-	1 (2.8)	1 (2.6)
Other	-	1 (2.6)	-	-

Table 4. Cont.

	Sessions 1 -3 N = 89			
	Pre Exp. n = 42	Post Exp. n = 42	Pre Control n = 47	Post Control n = 47
<u>Who prepared father most for the task of fathering (#/%)</u>				
Mother & father	13 (37.1)	14 (41.2)	12 (27.3)	11 (30.6)
Mother	13 (37.1)	14 (41.2)	17 (38.6)	12 (33.3)
Father	1 (2.9)	-	2 (4.5)	1 (2.8)
Grandmother & grandfather	-	2 (5.9)	1 (2.3)	-
Grandmother	1 (2.9)	1 (2.9)	1 (2.3)	1 (2.8)
Foster-parent(s)	1 (2.9)	-	-	2 (5.6)
Aunt/uncle	-	-	-	1 (2.8)
Friend	-	-	1 (2.3)	-
Other	1 (2.9)	-	3 (6.8)	2 (5.6)
No one	5 (14.3)	3 (8.8)	7 (15.9)	6 (16.7)
<u>Total Misconducts</u>				
Mean (SD)	1.7 (2.0)	1.8 (2.2)	2.7 (2.9)	2.9 (3.0)
<u>Misconducts within past 3 months</u>				
Mean (SD)	.19 (0.7)	.29 (0.8)	.28 (0.7)	.19 (0.5)
<u>Misconducts: >3 months to 6 months</u>				
Mean (SD)	.10 (0.3)	.1 (0.2)	.38 (0.9) [‡]	.30 (0.8)
<u>Misconducts: > than 6 months to 1 year ago</u>				
Mean (SD)	.36 (0.7)	.40 (0.6)	.43 (0.7)	.66 (1.2)
<u>Misconducts: over 1 year ago</u>				
Mean (SD)	1.1 (1.5)	1.1 (1.5)	1.6 (2.3)	1.6 (2.3)
<u>Custody level (#/%)</u>				
Level 5 (restricted housing unit)	-	-	-	2 (4.3)
Level 4 (increased security)	7 (16.7)	8 (19)	8 (17)	8 (17)
Level 3 (medium)	24 (57.1)	19 (45.2)	22 (46.8)	17 (36.2)
Level 2 (minimum)	11 (26.2)	15 (35.7)	15 (31.9)	17 (36.2)
Level 1 (pre-release)	-	-	2 (4.3)	3 (6.4)
<u>Institutional violence (#/%)</u>				
No	21 (87.5)	28 (93.3)	39 (100) [∇]	42 (100)
<u>Discipline report (#/%)</u>				
2 or more during last 6 months	1 (4.2)	3 (10)	2 (5.7)	3 (7.3)
1 during last 6 months	6 (25)	7 (23.3)	9 (25.7)	9 (22)
None during last 6 months	7 (29.2)	7 (23.3)	6 (17.1)	8 (19.5)
None during last 12 months	10 (41.7)	13 (43.3)	18 (51.4)	21 (51.2)
<u>Work performance (#/%)</u>				
Below average	1 (4.3)	1 (3.4)	2 (5.4)	1 (2.3)
Average	8 (34.8)	12 (41.4)	13 (35.1)	14 (32.6)
Above average	4 (17.4)	7 (24.1)	12 (32.4)	18 (41.9)
Idle status	10 (43.5)	9 (31)	7 (18.9)	7 (16.3)
<u>Housing performance (#/%)</u>				
Poor	-	1 (3.3)	-	-
Below average	2 (8.3)	2 (6.7)	5 (14.3)	3 (7.3)
Average	18 (75)	20 (66.7)	23 (65.7)	31 (75.6)
Above average	4 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	7 (20)	7 (17.1)

* p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ** p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test); ‡ p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); †† p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test); ∇ p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ∇∇ p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Results #2: Bivariate Analyses (Pre-test vs. Post-test)

To answer the primary research question: “Does the LDD program have any effect?”, we first examined the experimental group data from the pre-post tests (Table 5) and found 12 mean differences (indicated by asterisks) all showing improvement (e.g., “knowledge & awareness” improved from 9.7 to 10.8, LDD Content Test sum improved from 73.8 to 79.0, ICAN Fathering Profile total score increased from 101.7 to 114.3). However, there are 2 caveats to interpreting these data in isolation of subsequent analyses: 1) statistical differences are not necessarily substantive differences (i.e., an increase in “rating of the father by proxy” from 7.7 to 8.1 out of 10 may not necessarily be considered meaningful) and 2) failing to compare the experimental group’s post-test scores to the control group’s post-test scores may result in false attribution of program effects.

Hence, the between-group analyses found 3 differences (indicated by crosses) at *pre-test* where the control group’s average score was higher for: 1) involvement (26.6 vs. 15.5 out of 40); 2) awareness (30.7 vs. 26.1 out of 40); and 3) ICAN Fathering Profile total score (122.7 vs. 101.7). At *post-test*, there were 2 differences where the experimental group mean was higher/better than the control group: 1) average number of letters father reported sending home to children (5.0 vs. 3.0) and 2) total contact with child per year on average (92.2 vs. 50.9) and 1 difference where the control group scored higher than the experimental group (“involvement” 25.7 vs. 18.9 respectively).¹

¹ Throughout this report, the medians and ranges are provided for some variables because, in some instances, there were outliers. Upon investigation of the outliers, it was decided that we would keep all data in the analyses because most of the outliers were “corroborated” by either similarities in the data at pre- and post-test or similarity of outliers between the father’s and the caregiver’s responses. Nevertheless, as a test, we removed the outliers and re-ran all analyses with the result of no impact on the statistical results.

Table 5. Dependent Variables (Outcomes) - Fathers

	Sessions 1-3 N = 89			
	Pre Exp. n = 42	Post Exp. n = 42	Pre Control n = 47	Post Control n = 47
<u>Times fathers call children per month (on average)</u>				
Mean (SD)	2.2 (2.4)	2.8 (4.2)	1.4 (1.7)	1.4 (1.6)
Median	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0
Range	10.0	20.0	6.0	6.0
<u>Number of letters fathers send to children per month (on average)</u>				
Mean (SD)	4.7 (5.3)	5.0 (5.1) [‡]	3.9 (3.9)	3.0 (3.3)
Median	2.7	3.5	2.3	2.0
Range	25.0	30.0	20.0	18.0
<u>Total contact with children per year- on average (projected – phone, letters, gifts, and visits)</u>				
Mean (SD)	80.8 (84.7)	92.2 (104.3) [‡]	61.4 (54.8)	50.9 (51.7)
Median	66.5	65.3	48.5	37.0
Range	424.0	616.0	264.0	269.0
Content Test Domains				
<u>Anger & Frustration (Total score possible = 20)</u>				
Mean (SD)	13.8 (3.0)	14.4 (3.9)	13.3 (4.3)	14.2 (3.9)
<u>Knowledge & Awareness (Total score possible = 15)</u>				
Mean (SD)	9.7 (3.1)	10.8 (3.0) [*]	9.3 (3.3)	10.2 (2.9)
<u>Skills & Consistency (Total score possible = 10)</u>				
Mean (SD)	6.5 (2.5)	7.5 (2.1) ^{**}	6.8 (2.7)	7.0 (2.5)
<u>Goal Setting (Total score possible = 10)</u>				
Mean (SD)	8.5 (1.6)	8.8 (1.4)	8.5 (1.7)	8.6 (1.7)
<u>Knowledge about their child/children (an average of 8 items from all relationships)</u>				
Mean (SD)	5.0 (2.0)	5.2 (2.0)	5.7 (1.9)	6.0 (1.9)
<u>LDD Content Test Sum (Total score possible = 105)</u>				
Mean (SD)	73.8 (11.2)	79.0 (10.4) ^{**}	72.9 (13.7)	75.9 (14.8)
<u>Parental Locus of Control (Total score possible = 50)</u>				
Mean (SD)	33.8 (6.7)	35.1 (5.0)	34.9 (6.7)	33.0 (6.9) [*]
<u>Index of Parental Attitudes (IPA) score (Total score possible = 120)</u>				
Mean (SD)	108.1 (19.4)	108.9 (9.8)	109.5 (11.6)	104.9 (15.1) ^{**}
<u>Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent Satisfaction Scale (Total score possible = 95)</u>				
Mean (SD)	67.2 (17.2)	73.6 (11.7) [*]	68.4 (14.1)	69.8 (17.3)
<u>Rating of Father (1-10)</u>				
Mean (SD)	6.7 (2.3)	7.4 (1.7) [*]	6.6 (2.2)	7.1 (2.0)
<u>Rating of Father – by proxy (1-10)</u>				
Mean (SD)	7.7 (2.5)	8.1 (2.5) [*]	7.6 (2.7)	8.1 (2.5)

* p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ** p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test)
[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)

Table 5. Cont.

	Sessions 1 - 3 N = 89			
	Pre Exp. n = 42	Post Exp. n = 42	Pre Control n = 47	Post Control n = 47
Fathering Profile (ICAN)				
<u>Involvement</u> (Total score possible = 40) Mean (SD)	15.5 (9.5)	18.9 (10.1)*	26.6 (9.7) ^{‡‡}	25.7 (10.9) ^{‡‡}
<u>Consistency</u> (Total score possible = 40) Mean (SD)	26.9 (6.3)	29.2 (6.4)*	29.5 (6.6)	29.6 (7.4)
<u>Awareness</u> (Total score possible = 40) Mean (SD)	26.1 (8.3)	30.7 (6.8)**	30.7 (7.9) ^{‡‡}	31.0 (7.6)
<u>Nurturance</u> (Total score possible = 40) Mean (SD)	33.3 (7.9)	35.4 (7.5)*	35.9 (6.1)	36.2 (6.2)
<u>ICAN Fathering Profile – total score</u> (Total score possible = 160) Mean (SD)	101.7 (24.6)	114.3 (23.4)**	122.7 (22.5) ^{‡‡}	120.5 (30.5)
<u>Total Parenting score</u> (Total score possible = 370) Mean (SD)	283.5 (44.4)	296.2 (27.4)*	281.9 (47.5)	276.8 (62.4)

* p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ** p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test)
[‡] p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ^{‡‡} p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)

Results #3: Multivariate Analyses (Pre-test, Post-test, Follow-ups)

Since we had such small sample sizes at follow-ups, we combined the series of follow-up data into one group and averaged the scores. We then compared the combined follow-up data to the pre- and post-test data via the GLM repeated measures procedure (multivariate statistics Wilk’s Lambda was used for computation) (Tables 6 & 7). Results from these tests indicated only 1 significant difference between the experimental and control groups: the control group indicated higher “involvement” than the experimental group. There were trends of increasing values over times for both the experimental and control groups for: anger & frustration; skills & consistency; LDD content test sum; and parental locus of control. However, the post-test mean for “awareness” was significantly higher than the pre-test and follow-ups. We tested the interaction of time and group effects and found only 2 significant associations: “awareness,” and “ICAN Fathering Profile total score.”

Table 6. Combined Follow-up Data Compared to Pre & Post Tests
Means (standard deviations)

	Experimental			Comparison		
	Pre-test (n=84)	Post-test (n=42)	Follow-ups (n=52)	Pre-test (n=60)	Post-test (n=47)	Follow-ups (n=40)
Phone calls/month (ave.)	2.3 (2.5)	2.8 (4.2)	3.0 (5.6)	1.4 (1.6)	1.4 (1.6)	1.1 (1.5)
Letters/month (ave.)	4.7 (4.5)	5.0 (5.1)	6.4 (9.0)	3.7 (3.7)	3.1 (3.4)	2.9 (4.2)
Gifts/year (ave.)	2.9 (3.6)	3.2 (2.9)	2.8 (2.7)	2.2 (2.9)	1.6 (2.4)	1.2 (1.3)
Visits/year (ave.)	1.9 (4.3)	1.5 (2.1)	1.3 (2.1)	1.2 (3.5)	1.2 (2.5)	0.9 (2.0)
LDD Content Test Sum	74.3 (11.6)	79.0 (10.4)	80.0 (9.9)	73.1 (14.2)	75.8 (14.8)	76.1 (13.7)
Anger & Frustration	13.3 (3.6)	14.4 (3.9)	15.5 (3.0)	13.3 (4.3)	14.2 (3.9)	14.1 (3.8)
Knowledge & Awareness	10.5 (2.8)	10.8 (3.0)	10.7 (2.8)	10.1 (3.2)	10.2 (2.9)	9.9 (3.3)
Skills & Consistency	6.7 (2.4)	7.5 (2.1)	7.9 (1.7)	6.7 (2.7)	7.0 (2.5)	7.6 (2.1)
Goal Setting	8.9 (1.6)	8.8 (1.4)	8.7 (1.2)	8.5 (1.7)	8.6 (1.7)	8.5 (1.8)
Parental Locus of Control	34.7 (6.5)	35.1 (5.0)	36.4 (3.9)	35.0 (6.5)	33.0 (6.9)	36.0 (5.9)
Index of Parental Attitudes	109.1 (15.8)	110.1 (10.1)	111.3 (19.7)	109.3 (11.6)	105.8 (15.5)	109.6 (14.6)
C-G Parental Satisfaction	68.7 (15.0)	73.6 (11.7)	72.1 (14.9)	68.6 (15.1)	69.8 (17.3)	67.4 (18.1)
Rating of Father	6.6 (2.2)	7.4 (1.7)	6.9 (2.0)	6.4 (2.5)	7.1 (2.0)	7.2 (2.1)
Rating of father, by proxy	7.8 (2.4)	8.1 (2.5)	8.2 (2.5)	7.2 (3.1)	8.1 (2.5)	7.5 (2.6)
ICAN - total score	105.8 (24.9)	122.0 (15.2)	113.3 (25.0)	120.3 (24.9)	120.5 (30.5)	116.5 (36.8)
Involvement*	17.8 (10.9)	20.5 (10.1)	19.6 (10.7)	25.7 (10.2)	25.7 (10.9)	24.9 (11.4)
Consistency	26.8 (6.0)	31.3 (4.8)	29.1 (6.3)	29.3 (6.8)	29.6 (7.4)	30.2 (8.8)
Awareness	27.1 (8.0)	32.9 (4.3)	29.5 (8.1)	30.2 (8.1)	31.0 (7.6)	30.1 (8.2)
Nurturing	34.0 (7.6)	37.3 (3.3)	35.3 (6.3)	35.1 (7.3)	36.2 (6.2)	34.4 (8.4)
Total Parenting Score	286.8 (38.7)	297.8 (27.3)	301.6 (37.2)	282.8 (47.5)	277.6 (62.9)	283.1 (63.6)

* statistically significant between-group effects (refer to Table 7)

Table 7. Results of Repeated Measures of Pre, Post and Follow-ups

	Time Effect (F-value)	Time Effect (p-value)	Group Effect (F-value)	Group Effect (p-value)
Phone calls/month	0.72	0.4931	0.63	0.5378
Letters/month	0.49	0.6169	1.19	0.2800
Gifts/year	2.16	0.1291	2.58	0.1162
Visits/year	1.15	0.3276	0.13	0.7158
LDD Content Test Sum	5.10	0.0093	1.12	0.2947
Anger & Frustration	3.88	0.0264	1.42	0.2381
Knowledge & Awareness	0.22	0.8020	0.22	0.6437
Skills & Consistency	4.28	0.0188	0.22	0.6446
Goal Setting	0.38	0.6869	0.03	0.8650
Parental Locus of Control	4.21	0.0198	0.06	0.8071
Index of Parental Attitudes	1.17	0.3165	1.25	0.2682
C-G Parental Satisfaction	0.84	0.4356	0.31	0.5803
Rating of Father	1.47	0.2401	0.05	0.8226
Rating of Father – by proxy	1.99	0.1485	0.53	0.4722
ICAN - total score	2.65	0.0814	0.55	0.4619
Involvement	1.33	0.2759	9.28	0.0038
Consistency	2.06	0.1389	0.08	0.7791
Awareness	4.36	0.0185	0.19	0.6645
Nurturing	1.37	0.2639	0.04	0.8444
Total Parenting Score	2.22	0.1176	1.93	0.1697

In a further attempt to examine the data, we fit a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models for each of the 20 outcome variables (data not shown here). Each of the models included 3 independent/predictor variables: the pre-test; post-test; and group variable (experimental vs. control). The group variable was not a significant predictor of any of the outcome variables.

Results #4: Caregivers

We combined all caregiver data over all three of the LDD sessions for analyses which resulted in a sample of 18 caregivers who completed both the pre- and post-test interviews. The average age of the caregivers was 35, slightly more than half were white, one-fifth reported having some college education, more than half reported to be religious, all spoke English, and 67% reported that they were employed (Table 9). For the independent variables, there were no pre/post statistical differences (Table 10). At pre-test, the average number of reported hours by car from prison was 9; at post-test, the hours reported averaged 10. In terms of father contact with his child/children at pre-test, the average number of letters sent to the child/month was 8, phone calls to caregiver were 3/month, 4 caregiver visits/year, gifts sent 10 times/year, and money sent ~ 2 times/year. The majority of caregivers (94%) were in favor of the father seeing his child/children. The caregiver sample size is small and there is tremendous variability in these data as evidenced by the large standard deviations necessitating caution in interpretation.

For the dependent variables (Table 11), there was 1 significant research finding: caregivers stated that the number of calls fathers made to their children decreased significantly from pre to post-sessions (3 calls/month vs. 2.1/month). However, inmates who use the telephone to call home must call collect which is expensive; thus, this outcome may not be reflective of the LDD program as much as it may be a financial issue. SCI Albion has instituted a new inmate calling card program that will allow the onus of payment for calls to fall on inmates, not on the party that inmates are calling. It is not known whether this program will enhance telephone communication for incarcerated fathers. This would be an important issue for the institution to investigate further.

Table 9. Demographic Information - Caregivers

	Sessions 1 - 3 N=18
<u>Age</u>	
Mean (SD)	35 (14.0)
<u>Race/Ethnicity (#/%)</u>	
African-American	7 (38.9)
White	10 (55.6)
Other	1 (5.6)
<u>Education (#/%)</u>	
Some high-school	3 (16.7)
High-school graduates/GED	6 (33.3)
Technical/trade school	1 (5.6)
Some college	4 (22.2)
2-year degree	2 (11.1)
4-year degree	2 (11.1)
<u>Religious (#/%)</u>	
Yes	11 (61.1)
<u>Primary Language (#/%)</u>	
English	18 (100)
<u>Employed (#/%)</u>	
Yes	12 (66.7)

Table 10. Independent Variables – Caregivers

	Sessions 1 - 3 N= 18	
	Pre	Post
<u>Hours (by car) from prison</u>		
Mean (SD)	8.5 (8.7)	9.7 (10.6)
<u>Times per month father contacts caregiver via letter</u>		
Mean (SD)	8 (8.7)	10.2 (15.3)
Median	4.5	4
Range	28	59
<u>Times per month father contacts caregiver via phone</u>		
Mean (SD)	3 (3.5)	2.1 (3.0)
Median	2	1
Range	12	12
<u>Number of times caregiver visits father per year</u>		
Mean (SD)	3.8 (8.6)	2.1 (3.2)
Median	1	1
Range	36	12
<u>Times per year father sends caregiver gifts</u>		
Mean (SD)	10 (13.0)	5.9 (3.3)
Median	4.5	4.5
Range	34	9
<u>Times per year father sends caregiver money</u>		
Mean (SD)	1.5 (0.7)	2.7 (2.9)
Median	1.5	1
Range	1	5
<u>Total contact with caregiver per year</u> (Includes letters, phone calls, visits, gifts, and money sent)		
Mean (SD)	139 (129.0)	146 (197.0)
Median	105	74.5
Range	397	738
<u>Global Health Score (#/%)</u>		
Excellent	4 (22.2)	4 (22.2)
Very Good	6 (33.3)	8 (44.4)
Good	6 (33.3)	4 (22.2)
Fair	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)
(1-5 Scale) Mean (SD)	3.7 (1.0)	3.8 (1.0)
<u>Modified SF-12 Score</u> (Total score possible = 21)		
Mean (SD)	14 (3.2)	15.6 (3.3)
<u>Is caregiver in favor of father seeing child/children (#/%)</u>		
Yes	17 (94.4)	16 (88.9)

* p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ** p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test)

‡ p ≤ .05 (Independent Samples T-test); ‡‡ p ≤ .01 (Independent Samples T-test)

∇ p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ∇∇ ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

Table 11. Dependent Variables – Caregivers

	Sessions 1 - 3 N= 18	
	Pre	Post
<u>Number of times father contacts child/children via letter per month</u>		
Mean (SD)	5.4 (6.8)	8.2 (8.5)
Median	3.5	6.0
Range	28	30
<u>Number of times father contacts child/children via phone per month</u>		
Mean (SD)	3 (3.3)	2.1 (3.0) [*]
Median	2	1
Range	12	12
<u>Number of times child/children visit(s) per year</u>		
Mean (SD)	1.3 (1.7)	1.9 (2.0)
Median	1	1
Range	6	6
<u>Number of times father sends gifts to child/children per year</u>		
Mean (SD)	6.7 (12.0)	5.1 (5.8)
Median	1	3.3
Range	36	24
<u>Number of times father sends money to child/children per year</u>		
Mean (SD)	0.4 (1.0)	0.6 (2.0)
Median	0	0
Range	4	6
<u>Does father contact his child/children any other way (#/%)</u>		
Yes	3 (17)	3 (17)
<u>Total contact with child/children per year</u>		
Mean (SD)	108 (99.3)	131 (116.0)
Median	80	94
Range	374	364
Content Test Domains		
<u>Anger and Frustration (Total score possible = 25)</u>		
Mean (SD)	14.7 (5.4)	16.1 (5.6)
<u>Knowledge & Awareness (Total score possible = 15)</u>		
Mean (SD)	10.6 (3.9)	11.4 (3.7)
<u>Skills and Consistency (Total score possible = 15)</u>		
Mean (SD)	9.6 (3.8)	10.2 (3.8)
<u>Goal Setting (Total score possible = 10)</u>		
Mean (SD)	7.2 (2.2)	6.5 (2.7)
<u>LDD Content Test Sum (Total score possible = 90)</u>		
Mean (SD)	59 (17.5)	62.7 (17.5)
<u>Rating of Father (1-10)</u>		
Mean (SD)	7.7 (2.1)	7.7 (2.2)
<u>Rating of Father – by proxy (1-10)</u>		
Mean (SD)	8.4 (2.8)	8.8 (2.5)

* p ≤ .05 (Paired Samples T-test); ** p ≤ .01 (Paired Samples T-test)
[∇] p ≤ .05 (Chi-square); ^{∇∇} p ≤ .01 (Chi-square)

At the post-test interview, caregivers were asked if participating in the LDD program had changed the way the inmate viewed himself as a father. Half of the caregivers (9) either agreed or strongly agreed that the program had changed the way that the father viewed himself while 8 (44%) did not know or were not sure if the program had that kind of an impact. One caregiver strongly disagreed that the program had that kind of a possible impact.

Upon examining the results from both the inmate surveys and the caregiver inmates, we were interested in the correlation between the caregivers and fathers answers. We investigated this association between the global, self-rating fathering questions (i.e., how would you rate yourself/how would you rate the father and how would the child rate the father on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a perfect father?). As the reader may recall (see Table 5), the experimental group fathers' post-test self-ratings were statistically higher than their pre-test scores (6.7 vs. 7.4 for the self-rating and 7.7 vs. 8.1 for the proxy by the child's perspective, pre vs. post-test scores respectively). However, the caregivers' pre-post ratings were not statistically different for either question (7.7 vs. 7.7 and 8.4 vs. 8.8 respectively) (see Table 10). We sought to examine if there was a correlation between the fathers and their caregivers' ratings. The Pearson's correlation coefficients (results not shown here) were calculated between the experimental group's fathers' and the caregivers' ratings. Both the inmates' and caregivers' ratings were statistically correlated with their own scores from pre-post (coefficients ranged from .36-.91); the caregivers' scores were more strongly associated (coefficients ranged from .75-.91) while the inmates' scores ranged from .36-.76). However, the caregivers' and inmates' scores were not correlated with each other except for one association between the caregivers' post-test appraisal of the father (7.7) and the fathers' post-test appraisal (7.4) ($r=.530$).

Results #5: Qualitative Data: Inmate Interviews

In order to provide an in-depth assessment of the impact of the Long Distance Dad's Program, CORE conducted face-to-face audio-taped interviews with LDD participants. During the first LDD session, CORE researchers randomly selected 10 of what was an original LDD session roster of 42; 6 inmates ultimately participated in both the pre- and post-LDD interviews. Each participant signed an additional informed consent form for the interview. All face-to-face interviews were conducted by the same researcher and every attempt was made to ask study questions in the same manner. The Face-to-Face Father Interview consisted of a series of open-ended questions. The questions that were asked covered a multitude of fathering topics that related directly to the curriculum taught in the LDD program. For example, there were questions dealing with: anger; nurturing skills; children's needs; the definition of defense mechanisms; child development stages; consistency with parenting habits, etc.

A summary of the pre-post comparison, key findings (skills, knowledge, and anger) follows.

Fathering skills:

- 2 (fathers) indicated that they had more skills to use to become a better dad;
- 5 increased their skills in regards to nurturing;
- 1 increased in his “love-expression” skills;
- 4 showed an enhancement in their parental awareness skills;
- 1 developed a new skill that connected to reaching out to his children;
- 5 increased skills that centered on parental consistency;
- 1 expressed a greater skill-set in how he can spend time with his child/children;
- 2 fathers learned how they could boost their family’s self-esteem

Skill domain total:

In total, out of 48 possible opportunities where parental skills could have been enhanced (6 fathers X 8 questions), on 22 occasions in the post-session, fathers detailed information about new skills that they had learned (22/48 = 46%).

Fathering knowledge:

- 5 provided new knowledge on what children need most in a dad;
- 3 detailed new knowledge on listening skills;
- 1 learned specifically about word pictures;
- 5 learned specific details about love languages;
- 1 gained new information about defense mechanisms;
- 4 gained new information about personal boundaries;
- 3 learned specific information about stages of development;
- 0 learned new information about dysfunctional traits;

Knowledge domain total:

In total, out of 48 possible opportunities to gain new fathering knowledge (6 fathers X 8 questions), on 22 occasions, in the post-session, fathers provided new details about new knowledge that they had acquired (22/48 = 46%).

Anger:

- 4 provided more information on anger, in general;
- 5 detailed different ways of dealing with their anger;
- 3 provided new information on way that they deal with frustration;
- 6 detailed different ways that they deal with their child’s/children’s anger;
- 2 provided new information on how they would confront a difficult person;
- 4 detailed new information about how they could have healthy arguments

Anger domain total:

Out of 36 possible opportunities to show change in the post-session (6 fathers X 6 questions), identifiable change occurred 24 times (24/36 = 67%).

In summary, of the three main analytical domains (skills, knowledge, anger), there were 68 occurrences of post-session change out of 132 opportunities (52%). When asked if the LDD program met their expectations, 5 out of 6 fathers answered in the affirmative.

Discussion: Key Findings

In answer to the primary research question: “Does the Long Distance Dads program improve inmates’ fathering knowledge, attitudes, skills, and/or behaviors?” our outcomes evaluation found minimal evidence.

Both the experimental and control groups were identically matched on demographics and virtually identical at pre-test on the outcome variables. At post-test, of the 20 possible measured outcomes, there were only 2 variables that showed the experimental group performing better than the comparison group: number of letters sent to the child (self-report) and total contact with the child (self-report). Because this self-reported contact was *not* corroborated by the caregiver data (i.e., the caregivers reported no significant improvement in father contact with the child from pre-post interview; in fact, the 1 significant difference was a reported *decrease* in number of times father telephoned the child), it is reasonable to believe that at post-test, the inmates participating in the LDD program may have felt obligated to report more evidence of positive fathering with the child. However, it is also possible that the caregivers underestimated the number of letters sent to the child during that time.

Furthermore, upon conducting the GLM repeated measures with the pre-, post-, and combined follow-up tests, we found only 1 significant group effect: the control group reported more involvement with their children than the experimental group. However, the involvement domain of the ICAN scale is tenuous since many of the involvement questions are not applicable to an inmate population. Thus, interpretation of this domain is troublesome. Nonetheless, the LDD program participants’ lower scores in this involvement domain may be a function of their introspection and hence desire and motivation to improve their degree of involvement via enrollment in the program. However, it remains the case that OLS regression modeling also failed to show that LDD program participation was associated with any of the outcomes.

While quantitative analyses indicate that the LDD program may not be reaching its potential, the qualitative results suggest that this fathering program has some promise. The program is quite popular with the inmates as evidenced by an extensive waiting list and the inmates appear to be satisfied with program and hold it in high regard. In addition, based on the random sample of inmates interviewed, approximately half gained knowledge and skills from the program and nearly 70% learned about dealing with anger. Thus, there is a solid framework of inmate support for the program. SCI Albion and other institutions that are using the

program might consider the recommendations in this report as a way to increase desired programming outcomes.

Limitations

The first and most important limitation to this study has to do with the nature of quasi-experimental designs. The “gold standard” in evaluation is the randomized trial; however, randomizing inmates to a treatment vs. control group was not possible in this project and therefore we chose the quasi-experimental design with a comparison group component. As such, we cannot state unequivocally that any findings/non-findings were necessarily the result of the LDD program.

A second limitation involves the issue of small sample sizes; especially with the follow-up measurements. While the drop-out rate in this outcomes study appears to be consistent with the program’s typical drop-out rate, the loss of data was unfortunate. Additionally, enrolling and retaining the caregivers was challenging due to a number of circumstances including: many fathers were not in contact with caregivers; some fathers did not have the caregiver’s phone number; some had a strained or severed relationship with caregivers/children; some fathers had not seen or heard from the caregiver or their child/children in years; there was an ongoing issue of phone numbers being disconnected and/or caregivers moving; or caregivers simply refusing to participate.

Other limitations include the fact that we did not measure any characteristics of the actual groups that comprised each LDD session (typically 4 groups per session) and hence cannot determine outcomes based on particular groups and/or compare between-group differences. We also did not determine the motivation (i.e., selection bias) for each particular inmate for enrolling in LDD which may in-turn drive the outcomes nor did we talk with any of the children to gauge changes in fathering.

In this outcomes evaluation, we also did not examine the potential impact of other sources of knowledge, attitudes, or skills such as other inmates, other institutional programs, television programming, the inmates’ own reading/research, or family collaboration; any of which could have been responsible for improvements/losses.

As with any special population, particularly a prison-based population, there are special issues that may impede the collection and/or interpretation of data. In our case, there appeared to be a heightened concern about privacy and trust issues particularly concerning the involvement of the inmates’ families. Correspondingly, the caregivers may also have had a bias in their participation and/or responses to the interview questions. Thus, this fact, in conjunction with the established issues revolving around self-report data, should be considered in the interpretation of the results.

A final limitation involves the impact of prison staff on fathers in terms of how the research project and researchers as a team were presented to participants. As with

any evaluation process, it is sometimes challenging to get universal “buy-in” so that the evaluators and their work are presented as legitimate and important. Without perceived institutional support for research, we cannot be certain that the inmates took their participation seriously by answering honestly.

Recommendations

This final section details recommendations (in no specific order) that are institution-specific and program-specific.

Institution-specific recommendations

- 1) establish an LDD steering committee with the goal of monitoring program administration issues (e.g., curricula, training, dissemination, outcomes)
- 2) create a new training program policy so that all DOC staff have at least a basic understanding of the variety of programs offered with the goal of creating institution-wide support and encouragement of programming
- 3) list the LDD program in the psychology and education programming materials
- 4) promote and increase contact between inmates and their children
- 5) improve training for LDD program administrators and peer leaders
- 6) improve the environment of the group sessions (to allow for easier group communication)
- 7) improve the environment of the family visitation area by reinstating a child play area and/or by allowing inmates to change into “street clothes” or non-institutional attire for visits
- 8) investigate providing programming to inmates’ children
- 9) standardize programming across the state

Program-specific recommendations

- 1) enhance the curriculum/programming (e.g., include components on personality profiling, psychological assessments, and/or “criminal thinking errors” as risk factors for incarceration)
- 2) increase subject matter retention via reviews/exams
- 3) streamline the material in order to increase learning (e.g., encourage the father to connect the information from the “child development” section directly to their child/children)
- 4) meet more than once/week or increase each week’s session length
- 5) group inmates based on the similar ages of their children
- 6) teach specific communication skills (e.g., phone conversations and letter-writing)
- 7) incorporate actual letter-writing in the course
- 8) make arrangements for fathers’ reading level/translation needs

- 9) increase the amount, quality, and variety of resources fathers can send home
- 10) implement an internal evaluation system (e.g., improve data collection and tracking with the goal of examining the data for gaps in knowledge, attitudes, or skills).
- 11) ask for structured feedback from the inmates on the program
- 12) provide additional/follow-up LDD sessions
- 13) implement multi-faceted programming (i.e., guest speakers, multi-media presentations, cognitive therapy, role-playing, etc.)
- 14) bring children and fathers together (e.g., family day at the end of the program)
- 15) reduce the drop-out rate (e.g., provide make-up classes for those who miss the class due to mandatory call-outs)
- 16) enhance the milieu for the class (explore other rooms for meeting)
- 17) better utilize peer leader meetings
- 18) link the LDD program with community programs such as pre-release planning

There are many issues that concern incarcerated fathers. Among these are: 1) legal issues (finding competent legal representation and the perception that contact with an incarcerated parent is not in the child's best interest); 2) economic issues (incarcerated fathers cannot provide financial support for their children); 3) environmental issues (visitation conditions are not always conducive to engaging visits); 4) emotional issues (most incarcerated fathers suffer from anxiety, depression, and lack of self esteem); and 5) relationship issues (most fathers are concerned about their relationships with their families both while they are in prison and when they get out) (Lanier, 1995). Addressing these issues is important and may serve to enhance familial relationships, and could also reduce disciplinary problems within the prison system (Klein, Bartholomew, & Bahr, 1999).

Furthermore, a key element to any prison-based rehabilitative program is addressing criminal thinking errors; "To be effective, prison family life education programs must also address the aspects of the criminal personality that prevent inmates from having good family relationships" (Bayse, Allgood, & Van Wyk, 1991:257). Anti-social attitudes, values, and beliefs are key criminogenic risk factors (Harris, 1984). Rehabilitative programs should teach inmates about psychological traits, personality disorders, and defense mechanisms that are common to criminal behavior such as narcissism, egocentrism, blameshifting, justification, denial, and rationalization. Most importantly, criminals need to be taught "correct thinking" and "taught that there is a worthy substitute for crime" (Samenow, 1998:168).

Collaboration between the LDD program administration and the DOC to adopt some of these recommendations and/or examine some of the related incarcerated fathers issues may result in inmate change that would have implications for fathers, their children and families, and the institution.

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Appendix: Study Instruments