

Improving public safety by positively changing lives

Parenting Sentencing Alternative



AT A GLANCE

Total participants:
1386**

CPA: 756
FOSA: 630

Women vs. men
50% vs. 50%

Race
White 49%
Black 13%
Hispanic 10%
Other 28%

Successful completion**
CPA: 632 — 84%
FOSA: 460 — 73%
Combined: 1092 — 79%

Terminated or revoked**
CPA: 124 — 16% terminated
FOSA: 170 — 27% revoked
Combined: 294 — 21%

**Return to prison on a new
felony after successful
completion ***
CPA: 13.3%
FOSA: 6.5%
Combined: 10.4%

* As of February 2025

**as of April 22, 2025 and
does not include active
participants.

Providing individuals alternatives to incarceration to parent their children

The Parenting Sentencing Alternative (PSA) was enacted through law in June 2010 and recently expanded again under ESSB 5219 in July 2025. This law allows some parents of minor children the opportunity to have an alternative to prison or transfer from incarceration to parent their children when it is in the best interest of their child/ren.

Community Parenting Alternative (CPA) – *Prison-based option:*

The Department of Corrections may transfer an incarcerated individual home on electronic home monitoring for up to the last 18 months of their sentence. Approval is determined through a multidisciplinary team who work with children and family systems.

Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA) – *Judicial Sentencing Option:* Provides judges the option to waive a sentence within the standard sentence range and impose 12 months of community custody.

Both provide programming and mandatory requirements, along with access to resources to assist with navigating transition back to their families and communities.

Eligibility

For CPA, the incarcerated individual must:

- Be an expected parent, a parent with guardianship or legal custody of a minor child, **or**
- Be a biological/adoptive parent, custodian, caregiver, or stepparent with a proven, established, ongoing, and substantial relationship with a minor child that existed at the time of the current offense, **or**
- Be expected to take over the duties of a caregiver or parent and be responsible for exercising the day-to-day care and control of a minor child, and has a proven, established, ongoing, and substantial relationship with the minor child, and who is not prohibited from contact with a minor child by any law, court order, or any other restriction, **and**
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

They may NOT have:

- A current conviction for felony sex and/or serious violent offense.
- A current conviction for violent offense unless it has been determined that the individual is not at high risk to reoffend.

To be eligible for the FOSA, the individual must:

- Be an expectant parent, a parent with physical custody of a minor child, a legal guardian of a minor child, **or**
- Be a biological/adoptive parent, custodian, or stepparent with a proven, established, ongoing, and substantial relationship with a minor child that existed at the time of the current offense, **and**
 - Will be sentenced for an offense where the high end of the standard sentence range is greater than one year, **and**
- Sign a release of information waiver regarding current and/or prior child welfare involvement.

They may NOT have:

- A current conviction for a felony violent offense.
- A current or prior convictions for a felony sex and/or serious violent offense.
- A felony offense where the individual was armed with a firearm or deadly weapon in the commission of the offense.

Solution-Based Case Management

PSA staff recognize that working with participants, their children and family more directly creates a need to interact differently and more intentionally. The case managers (specialists) operate from a strengths perspective and utilizes solution-based case management in working with this population. The intent is to strengthen families in an effort to break the intergenerational cycle of criminal behavior to include drug use, property crimes, and victimization. The participants learn to utilize the community-based programs and resources in an effort to change their response to life challenges.

PSA requires “Present Parenting: – Each participant is clean and sober first, then learning skills and abilities to make their kids their first priority in managing daily living. This includes focusing on the developmental, educational, nutritional, and physical/mental health needs of the children.

The program is highly structured with focus on the parent putting their child/ren first, with family management skills, court-ordered and imposed conditions, and organizational/time management skills.

PSA focuses on the Five Protective Factors of Strengthening Families in order to support parents and encourage them to take care of themselves, especially during times of stress. This includes encouraging growth in problem-solving, self-care, learning how to cope with stress, and seeking help when needed, and not allowing the stress to impact parenting. The Five Protective Factors are:

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

DOC works with Department of Child, Youth and Family Services in child and community safety to reduce duplicative services, develop case management plans and conduct home visits together quarterly. DOC also works with other agencies and community-based organizations to provide wrap-around support and determine resources available for each participant and their family.

— For More Information —

Please email DOCPSAAlternative@doc1.wa.gov