

CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS

A List of Select Resources

“Our intent is to bring these children out of the shadows, so they occupy our thoughts when we make decisions, set policy, do research, and plan interventions.” ~Voices for America’s Children

GENERAL

All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated, Bernstein, N. (2005). Award-winning journalist Nell Bernstein takes an intimate look at parents and children affected by U.S. incarceration policy. Described as “meticulously reported and sensitively written” by Salon, the book is “brimming with compelling case studies . . . and recommendations for change.”

Children and Families with Incarcerated Parents: Exploring Development in the Field and Opportunities for Growth, Bouchet, S. (2008). This report summarizes the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s findings from consultative sessions with leading researchers, practitioners, advocates, policymakers, and funders on the current state of the field and the opportunities for growth and describes some of the Foundation’s recent investments on this issue and synthesizes what it has learned into potential opportunities for the field at large. www.aecf.org/childrenofincarcerated.aspx

CW360° Spring 2008 issue. Provides a comprehensive look at a prevalent child welfare issue—the children of incarcerated parents. This journal is published by the University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, and is available at <http://cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/research/cw360.asp>

Family and Corrections Network Provides information, technical assistance, and training on families of offenders, children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, and the impact of the justice system on families. FCN’s website has over 100 articles, an e-mail list, a directory of programs, and links to offender family websites. www.fcnetwork.org

Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families Beyond the Bars: A new GCYF Learning Initiative on Children with Incarcerated Parents. www.gcyf.org

When a Parent Is In Prison, by Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz; photos by Howard Zehr, design by Judith Rempel Smucker. Exhibit can be borrowed from Mennonite Central Committee, U.S. Office on Justice and Peacebuilding and the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. www.tng-secure.com/scripts/mcc/catalog/product_detail.php?pid=1002. Forthcoming book from www.goodbks.com.

RESEARCH

Broken Bonds: Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents, La Vigne, N.G., Davies, E., and Brazzell, D. (2008). This report by the Urban Institute reviews the current research on children with incarcerated parents, and offers recommendations on how to reduce the negative impact of parental incarceration. The authors of the report pay particular attention to the influence that supportive relationships with the incarcerated parent and other adults has on children’s outcomes. www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411616

Children with Parents in Prison: Child Welfare Policy, Program, and Practice Issues, Seymour, C., and Hairston, C.F. (2000). Explores challenges facing child welfare agencies serving children with incarcerated parents. Discusses the impact of parental incarceration on the child, considers current child welfare policy and practice, and discusses the shared interests of child welfare and advocacy groups for criminal justice and prisoner advocacy. Proposes suggestions for a comprehensive strategy for meeting needs of incarcerated parents and their children.

Families Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry, Travis, J., Cincotta, E.M., and Solomon, A.L. (2006). 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. www.urban.org/publications/310882.html

Focus on Children with Incarcerated Parents: An Overview of the Research Literature, Hairston, C.F. (2007). This report provides an overview of major research findings on children whose parents are incarcerated as a means of further informing this developing area of research, practice, and policy. The findings and policy and program suggestions offered in this synthesis are based primarily on research published during the last 20 years. www.aecf.org/childrenofincarcerated.aspx

Incarcerated Parents and Their Children, Mumola, C. (2000). This report is based on the 1997 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) finds that incarcerated women are more likely than men to be parents and to have been the primary caregiver of their children prior to their arrest. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/iptc.htm

Merging Local Data to Explore the Experiences and Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents The Urban Institute partnered with organizations in Chicago, Illinois; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Providence, Rhode Island to merge local- and state-level criminal justice and human services data to learn about children of incarcerated parents in their localities. This report presents findings from the three sites and a discussion of the possibilities and difficulties involved in merging and analyzing administrative data on this population. www.aecf.org/childrenofincarcerated.aspx

Parental Incarceration and Child Wellbeing in Fragile Families In this policy brief, the authors highlight findings from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, conducted through Columbia University's School of Social Work. The study explores the extent to which children of incarcerated parents are at a greater risk for material hardship, family instability, and developmental challenges. www.aecf.org/childrenofincarcerated.aspx

Services for Families of Prison Inmates A survey of state and federal departments of corrections. National Institute of Corrections, February 2002. www.nicic.org/pubs/2002/017272.pdf

Serving Incarcerated and Ex-Offender Fathers and Their Families: A Review of the Field, Jeffries, J.M., Menghraj, S., and Hairston, C.F. (2001). A review of materials developed and disseminated by programs serving prisoners or low-income fathers and their families. www.vera.org/publications/publications_5.asp?publication_id=20

Understanding the Experiences and Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents: Views from Mentors

To better understand the experiences and needs of children with incarcerated parents, Urban Institute researchers collaborated with mentors from Big Brothers, Big Sisters to gather qualitative data through the use of focus groups with the mentors of children whose parents are incarcerated. www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411615

What We Know Now that We Didn't Know Then, Phillips, S.D., and Gleeson, J.P. About the Criminal Justice System's Involvement in Families with Whom Child Welfare Agencies Have Contact. Center for Social Policy and Research, Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago, July 2007. www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research/What%20we%20know%20now.pdf

PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

Amachi Mentoring Provides one-to-one mentors to children with parents who are incarcerated or recently released. www.amachimentoring.org

Angel Tree/Angel Tree Camping Provides religious ministry, mentoring, and support to the children and families of prisoners. Distributes holiday gifts to children of prisoners and provides a children's camping program. www.angeltree.org

Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents Provides services in four components: informational, educational, family reunification, and therapeutic. www.e-ccip.org

Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM) Provides legal aid on family law issues for incarcerated mothers and their children's caregivers in Illinois and representation on Cook County cases involving child custody. www.claim-il.org

Fathers Behind Bars, Inc. Provides publications and technical assistance on self-help support groups for incarcerated fathers. fathersbehindbars2@msn.com

Foreverfamily Provides gifts for children, group activities, after-school programs, mentoring and tutoring services, parent/child group activities, and supervised family visitations. www.takingaim.net

Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Provides scouting activities for incarcerated mothers and their children. Provides family reunification support, support groups, mentoring to mothers and daughters by volunteers. www.gscm.org

Long Distance Dads Provides training and technical assistance on parent education for incarcerated fathers. The Long Distance Dads curriculum is used in over 145 correctional facilities in 24 states of the USA as well as in Canada, Great Britain, and Africa. Provides extensive fatherhood resources and publications. www.fatherhood.org

U.S. Dream Academy Provides children in grades 3 through 6 daily after-school programming that includes online academic enrichment, healthy lifestyles instruction, homework assistance, values training, and mentoring. Provides video-visiting to support communication between prison and home. www.usdreamacademy.org

Volunteers of America Provides literacy and family strengthening programming for incarcerated parents and their children. Parents take a class then read and record books. The recordings are given to the children along with a book bag, personal tape player, and other supplies. www.voa.org

POLICY AND STATE/LOCAL LEVEL ACTIVITY

Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights The San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership (SFCIPP) is a coalition of social service providers, representatives of government bodies, advocates, and others who work with or are concerned about children of incarcerated parents and their families. Formed in 2000 under the auspices of the Zellerbach Family Foundation, SFCIPP works to improve the lives of children of incarcerated parents, and to increase awareness of these children, their needs, and their strengths. www.sfcipp.org

Children of Incarcerated Parents Project, Report to the Oregon Legislature, December 2002 The project's mission is to improve the health and well being of children whose parents are incarcerated. The 2001 Oregon Legislature approved Senate Bill 133 and put the workgroup into law, charging it to develop recommendations for improving parent-child relationships while parents are involved in the criminal justice system. egov.oregon.gov/DOC/PUBAFF/docs/pdf/legreport_bill133.pdf

Council of State Governments Justice Policy Center Developing three resources for policymakers and practitioners interested in supporting families of people in prisons or jails and facilitating successful prisoner reentry: technical assistance, case studies, and an online collaboration tool.
www.reentrypolicy.org/issue_areas/children_families_project

Every Door Closed: Barriers Facing Parents with Criminal Records, CLASP and Community Legal Services, Inc., of Philadelphia, May 2002. The report contains an introduction with background information on parents with criminal records, and chapters on employment, public benefits, housing, child welfare, student loans, and immigration. www.clasp.org/publications/every_door_closed.pdf

Policy Recommendations on Families of Adult Offenders Recommendations fall into four groups: government policies and procedures, the role of the criminal justice system, community support, and the role of research.
www.fcnetwork.org/reading/policy.html

Position Paper for 2006: Family Unification, the Next Step for Family Values, Virginia CURE.
A comprehensive state legislative agenda addressing concerns for prisoners and their families.
www.fcnetwork.org/reading/2006_Position_Paper_VaCURE.pdf

Rebuilding Families, Reclaiming Lives—State Obligations to Children in Foster Care and Their Incarcerated Parents, Brennan Center for Justice, 2006. Addresses federal policy opportunity to address the family reunification needs of children and their incarcerated parents. www.brennancenter.org/page/-/d/download_file_37203.pdf

Advocating for Children of Prisoners: FIRST REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2005 Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/childguidance/linked_files/pcgf_report1.pdf

Advocating for Children of Prisoners: SECOND REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2006 Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/childguidance/linked_files/pcgf_report2.pdf

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, rather a sample of promising work done in the field.



The Annie E. Casey Foundation



casey family programs



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