



DIGITAL DIALOGUE

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE FAMILIES



Families Impacted by Incarceration: Understanding the Issues



Speakers

*Join the National
Conversation
on Child Abuse
and Neglect*



WELCOME

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Assumptions, Beliefs, and Attitudes

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What is the *best thing* that could happen to the children of incarcerated parents?

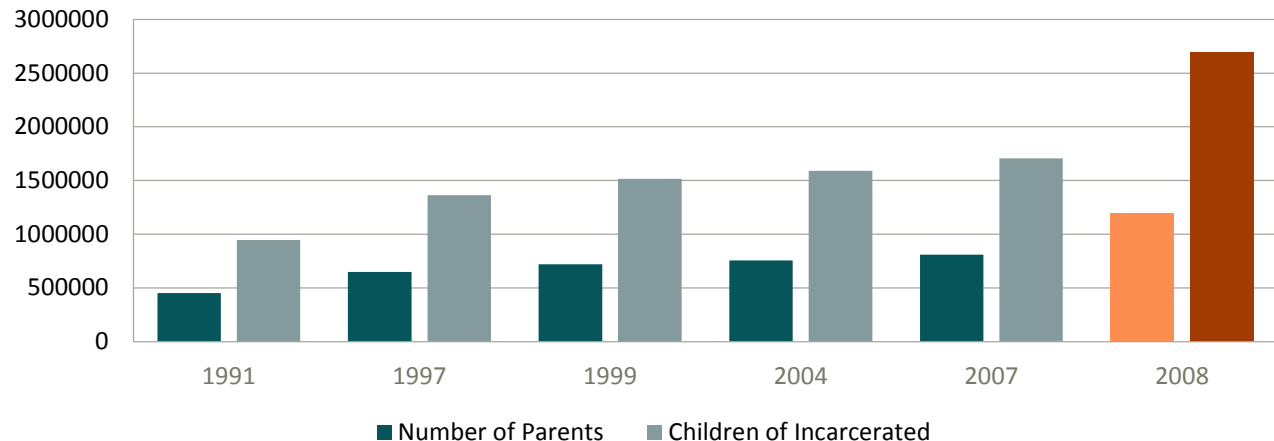
What is the *worst thing* that could happen to children of incarcerated parents ?

What We Know: “Estimated” Numbers

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Including jails, estimates indicate that as many as 2.7 million children have a parent behind bars.

Estimated number of parents in state and federal prison and jail and their minor children

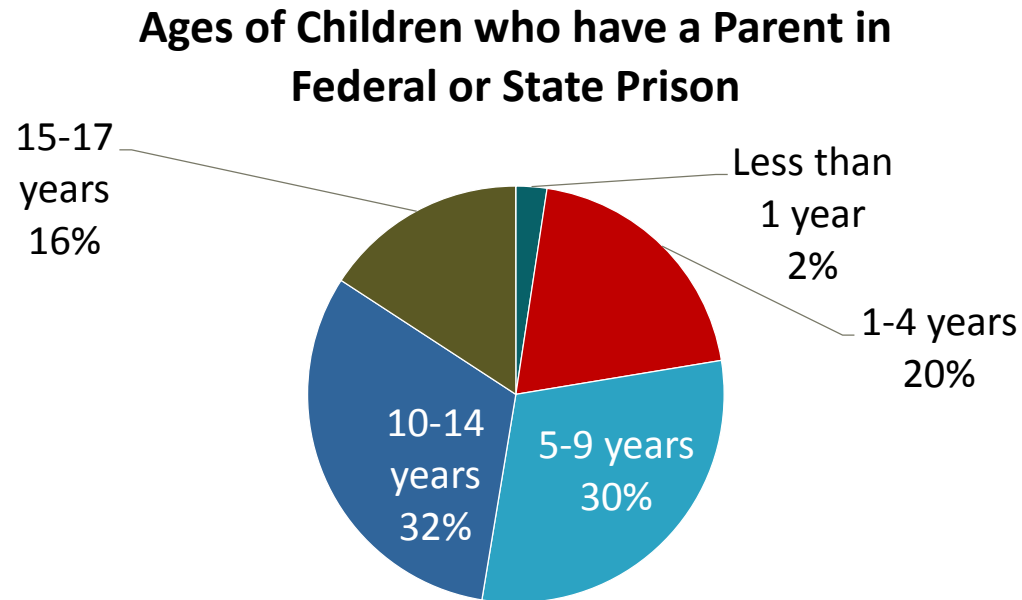


Source: Pew Charitable Trusts. *Collateral Costs: Incarceration’s Effect on Economic Mobility*. 2010.

What We Know: Ages

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Over 50% of children who have an incarcerated parent are age 9 or younger.



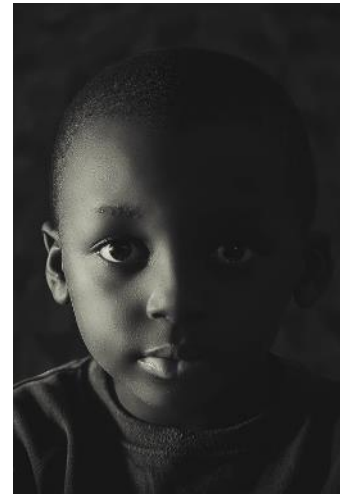
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Parents in Prison and their Minor Children*. Aug 2008

What We Know: Racial Disparities

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- Over 70% of minor children with a parent in prison are low income children of color.
- Of the 1 in 28 children with a parent in prison
 - 1 in 9 are Black
 - 1 in 28 are Hispanic
 - 1 in 57 are White

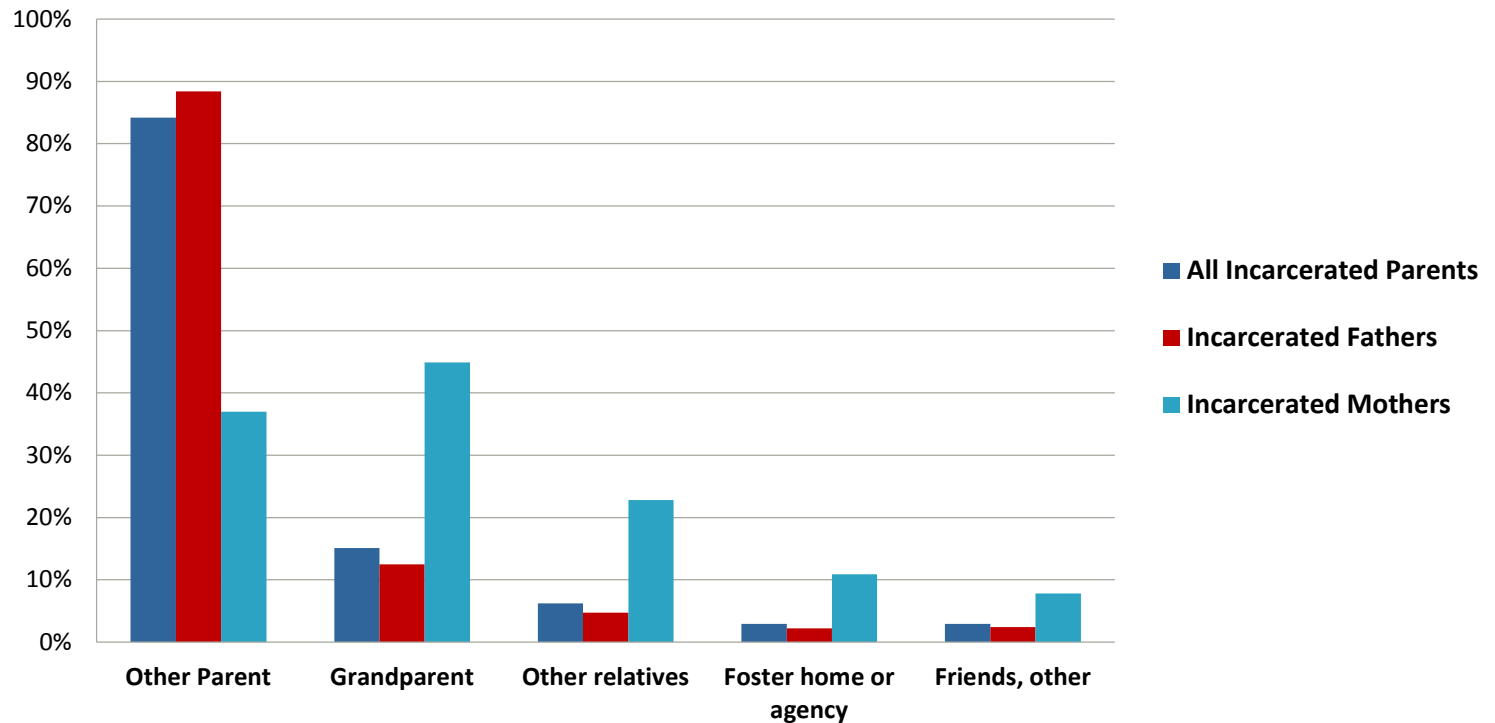
The Sentencing Project 2009



What We Know: Caregivers

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Caregiver for Children During Parent's Incarceration



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Parents in Prison and their Minor Children*. Aug 2008

Child Outcomes

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Kristin Turney's 2014 study found that having an incarcerated parent increased and often doubled a child's likelihood of being diagnosed with a host of conditions:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Anxiety
- Autism
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Depression
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Speech or language problems
- Vision problems
- Epilepsy

Stress Proliferation across Generations: Examining the Relationship between Parental Incarceration and Childhood Health; Kristin Turney 2014

Stresses on Caregivers

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- Financial stress and hardship.
- Elevated levels of emotional stress.
- Additional strains placed on interpersonal relationships.
- Increased difficulty in monitoring and supervising children.



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See: Turanovic, J. J., Rodriguez, N., & Pratt, T. C. (2012). The collateral consequences of incarceration revisited: A qualitative analysis of the effects on caregivers of children of incarcerated parents. *Criminology*, 50(4), 913-959.

Direct and Indirect Causes of Child Protective Services Overlap

Direct:

1. As a result of abuse or neglect prior to the parent's incarceration
2. As a direct result of the primary caregiving parent's arrest with no prior abuse or neglect

Indirect:

1. Reduction of stability- economic; social support
2. Parenting/child care stress for caregiver
3. Differential levels of surveillance, monitoring, policing and reporting for low income families of color
4. Use of Criminal Justice involvement as marker for abuse/neglect substantiation

Berger, L.M.et.al. Families at the Intersection of the Criminal Justice and Child Protective Services Systems. In *Tough On Crime Tough On Families*. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Volume 665, Issue 1, May 2016

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Adverse Childhood Experiences

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Growing up experiencing any of the following conditions in the household prior to age 18:

Recurrent physical or emotional abuse or neglect

- Sexual abuse
- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother is treated violently
- Parental absence

The ACE Study is an ongoing collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente. Led by Co-principal Investigators Robert F. Anda, MD, and Vincent J. Felitti, MD.

Why ACES Matter?

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Toxic Stress & Trauma: Impact on brain development related to Cortisol regulation

- Impulse Control—inability to stop oneself
- Cause and Effect—limited capacity to anticipate consequences
- Predictability—lack of social “cueing”
- Emotional Regulation—extreme difficulty delaying gratification
- Reciprocal Engagement—inability to tolerate conflict with or in others

Leading to poor school performance, increased drop out rates, gang involvement, early pregnancies and drug use, abuse and addiction.



Combined Sources Point to Unique Toxic Stress of Parental Incarceration

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- Stigma and shame
- Conspiracy of silence and isolation
- Changes in residence, family structure
- Attachment disruption
- Fear and worry about parents and caregivers
- Loyalty conflicts
- Guilt and self blame
- Trauma from the sudden absence of a parent or the events leading up to it
- Lack of relevant support
- School behavior and performance problems

Cumulative STRESS of Parents' Criminal Justice System Involvement for Children

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- **Arrest:** Fear, Confusion, Panic.
- **Pre-Trial/Trial:** Anxiety, Frustration.
- **Sentencing:** Hopelessness, Helplessness.
- **Initial Incarceration:** Abandonment, Stigma, Loyalty Conflict, Worry.
- **Incarceration Stage 2:** Resentment, Balance, Idealization.
- **Pre-Release:** Fear, Anxiety, Anticipation.
- **Post-Release:** Celebration, Ambivalence, Chaos.

Children of the Incarcerated: Resilience and Protective Factors

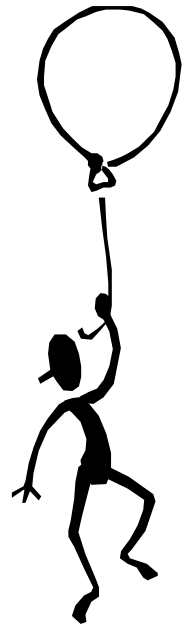
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“Risk factors are not predictive factors—because of protective factors.”

David Satcher, M.D., Former U.S. Surgeon General

Protective Factors include:

- PARENTS and other Primary attachments.
- Other adult bonds.
- Skills/confidence.
- Emotional competence.
- Faith, hope, ability to find meaning
- Participation, influence



Seeking Equilibrium

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The presence of parents or other adult attachment figures raises dopamine levels and lowers the dangerous levels of cortisol.

(Dozier, 2005)

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Assumptions, Beliefs, and Attitudes

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What is the *best thing* that could happen to the children of incarcerated parents?

What is the *worst thing* that could happen to children of incarcerated parents ?

How we can help?

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- Know the facts
- Challenge your assumptions
- Honor the Themes and Variations
- Create an atmosphere of safety and trust

Resources

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- www.CANTASD.org
- Youth.Gov
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)
- [National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#)

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Thank You and Next Steps

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- Download the handouts to learn more. Click on the files in the “Handouts” box on your screen.
- Do you have innovative ideas, questions or concerns about supporting vulnerable families? Tell us about your work. Send an e-mail to **hello@CANTASD.org** with “supporting vulnerable families” in the subject line.
- Join us on **January 17th at 2:00 ET** for a 2nd Digital Dialogue that focuses on the skills and tools workers can bring to the table in their work with families impacted by incarceration.

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Participant Feedback

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Thank you for your participation!

How useful was this session?

Additional Comments: hello@CANTASD.org

