



Resources for Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents in School (COIP)

Having a parent in prison can impact a child's mental health, social behavior, health, and educational performance.¹ Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences, including witnessing violence, financial hardships, and exposure to drug and alcohol abuse.² These children require support from local, state, and federal systems to serve their needs.

To support children of incarcerated parents in schools - teachers, counselors, and juvenile justice professionals might consider how they can more adequately address the needs of the 2.7 million children who currently have a parent in prison or jail in the United States.³ Below is a list of resources that can help you understand and overcome these challenges for supporting children of incarcerated parents in schools.

For School Administration and Teachers

[Supporting Youth with Incarcerated Parents: For School Staff](#)

This video and discussion guide are designed for school staff who provide direct supports and services to students: teachers, administrators, and support staff (e.g., school social worker, psychologist, guidance counselor, librarian, art teacher, PE teacher, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver).

[Tip Sheet for Teachers \(Pre-K through 12\): Supporting Children Who Have an Incarcerated Parent](#)

School staff make a difference in the lives of all children, including children of incarcerated parents. For the child with a parent in prison, a safe and supportive school can provide a caring, stable setting offering opportunities for educational, social, and emotional development.

[Educators are Critical Partners in Making A Difference in the Lives of Children of Incarcerated Parents](#)

This presentation and Q&A session provided the audience with statistics on the prevalence of children with incarcerated parents, practical tips for addressing the needs of these children and youth, and how to use collaboration, focused assistance, and advocacy to contribute to positive outcomes for children who have an incarcerated parent.

For Child Welfare/Social Work and Clinical Professionals

[Tip Sheet for Providers: Supporting Children Who Have an Incarcerated Parent](#)

This tip sheet was written by youth who have or have had incarcerated parents for service providers who work with youth who have this experience or may interact with them. The tip sheet includes information from youth about the changes they would like to see in their lives, including more frequent visits with incarcerated loved ones and better coordination between the systems that influence their lives.

¹ Turney, K., Goodsell, R. (2018). Parental Incarceration and Children's Wellbeing. ERIC.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2013; Phillips & Gleeson, 2007

³ The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew Center on the States. Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility. Washington, DC. 2010

[Supporting Youth with Incarcerated Parents: For Social Workers](#)

This video and discussion guide are designed for social workers who may come in contact with children of incarcerated parents. They are intended for the larger world of social work, including those who work in clinical settings, community and faith-based organizations, schools, child welfare, juvenile justice, adult corrections, etc. Professional social workers contributed to the planning and content and several are featured in the video.

[The Adoption and Safe Families Act: Barriers to Reunification between Children and Incarcerated Parents](#)

This information packet, developed by the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections and featured on the Children's Bureau website, addresses how certain provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) create barriers to reunification for incarcerated mothers.

[Child Welfare Practice with Families Affected by Parental Incarceration](#)

This Bulletin for professionals provides an overview of the intersection of child welfare and parental incarceration; highlights practices to facilitate parent-child visits during incarceration, include parents in case planning, and work toward reunification; and points to resources to help caseworkers in their practice with these children and families.

[When a Parent Is Incarcerated: A Primer for Social Workers and Foster Parents](#)

This resource provides information for social workers and foster parents on how incarcerated parents and their children can maintain a relationship. The article includes information on visiting and tips for how to make visitation with incarcerated parents as successful as possible.

For Law Enforcement and Corrections Personnel

[Tip Sheet for Prison/Jail Staff and Volunteers: Supporting Children Who Have an Incarcerated Parent](#)

Prison and jail staff and volunteers play an important role in facilitating visits and helping make visits a positive experience for children with incarcerated parents. Staff and volunteers are the first and last individuals that children see in the facility; their support of family visits can set an important tone that parent-child relationships are valued and important.

[Video Visiting in Corrections: Benefits, Limitations, and Implementing Considerations](#)

This guide from the National Institute of Corrections can help inform administrators working in correctional settings about the benefits and challenges of using "video visiting," in which incarcerated individuals communicate with family members via video conferencing technology or virtual software programs.

[Safeguarding Children at the Time of Parental Arrest Law Enforcement Pre-Arrest/Arrest Checklist](#)

The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, created a checklist that provides strategies to lessen the potential harmful effects of parental arrest on children and youth.

[Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents: Trauma Prevention Policy](#)

The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, created a policy that reflects input from subject-matter experts and stakeholders, providing strategies for law enforcement to improve their procedures for interactions with children when a parent is arrested.

For Parents and Caregivers

[Sesame Street Incarceration Tool Kit](#)

This toolkit provides activities, tip sheets, and videos for caregivers and professionals to help explain incarceration to children and facilitate communication about children's emotions.

[Tip Sheet for Incarcerated Parents: Planning for a Visit from Your Child/Children](#)

Many aspects of visitation are outside of the control of an incarcerated parent, but there are things you can do to anticipate problems and reduce stress to make visitation a positive and beneficial experience for everyone involved. Included in the tip sheet are things to consider when planning for a visit from your child.

[Stronger Together Handbooks](#)

These handbooks focus on the experiences and needs of children with an incarcerated parent and provide essential information for caregivers.

[Parent-Child Visiting Practices in Prisons and Jails](#)

This resource includes best practices and several recommendations for facilitating parent-child visiting in prisons and jails.

[Recommended Books by New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents](#)

These books about children of incarcerated parents act as a resource for parents, caregivers, providers, and policy makers about the diverse needs and experiences of children of incarcerated parents. Books are listed according to recommended audience age.

Additional Resources:

[Children and Families of The Incarcerated Fact Sheet](#)

This fact sheet provides an overview of some of the key factors to understanding both the needs of the children and families of the incarcerated and the obstacles they face in their lives.

[The Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights \(BOR\)](#)

The Bill of Rights recognizes that children's needs extend well beyond physical comfort and security. Developed by The San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership (SFCIPP), this popular resource addresses the special needs of families affected by incarceration.

[National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#)

This website provides a range of information and resources to assist children and families of the incarcerated, including:

- research publications,
- training materials,
- fact sheets,
- frequently asked questions documents,
- and more.

[Georgetown Early Learning "Just Beginning" Program](#)

The Just Beginning Project is a relationship-based intervention consisting of instructional sessions and parent-child visits focusing on communication and socio-emotional enhancing techniques.

[Infographic: Children of Incarcerated Parents — The Impact of Incarceration](#)

Seven percent of all children under the age of 18 – that's more than 5 million children — have lived with a parent who went to jail or prison. Learn more about children of incarcerated parents and the financial impact of incarceration on families with this infographic.

[Tips for Parents, Teachers, and Other Caregivers for Talking with Children Who Have Experienced Traumatic Events](#)

This presentation, developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), discusses typical responses that children and youth of specific ages may display after experiencing a traumatic event, as well as how parents, caregivers, and teachers can support recovery for young people of all ages.

[Tip Sheet for Mentors: Supporting Children Who Have an Incarcerated Parent](#)

This “tip sheet” provides information about the experiences of children who have an incarcerated parent, to help mentors provide support and understanding through their mentoring relationship. It addresses how to build a trusting relationship, help a youth maintain a relationship with an incarcerated parent if appropriate, and support youth in coping with challenges related to a parent’s incarceration.

Related Websites

[Child Welfare Information Gateway – Supporting Children of Incarcerated Parents \(COIP\)](#)

[Children’s Literature Resources](#)

[Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership \(COIPP\)](#)

[Coping with Confinement: Adolescents’ Experiences with Parental Incarceration](#)

[Echoes of Incarceration](#)

[Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children](#)

[Mental Health of Adolescents with Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Parents](#)

[National Institute of Corrections \(NIC\) - Children of Incarcerated Parents \(COIP\) Project](#)

[Parent-Child Visiting Practices in Prisons and Jails](#)

[Reading Unites Families: An Interactive Literacy Program for Incarcerated Fathers and Their Children](#)

[Reentry MythBusters: Children of Incarcerated Parents Series](#)

[SKIP, Inc. Community Resource Services](#)

[Stigma Management among Children of Incarcerated Parents](#)

[The Angel Tree Program](#)

[The National Proponent for Children with Incarcerated Parents](#)

[The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University](#)

[The Osbourne Association](#)

[The San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership \(SFCIPP\)](#)

[Why Children with Parents in Prison Are Especially Burdened](#)

[Youth.gov](#)

[Youth Law Center](#)