

Numbers to Emphasize

In 2007, 1.7 million minor children had a parent in prison, an 82% increase since 1991

One in 43 American children has a parent in prison.

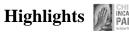
One in 15 black children and 1 in 42 Latino children has a parent in prison, compared to 1 in 111 white children.

The Sentencing Project 2009

Recommendation Highlights

The Need to Collect Data: There are no systems in place to gather data on children of the incarcerated.

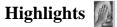
Create incentives and guidelines to encourage effective information-sharing among agencies that may already collect relevant data on children of incarcerated parents





The Need to Understand the Impact: Data is often misinterpreted and circulated without accurate citation.

More research is needed on the long term impact of parental incarceration on children especially on variations between boys and girls, children with incarcerated fathers versus incarcerated mothers and children of different ages. Variations in family and caregiver situations and supports must include children not known to public systems to combat or substantiate statements suggesting that CIPs are more likely than their peers to themselves become incarcerated.





The Need to Evaluate Programs

Evaluate the effectiveness of existing program models in improving child outcomes, including a study of Child Protective Services (CPS) practices regarding children of incarcerated parents in the child welfare system and permanency outcomes for such children.

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Implications to Program and Practice

Additional Research Recommendations Evaluate the potential for research protocols to inadvertently cause harm:

- ➢ increase stigma
- decrease willingness to be honest
- interfere with access to supports

Implications to Program and Practice

Research questions that cause harm

- "Do you ever wish you had a different parent?"
- ➤ " Have you ever seen your parent use drugs?"
- ➤ "Has your child's caregiver ever been incarcerated?"

Implications to Program and Practice

Additional Research Recommendations

- Evaluate the effect of training (on the specific needs and concerns of children of the incarcerated) of program staff and volunteers on program effectiveness and child outcomes
- Conduct research on the unique challenges experienced by caregivers of children with a parent in prison, as well as the effectiveness of existing services designed to address these challenges.
- Conduct studies (not yet done) on the presence and role of trauma, stigma and shame in the lives of these families



Sharing of Information : Coordination Across Service Systems

Encourage collaboration between child welfare agencies, corrections, education and health and mental health services with guidelines to ensure that the sharing of data follows privacy and confidentiality laws governing the sharing of client information.

Implications to Program and Practice

Focus group families said:

- > They are wary of cross system communication
- > They want communication with them!
- > They were not aware of resources for them

Establish a navigator system across programs that are accessible to a broad array of caregivers in contact with the criminal justice system.

Implications to Program and Practice

Obstacles and Pathways

Enhance the capacity of other child serving systems to meet the needs of these children by making recommendations to Departments of Education and Health (Mental Health) that information about children of the incarcerated be provided on a national or state basis

- ➤ Pediatricians and TB
- > Teachers and Monday morning meltdown

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Implications to Program and Practice

Establish task forces at the state and federal levels

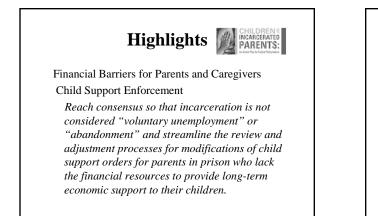
- Leverage the resources of agencies already in contact with these children and families, to identify existing programs and services for children and families of the incarcerated, identify gaps in services, and devise strategies for improving coordination between agencies
- Develop a needs assessment tool could be developed that could help agencies understand where on the continuum of need a child or family falls coordinate services

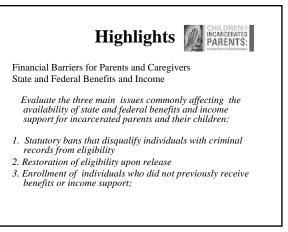
Highlights



Support for Caregivers

- Establish a federal policy that would permit kinship care agencies to serve families that are not in the child welfare system.
- Identify promising examples of kinship navigator programs and disseminate this information to the field.
- Analyze the impact of AFSA on children of incarcerated parents who are in foster care and provide a more detailed definition of ASFA's "reasonable efforts" requirement.



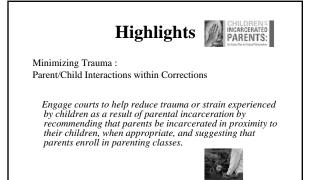




Implications to Program and Practice: Law Enforcement

- > Most initiatives focus on child placement issues
- ➢ Focus group families said:
- We are less concerned about the placement protocols than the issue of interrogating children about their parents whereabouts and activities and destroying childrens' property in search of drugs in front of the child.
- An additional concern is children who are not at home but arrive later after the arrest.

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Implications to Program and Practice: Corrections



Emphasizing the role of corrections in developing family strengthening visiting policies.

Implications to Program and Practice: Corrections

Provide parenting education classes that are specifically designed for incarcerated parents in the corrections setting. These programs are most effective when they are connected to visiting programs and when caregivers are included in the parenting class through mailed materials or parallel classes in the community.





Minimizing Trauma : Parent/Child Interactions within Corrections

> Promote promising practices of state and local corrections, child protection and community agencies to eliminate barriers to contact between incarcerated parents and their children, when appropriate and identify additional strategies to keep families connected and facilitate **healthy parent-child contact** to complement in-person visits (such as reading books on tape, teleconferencing, or other outreach).

Implications to Program and Practice: Corrections

Evaluate parent-child programs and policies to determine not only how many people with a demonstrated need participate in these programs, but also the outcomes for program participants.



Implications to Program and Practice: Corrections



Recommend that the National Institute of Corrections provide cross-training for corrections staff and child welfare caseworkers and community agency staff to highlight the impact of incarceration on children and families, with the goal of mitigating existing tensions between corrections and child serving agencies

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Highlights INCARCERATED PARENTS:

Promoting Promising Practices

- Initiate efforts to identify promising program models and effective evidence-based practices that address the needs of children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers.
- > Develop a consistent set of outcomes measures to be collected by participating programs to enable cross-site, cross-program evaluations and provide funding to conduct those

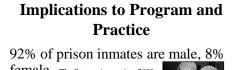
Emphasis and Embedded Issues



► Eighty-six percent of prisoners' minor children were under 10 years of age

22 percent were under five Hairston (2008)

The largest Federal Funding Initiative is Mentoring Programs which are best suited to children ages 8-16. Programs and practices focused on young children must be developed.

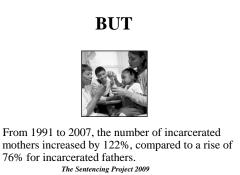


female. The Sentencing project 2009

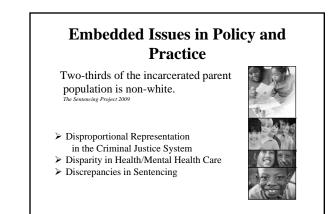


Most children of incarcerated parents have a father in prison or jail

BJS, 2007 and Sentencing Project 2009



Programs focused on children and families of the incarcerated must be designed for children of incarcerated Mothers and Fathers



Embedded Issues in Policy and Practice

These policy recommendations do not address the fundamental issues in the U.S.:

- ➢ Racial Disparities
- ≻Drug Addiction and Treatment
- ≻Trauma
- ≻Mass Incarceration

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Closing Notes

- The needs of the children of the incarcerated must be included in the agenda of the proposed White House Conference on Children
- Family members must be included in all task forces, advisory groups and grant reading activities for this population



NRCCFI at FCN www.fcnetwork.org

- ≻Disseminating accurate data
- ➤ Training, inspiring, preparing and connecting those working in <u>and</u> around the field
- ➢ Guiding family strengthening policy and practice
- Including the families in defining the problem and designing solutions

