

FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND: THE HIDDEN COSTS OF INCARCERATION AND REENTRY

With incarceration rates in America at record high levels, the criminal justice system now touches the lives of millions of children each year. The imprisonment of nearly three-quarters of a million parents disrupts parent-child relationships, alters the networks of familial support, and places new burdens on governmental services such as schools, foster care, adoption agencies, and youth-serving organizations. Few studies have explored the impact of parental incarceration on young children or identified the needs that arise from such circumstances. Little attention has focused on how communities, social service agencies, health care providers, and the criminal justice system can work collaboratively to better meet the needs of the families left behind. This policy brief is intended to help focus attention on these hidden costs of our criminal justice policies.

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PRISONERS AS PARENTS

More than half of the 1.4 million adults incarcerated in state and federal prisons are parents of minor children.¹ The vast majority of incarcerated parents are male (93%) and are held in state prisons (89%). Among the men held in state prison, 55 percent report having minor children. Among the women, who account for 6 percent of the state prison population, 65 percent report having minor children. Over half (58%) of the minor children of incarcerated parents are less than 10 years old (see figure 1).²

Great distances typically separate children from their incarcerated parents. Women are housed in prisons an average of 160 miles from their children, while men are an average distance of 100 miles away.³ These distances serve as a barrier to prison visits by family members. More than half of incarcerated parents report never receiving a personal visit from their children.⁴ Contact in the form of phone calls and letters often proves problematic as well. The number of calls or letters per prisoner is typically limited by corrections policy. The high cost of collect phone calls, reflecting surcharges imposed by telephone companies or the departments themselves, can make this form of contact quite expensive. Despite these barriers, nearly 60 percent of mothers and 40 percent of fathers report having weekly contact with their children while incarcerated.

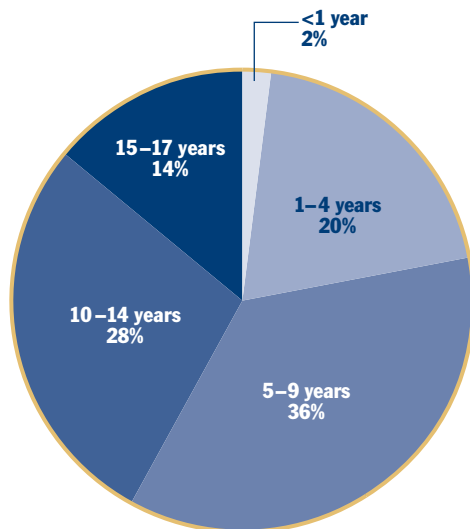
The majority of parents are serving time for either violent offenses (46% of fathers and 26% of mothers) or drug offenses (23% of fathers and 35% of mothers). Incarcerated parents in state prison are sentenced to a mean term of 80 months for their current offense.⁵ More than three-quarters of incarcerated parents in state prison report a conviction prior to the one for which they are serving their sentence. More than half had previously been incarcerated.⁶ This profile demonstrates that many parents have repeated exposure to the criminal justice system, which could disrupt familial relationships. Both children and parents might have to deal with issues

IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1999,

- About 2 percent of all minors—more than 1.5 million children—had a parent in state or federal prison.
- 10 percent of all minor children—7.3 million children—have a parent in prison, jail, on probation, or on parole.

Source: Estimates based on the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails, 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 2001 Annual Survey of Jails, and the 2001 National Prisoners Statistics program. (Presented by Christopher Mumola at the National Center for Children & Families, Washington, D.C., on October 31, 2002.)

FIGURE 1. Age Distribution of Minor Children with Parents in State or Federal Prison, 1997



Source: Adapted from Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 182335, 2000).

of abandonment and loss, weakened attachment caused by separation, and the possibility of inadequate ongoing care resulting from changes in caregiving arrangements.

Prison presents opportunities to improve prisoners' abilities to serve as productive members of their families once they are released. For example, prison-based programs can enhance parenting skills, treat addictions, increase literacy, raise educational levels, and generally prepare inmates for life outside prison. Many of these programs have been shown to reduce recidivism rates and improve the chances of successful reintegration.⁷ Some research suggests that these programs also benefit a prisoner's family networks and community. However, for a variety of reasons, these programs are not widely available in American prisons. In fact, in recent years, the share of prisoners participating in these programs has declined.⁸ Reasons for reduced availability include fiscal constraints as well as a shift in corrections departments' policies, with greater emphasis now on punishment rather than rehabilitation.

CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND

Losing a parent to prison affects multiple aspects of children's lives and affects them to varying degrees. Such a loss can likely have a significant impact on the emotional, psychological, developmental, and financial well-being of the child. Yet there has been little research exploring these consequences of parental incarceration. The broader phenomenon of parental separation and loss, particularly in the context of divorce or death, has, by contrast, received substantial research attention. This body of literature provides a framework for understanding possible repercussions of parental imprisonment for the children left behind.

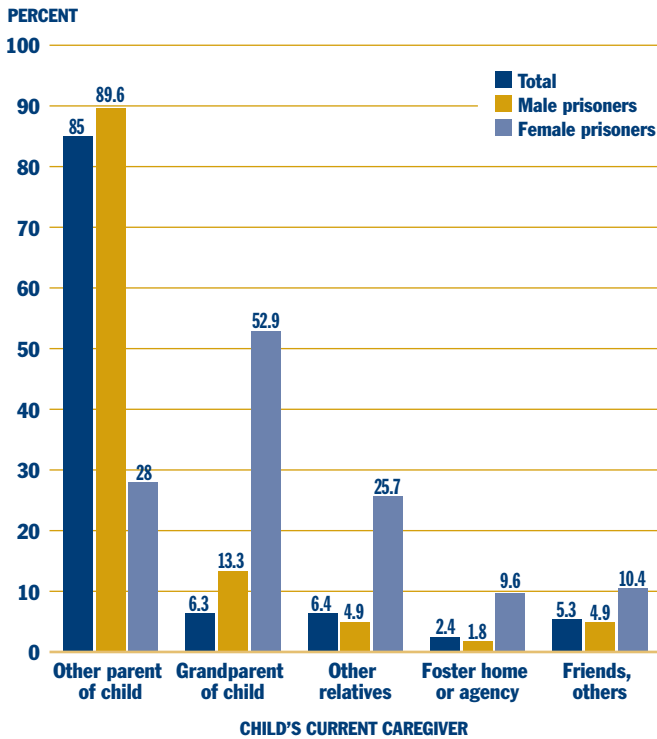
This literature suggests that parental separation due to imprisonment can have profound consequences for children (see table 1). The immediate effects can include feelings of shame, social stigma, loss of financial support, weakened ties to the parent, changes in family composition, poor school performance, increased delinquency, and increased risk of abuse or neglect. Long-term effects can range from the questioning of parental authority, negative perceptions of police and the legal system, and increased dependency or maturational regression to impaired ability to cope with future stress or trauma, disruption of development, and intergenerational patterns of criminal behavior.⁹

TABLE 1. POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS OF PARENTAL ARREST AND INCARCERATION ON CHILDREN

Developmental state	Developmental characteristics	Developmental tasks	Effects of separation
Infancy (0–2 years)	Limited perception, mobility Total dependency	Development of trust and attachment	Impaired parent-child bonding
Early childhood (2–6 years)	Increased perception and mobility and improved memory Greater exposure to environment; ability to imagine	Development of sense of autonomy, independence, and initiative	Inappropriate separation anxiety Impaired socioemotional development Acute traumatic stress reactions and survivor guilt
Middle childhood (7–10 years)	Increased independence from caregivers and ability to reason Peers become important	Sense of industry Ability to work productively	Developmental regressions Poor self-concept Acute traumatic stress reactions Impaired ability to overcome future trauma
Early adolescence (11–14 years)	Organization of behavior in pursuit of goals Increased abstract thinking Puberty Increased aggression	Ability to work productively with others Control expression of emotions	Rejection of limits on behavior Trauma-reactive behaviors
Late adolescence (15–18 years)	Emotional crisis and confusion Adult sexual development and sexuality Formal abstract thinking Increased independence	Development of cohesive identity Resolution of conflicts with family and society Ability to engage in adult work and relationships	Premature termination of dependency relationship with parent Intergenerational crime and incarceration

Source: Adapted from Katherine Gabel and Denise Johnston, *Children of Incarcerated Parents* (New York: Lexington Books, 1997), with permission from Lexington Books.

FIGURE 2. Children's Living Arrangements during Parental Incarceration



Source: Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 182335, 2000).

Across developmental periods, parental arrest and incarceration may impact maturational progress. These effects can vary considerably given the child's age. For example, parental incarceration interrupts key developmental tasks, particularly during adolescence, when parent-child relations strongly influence issues of identity.¹⁰

The extent to which parental incarceration impacts children's living arrangements is closely related to whether the incarcerated parent was the child's exclusive caregiver. Two-thirds of incarcerated mothers are the sole custodial parent before incarceration.¹¹ By contrast, roughly 40 percent of fathers in prison reported living with their children prior to imprisonment, but the majority of these fathers were living with both their child and the child's mother. Typically, when the sole custodial parent is incarcerated, a new caregiver enters the picture and alternate living arrangements are made. As shown in figure 2, more than half of the children who lived with their mother went to live with a grandparent when their mother was sent to prison. By contrast, nearly 90 percent of children who lived with their father continued to live with their mother during their father's incarceration. For incarcerated mothers, 10 percent have children placed in foster care, compared with only 2 percent of incarcerated fathers. Yet given the unequal size of the male and female prison population, in terms of numbers, more children of incarcerated fathers are in foster care than children of incarcerated mothers.

IMPRISONMENT ALTERS FAMILY DYNAMICS

When a parent is sent to prison, many dimensions of family functioning undergo significant changes. The family structure, financial relationships, income levels, emotional support systems, and living arrangements may be affected.

Intimate relationships are substantially burdened by incarceration. The forced separation of spouses and other intimate partners creates enormous strains on those relationships, frequently ending them. Few prisons allow conjugal visits or extended contact, which might ameliorate those strains. The artificial nature of same-sex institutions inhibits the cycles of dating, friendships, and courtship experienced in free society. The parent in prison is removed in a psychological sense, not just physically absent. Most aspects of family life are outside their sphere of influence and control.

While a spouse or partner is in prison, life for the loved one left behind also undergoes significant changes. The literature suggests that wives and girlfriends of inmates experience significant personal change, often gaining independence and self-sufficiency.¹² Such changes can alter the spouse's expectations of the familial role the prisoner will play upon his or her return. In addition, changes in family composition during an inmate's absence can preclude the prisoner from resuming his or her role upon return.¹³ For example, the introduction of a new father figure in the lives of a prisoner's children may forever alter the father's relationship to his children. The social stigma of incarceration may prompt adult family members to avoid complicated or difficult discussions with children to explain the absence of an incarcerated family member. Being kept in the dark about a family member's incarceration can influence the child emotionally and psychologically, and this in turn impacts the restoration of parent-child relationships.

Incarceration can also damage the financial situations of the families left behind. Most parents (71%) in state prison were employed either full- or part-time in the month preceding their arrest. Among incarcerated fathers, 60 percent held a full-time job prior to imprisonment, compared with 39 percent of mothers. For fathers, these wages were the primary source of income for their families (68%). Other sources of income included public assistance (13%), family and friends (18%), and illegal sources (27%). More than half (53%) of fathers had a personal income below \$1,000 and another quarter (25%) had a personal income below \$2,000 in the month prior to their arrest. Mothers relied primarily on wages (44%) and public assistance (42%) as primary sources of income. They also relied on family and friends (26%) as well as illegal sources (28%) for income. Child support only accounted for about 6 percent of mothers' income. More than half (51%) of incarcerated mothers had a personal income below \$600 and another third (35%) had a personal income below \$2,000 in the month prior to their arrest.¹⁴ For incarcerated parents, these sources of income are terminated when they go to prison. Sharing income with one's family is all but eliminated as most prisoners, even those with prison jobs, earn as little as \$350 a year.¹⁵ This financial loss disproportionately burdens families already living in poverty.¹⁶

OBSTACLES TO PARENT-CHILD VISITS IN PRISON

- Inadequate information about visiting procedures.
- Difficulty scheduling visits.
- Geographic location of prison facilities.
- Family's inability to afford transportation.
- Visiting procedures that are uncomfortable or humiliating.
- Visiting rooms that are inhospitable to children.
- Foster parents or caregivers who are unwilling to facilitate visits.

Source: Women's Prison Association, When a Mother Is Arrested: How the Criminal Justice and Child Welfare Systems Can Work Together More Effectively (Baltimore: Maryland Department of Human Resources, 1996).

However, in some cases, parental incarceration may temporarily improve a family's circumstances. For example, if the incarcerated parent was abusive, then a period of separation may bring relief to the family and improve living conditions. Similarly, the incarceration of a drug-addicted family member who stole money and property from his or her relatives may stop the drain on family resources. But more typically, the separation due to imprisonment has a negative impact on the family.

THE CHALLENGE OF MAINTAINING CONTACT

Simply maintaining contact with family members is difficult. While many correction departments recognize the value of communication between prisoners and their families, correctional practices—reflecting the security mission of prisons—often impede the maintenance of family ties.¹⁷ Intimidating security procedures, geographic distances between prison facilities and family residences, the time-consuming nature of visits, and the general lack of visiting arrangements conducive to parent-child interaction severely inhibit these visits (see sidebar).

Even long-distance phone calls can be problematic. State prison facilities frequently enter into contracts with phone companies that result in unusually high charges for long-distance calls. Phone companies stand to gain as much as \$85 million from these contracts.¹⁸ For example, California receives commissions of more than \$35 million each year from the phone companies.¹⁹ Some corrections agencies then use these additional revenues to provide programs or other

Studies comparing the outcomes of prisoners who maintained family connections during prison through letters and personal visits with those who did not suggest that maintaining family ties reduces recidivism rates.

services that may benefit the inmates.²⁰ Yet, because prisoners can only place collect calls, it is the prisoners' families who absorb the financial burden of this arrangement.²¹

Some prison facilities have made efforts to improve prison visitation procedures and accommodate families. For example, in March 2002, the Tennessee Prison for Women opened a Child Visitation Unit—a 16-bed addition to the prison that allows a child from three months to six years old to spend the weekend with his or her incarcerated mother, separate from the rest of the prison population and facilities.²² In Washington State, the McNeil Island Correction Center (MICC), in conjunction with the MICC Community Advisory Council, developed a comprehensive family and fatherhood program for incarcerated men and their families. The program teaches incarcerated fathers the skills of active and involved parenting, encourages them to provide financial support for their children, facilitates programs for prisoners' families, and coordinates activities for children and their incarcerated fathers.²³ In Florida, the Department of Corrections offers a program for incarcerated mothers to maintain weekly contact with their children through videos. The program, "Reading and Family Ties—Face to Face," allows incarcerated mothers and their children to transmit live video recordings via the Internet. Each live video session takes place weekly over the course of an hour, and is available at no cost to the families.²⁴

Research findings highlight the importance of contact among family members during incarceration. Facilitating contact has been shown to reduce the strain of separation and increase the likelihood of successful reunification.²⁵ Studies comparing the outcomes of prisoners who maintained family connections during prison through letters and personal visits with those who did not suggest that maintaining family ties reduces recidivism rates.²⁶ Several studies have also indicated that providing services to the families of recently released prisoners results in positive outcomes for the former inmates, including lower rates of physical, mental, and emotional problems, drug use, and recidivism.²⁷

CHALLENGES OF REUNIFICATION AND REINTEGRATION

Reentry is a challenging process along several dimensions. Upon release, former prisoners must find housing, employment, and health care. With access to public housing and assistance restricted by law, many struggle to find suitable living arrangements and financial support. Finding employment is also difficult for many returning prisoners, who often have limited educational backgrounds and vocational skills and face legal barriers to joining certain professions and discrimination from potential employers. Those with a history of substance abuse also confront the risk of relapse after release.

For a family who has struggled in an inmate's absence, many barriers make it difficult for family members to resume support roles when the prisoner returns home. These barriers can include new relationships, relocation, limited finances, and feelings of resentment. Even in instances where families are in a position to offer support to a returning inmate, reentry is still an extremely challenging process for the ex-offender. Barriers to finding employment and housing, as well as pressures from former peer groups and detachment from loved ones, all contribute to the personal challenges with which a returning prisoner grapples.

Amidst these difficulties in the reentry process, restoring the parent-child relationship after incarceration can be particularly complex. New relationships may have formed in the inmate's absence. The lack of contact during imprisonment may have attenuated the parent-child bonds. Structural changes may have altered relationships between family members. Feelings of shame and the social stigma of incarceration may create additional strains.

For a small share of returning prisoners, reunification after nonrelative foster care placement is an additional difficult reality. As discussed earlier, some incarcerated mothers (10%) and fathers (2%) have children placed in foster care during their imprisonment. Although a greater percentage of mothers have children placed in foster care, more children of incarcer-

1997 ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT

What does it say?

Once a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the ASFA requires the state to file a petition to terminate parental rights. Important exceptions exist, including if the child is in relative care and if the termination would not be in the best interest of the child.

What is the impact on incarcerated parents?

Because women serve an average of 18 months in prison, many female inmates whose children are in nonrelative foster care may face the possibility of losing their parental rights.

Source: E. Johnson and J. Waldfogel, *Children of Incarcerated Parents: Cumulative Risk and Children's Living Arrangements* (New York: Columbia University, 2002).

ated fathers are placed into foster care because the vast majority (93%) of parents in prison are fathers. Parents returning from prison who wish to take their children out of foster care must demonstrate that they now can adequately care and provide for their children. But little help is available to parents in finding suitable housing, employment, and child care, which are required before reunification can take place. Additional complications arise for parents who received public assistance prior to incarceration. They are one and a half times more likely to have their children placed in foster care than parents who did not receive public assistance prior to their arrest.²⁸ Receipt of public assistance may be associated with a weak family support network and an inability to find adequate relative care. This may present additional burdens for reunification.

Some parents have their parental rights terminated while they are in prison. The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act authorizes states to initiate termination of parental rights proceedings when a child has been placed in foster care for 15 months in a 22-month period (see sidebar). Many states have supplemented ASFA with legislation that relieves the state of making reasonable efforts to reunify families when “aggravated circumstances” are present. In a few states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Louisiana, and North Dakota) parental incarceration qualifies as an “aggravated circumstance.”

Another issue facing some prisoners is child support. Parents who are subject to formal child support agreements are under additional pressure to find a sufficient source of income to start paying child support immediately upon release. Child support payments usually accumulate during a parent’s prison term, although a few states and localities suspend payments during periods of incarceration. For example, Iowa considers incarceration an involuntary act and the incarcerated debtor entitled to a modification of his or her child support pay-

ments.²⁹ In addition, in Kansas and Virginia, incarcerated parents who have neither the possibility of parole nor sufficient assets to make child support payments are granted exemptions from some child support obligations.³⁰

Analyses in two states (Colorado and Massachusetts) indicate that released prisoners have an average child support debt of over \$16,000, a combination of both pre-prison and during-prison nonpayment.³¹ On average, inmates in Massachusetts accrued more than \$5,000 in arrears while behind bars (see figure 3). These debts are substantial, especially for parents who face many employment barriers upon release. Prisoners must be prepared to work with the child support agency to develop payment plans or else they risk an automatic deduction of 65 percent of their paycheck or even criminal penalties, especially when the child support is owed in another state. Nonpayment of debts can add another state misdemeanor or state or federal felony conviction and more prison time. In addition, failure to pay child support can create additional tensions between the supporting parent and the incarcerated parent who defaults on payments. These tensions can alter the balance of power in parenting relationships, making child visitation during prison and reunification after prison difficult.

Families can play a critical role in improving the lives of returning prisoners. Family interventions are based on the notion that strengthening the family support network for a returning prisoner will improve his or her chances of success. These interventions can thus meet the needs of the family, the released inmate, and the larger society. The few studies of these interventions are very encouraging. For example, an evaluation of La Bodega de la Familia, the direct service arm of Family Justice, Inc., which provides support to the families of drug users in the criminal justice system, found that the rate of illicit drug use among program participants declined from 80 percent to 42 percent, a significantly greater decrease than among those who did not participate in the program. In addition, researchers found that family members participating in the program obtained medical and social services at substantially higher rates and had fewer needs than those in the comparison group. Researchers concluded that strengthening the family network improved outcomes for both the returning prisoner and the individual family members.³²

Families can play a critical role in improving the lives of returning prisoners. These interventions can meet the needs of the family, the released inmate, and the larger society.

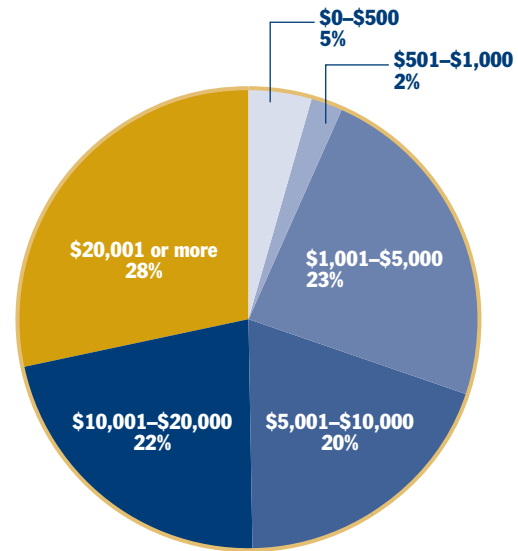
A ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES AND SERVICE AGENCIES

The high rates of incarceration affect a relatively small number of communities across America. These communities already struggle with high rates of unemployment, crime, drug use, and poverty. Now they also face the added burden posed by the record levels of community residents who are sent to, and return from, prison. These communities therefore have a vested interest in the outcomes of returning prisoners and the state of their family networks during and after incarceration.

Communities can play an active role in improving the outcomes of released inmates and their families. Community-based organizations are well positioned to provide assistance with housing, substance abuse treatment, health care, employment, child care, counseling, and vocational training. They can make contact with prisoners prior to release to assist in the reentry process. These groups also play an important role in preparing the community for a prisoner's return.

Many social service agencies provide services to former prisoners and their families. However, the delivery of these services may not be aligned to reflect the unique demands of the incarceration and reentry processes. For example, a returning prisoner may be eligible for community-based drug treatment but might be referred to join a waiting list upon his or her release from prison, during a high-risk time for relapse. Similarly, a public school may offer counseling to students experiencing difficult life crises, but may not be aware that a young person is severely stressed by the impending return of an incarcerated parent. By recognizing the service overlap and strategically coordinating these services to respond to the needs created by the criminal justice process, children and families are more likely to benefit. In addition, there is also a role for applied child developmental theory and research, where university-community collaborations can enhance program design and evaluate current program performance. But there is also a risk that involving multiple service agencies potentially increases the demands and conditions placed on family members, causing further strain to families. Therefore, the collaborative efforts of child protective services, health and human services, research organizations, and the criminal justice system are a central part of improving the outcomes of prisoners and their families.

FIGURE 3. Total Child Support Arrears Owed among Massachusetts' Prisoner Population



Source: Adapted from Nancy Thoennes, *Child Support Profile: Massachusetts Incarcerated and Paroled Parents* (Denver: Center for Policy Research, 2002).

Creating comprehensive strategies to mitigate the harmful effects of incarceration and reentry upon prisoners, their children, and their families is an enormous challenge. In recent years, a number of innovative efforts have pointed the way to new models for reentry management. In cities such as Oakland, Chicago, Fort Wayne, and Cleveland, mayors have designated prisoner reentry a priority for their municipal administrations. These cities have created coordinating committees that cut across city services and community organizations. Other cities, including Baltimore, San Diego, and Winston-Salem, have formed community coalitions

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to work with returning prisoners and their families at the neighborhood level. These fledging efforts underscore both the potential and difficulties inherent in local mobilization efforts on behalf of the families and children of incarcerated members of the community.

CONCLUSION

The unprecedented levels of incarceration and prisoner reentry in America are having widespread and poorly understood consequences for the families and children of prisoners. Clearly, more research is needed to document the hidden costs of our criminal justice policies. At the same time, policymakers, practitioners, service providers, and community organizations need to focus on the ripple effects of these policies and the opportunities for more systematic and coordinated efforts to reduce the harms so broadly experienced.

Endnotes

- ¹ P. Harrison and A. Beck. 2002. "Prisoners in 2001." *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Bulletin*. NCJ 195189. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice Statistics.
- ² C. Mumola. 2000. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children." *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report*. NCJ 182335. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- ³ Hagan and Petty. 2002. "Returning Captives of the American War on Drugs: Issues of Community and Family Reentry." Paper prepared for the Reentry Roundtable, Washington, D.C., Oct. 12–13, 2000.
- ⁴ C. Mumola. 2000. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children."
- ⁵ *Ibid.* It is important to note here that the prison time actually served is substantially less than the original sentence length.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Gerald G. Gates, Timothy J. Flanagan, Laurence L. Motiuk, and Lynn Stewart. 1999. "Adult Correctional Treatment." In *Prisons: Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, edited by Joan Petersilia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ⁸ James P. Lynch and William J. Sabol. 2001. "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective." *Crime Policy Report* 3. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- ⁹ The Osborne Association. "How Can I Help? Working with Children of Incarcerated Parents." See also Denise Johnston. 1992. *Children of Offenders*. Pasadena, Calif.: Pacific Oaks Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents; and Stanton. 1980. *When Mothers Go to Jail*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.
- ¹⁰ Richard Lerner. 2002. *Concepts and Theories of Human Development* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- ¹¹ L.A. Greenfield and T.L. Snell. 1999. "Women Offenders." *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report*. NCJ 175688. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- ¹² F.F. Furstenberg, Jr. 1995. "Fathering in the Inner-City: Paternal Participation and Public Policy." In *Research on Men and Masculinities Series*, 7, by M.S. Kimmel and M. Marsiglio (119–47). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- ¹³ K. McDermott and R.D. King. 1992. "'Prison Rule 102: Stand by Your Man,' The Impact of Penal Policy on the Families of Prisoners." In *Prisoners' Children: What Are the Issues?*, edited by R. Shaw. London: Routledge.
- ¹⁴ C. Mumola. 2000. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children."
- ¹⁵ Esther Griswold and Jessica Pearson. 2003. "Twelve Reasons for Collaboration between Departments of Correction and Child Support Enforcement Agencies." *Corrections Today*: 87–90.
- ¹⁶ D. Johnston and M. Carlin. 1996. "Enduring Trauma among Children of Incarcerated Criminal Offenders." *Progress: Family Systems Research and Therapy* 5: 9–36.
- ¹⁷ C.F. Hairston. 2002. *Prisoners and Families: Parenting Issues During Incarceration*. Paper prepared for the "From Prison to Home" conference, Jan. 30–31.
- ¹⁸ Jennifer Warren. 2002. "Inmates' Families Pay Heaving Price for Staying in Touch," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16. Also "Ameritech officials estimate that in the Midwest, inmate phones now constitute half of the company's pay phone market." Steven Elbow. October 5, 2002. "Jailhouse phone shake-down; corporations, lockups and prison here profit by forcing inmates to make collect calls at crushing rates." *The Madison Capital Times*.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ States such as Ohio, Florida, and New York require that these commissions are directed into an inmate welfare fund. These states even have legislation mandating specifically how the money in this fund can be spent. A handful of states, including California, Hawaii, Delaware, and Virginia, take the phone commissions and place them into a general state fund, where they can be allocated to anything.
- ²¹ Families across the country are filing lawsuit against phone companies. Families of Illinois prison inmates sued MCI, AT&T, and Ameritech for unfairly charging higher rates for collect calls from jails. In 1997, the Florida Public Service Commission ordered MCI to refund customers for overcharging them by \$2 per call for collect calls made from Florida correctional facilities. MCI reduced its surcharges after the state of Virginia negotiated a new contract in response to complaints from prisoners and their families.
- ²² Quenton White. March 8, 2002. "Women's Prison Dedicates New Child Visitation Unit." News release, Department of Corrections, Tennessee.
- ²³ For an overview of the program, please visit <http://www.wa.gov/doc/MICCFamilyFatherhoodOverview.pdf>
- ²⁴ <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/secretary/press/2002/families.html>
- ²⁵ Women's Prison Association. 1996. *When a Mother Is Arrested: How the Criminal Justice and Child Welfare Systems Can Work Together More Effectively: A Needs Assessment Initiated by the Maryland Department of Human Resources*.
- ²⁶ C.F. Hairston. 1998. "Family Ties During Imprisonment: Do They Influence Future Criminal Activity?" *Federal Probation*: 48–52.
- ²⁷ Eileen Sullivan, Milton Mino, Katherine Nelson, and Jill Pope. 2002. *Families as a Resource in Recovery from Drug Abuse: An Evaluation of La Bodega de la Familia*. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.
- ²⁸ Elizabeth Inez Johnson and Jane Waldfogel. 2002. "Children of Incarcerated Parents: Cumulative Risk and Children's Living Arrangements." New York: Columbia University.
- ²⁹ *Leasure v. Leasure*, 378 Pa. Super. 613, 549 A.2d 225 (1988). See also *In re Barker*, 600 N.W.2d 321 (Iowa 1999). In this case, the mother's incarceration on drug charges constituted a change in circumstance, warranting a downward modification.
- ³⁰ See, for example, Kansas C.S.G., Supreme Court Admin. Order No. 107 (1997 Kan. Ct. R. Ann. 89); *Rupp v. Grubb*, 265 Kan. 711, 962 P.2d 1074 (1998); Va. Code § 20-108.2(B) (2001). There is an exemption to using the presumed minimum income in determining the basic child support obligation where the parent is imprisoned with no chance of parole and insufficient assets from which to pay support.
- ³¹ Esther Griswold and Jessica Pearson. 2003. "Twelve Reasons for Collaboration between Departments of Correction and Child Support Enforcement Agencies." *Corrections Today*: 87–90. Full state reports: (Colorado) Jessica Pearson and Lanae Davis. "Serving Parents Who Leave Prison: Final Report on the Work and Family Center." Denver: Center for Policy Research; (Massachusetts) Nancy Thoennes. "Child Support Profile: Massachusetts Incarcerated and Paroled Parents." Denver: Center for Policy Research.
- ³² Sullivan et al., *La Bodega de la Familia*.

For Further Reading

Several publications explore the challenges faced by families and children of incarcerated parents and present pertinent information related to this topic. Below are suggested works for future reading:

FORTHCOMING TITLES

Travis, Jeremy, and Michelle Waul, ed. Forthcoming. *Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

From Prison to Home: The Effect of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families and Communities. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Pattillo, Mary J., David Weiman, and Bruce Western, ed. Forthcoming. *The Impact of Incarceration on Families and Communities*.

BACKGROUND

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CHILDREN

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS

Child Welfare League of America. <http://www.cwla.org>

The Osborne Association: Youth and Family Resources. Call 1-800-334-3414 (toll-free information hotline). http://www.osborneny.org/Family_Resource_Center.htm

The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents. <http://www.e-ccip.org>

The Legal Action Center. <http://www.lac.org>

Long Distance Dads. Call 717-671-7231 or write to National Fatherhood Initiative, c/o Charles Stuart, POB 126157, Harrisburg, PA 17112-6157.

Children of Incarcerated Parents, Inc. Call 781-899-6230 or write to c/o Susan Burkart, 6 Hemlock Terrace, Waltham, MA 02452.

Family and Fatherhood Program at McNeil Island Corrections Center. Contact Rick Jordan at 253-512-6583 or rajordan@doc1.wa.gov.

National Center on Fathers and Families. <http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu>

Family and Corrections Network. <http://www.fcnetwork.org>

Children and Family Networks. <http://www.childrenandfamilynetworks.org>

Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy. 23 N. Pinckney Street, Suite 210, Madison, WI 53703. Call 608-257-3148. <http://www.cffpp.org>

Families of Incarcerated Loved Ones. Call 512-443-0716 or e-mail filotv@aol.com. <http://www.charityadvantage.com/FILO/Home.asp>

Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers. Call 404-755-3262. <http://www.takingaim.net>

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