
CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS INITIATIVE

Institute for Municipal & Regional Policy at CCSU

CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY AWARD 2017

ATTACHMENT A

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In May of 2014, the Children with Incarcerated Parents (CIP) Initiative instated seven Guiding Principles. They were developed from careful analysis of the Initiative's funded programs, knowledge gained through review of what is being done nationally, and frequent communication with experts in the field.

- I. Practices should be designed specifically with CIP needs in mind
- II. Include CIP and their families in the process of program development, implementation, and evaluation
- III. The relationship between the child and the incarcerated parent should be supported
- IV. Programs should reach children and families to get "self-referrals"
- V. Stigma and isolation associated with incarceration should be reduced
- VI. Emphasis on connections, collaborations and coordination among agencies and community partners
- VII. Evaluation and accurate data are critical for identifying evidence-supported practices

For more information on the CIP Initiative, visit our website at <http://www.ctcip.org/>.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CIP

One of the factors that Connecticut policymakers have recently focused on as an area for improvement is the impact of familial incarceration on youth, in particular, the degree that parental incarceration may be a positive indicator in a child's future involvement with the justice system. Legislators have indicated a desire to meaningfully support children with incarcerated

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parents for the benefit of the child and the state. How Connecticut's disparate rates of incarceration across neighborhood, municipal, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines impact this dynamic is another primary concern for policymakers.

Although the circumstances surrounding CIP certainly warrant attention, at this point there is no one agency or entity that either identifies or monitors these children or their families. As such, it has become increasingly apparent to policymakers that effective public policy must be systematically developed to support these children along a path to a healthy and productive adulthood.

One of the certainties regarding these children is that the exponential rise in incarceration nationally over the past 30 years has substantially increased the likelihood that a child in the United States will face at least some of their life with an incarcerated parent. The National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated provides information on the frequency and impact of parental incarceration in the United States in its 2014 [Children and Families of the Incarcerated Fact Sheet](#). Below are some of its key points.

Demographics

- More than 2.7 million children in the U.S. have an incarcerated parent.¹
- Approximately 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives.²
- One in 9 African American children (11.4%), 1 in 28 Hispanic children (3.5%), and 1 in 57 white children (1.8%) in the United States have an incarcerated parent¹
- Approximately half of children with incarcerated parents are under ten years old.²

Impact

- While many of the risk factors children of incarcerated parents experience may be related to parental substance abuse, mental health, inadequate education, or other challenges, parental incarceration increases the risk of children living in poverty or experiencing household instability independent of these other problems.³
- A misperception exists that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be incarcerated than their peers, and are predisposed to criminal activity. There is no basis for this in existing research.⁴
- Parental incarceration is now recognized as an “adverse childhood experience” (ACE); it is distinguished from other adverse childhood experiences by the unique combination of trauma, shame, and stigma.⁵

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew Center on the States. *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*. Washington, DC. 2010.

² Mauer, M., Nellis, A., Schirmer, S.; *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children - Trends 1991 - 2007*, The Sentencing Project, Feb. 2009 - <http://www.sentencingproject.org>.

³ Phillips, S.D., Errant, A., Keeler, G.P., Costello, J.E., An gold, A., Johnston, D., et al. (2006). Disentangling the risks: Parent criminal justice involvement and children's exposure to family risks. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 5, 677-702

⁴ Raimon, M., Lee, A., & Genty, P. (2009). Sometimes Good Intentions Yield Bad Results: ASFA's Effect on Incarcerated Parents and Their Children.

⁵ Hairston, C.F. (2007). Focus on the children with incarcerated parents: A overview of the research literature. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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Prevalence

- Between 1995 and 2005, incarceration increased 57% for women and 34% for men. 75% of incarcerated women are mothers.⁷
- In 2010, 1.5 million people were in State or Federal prison in the U.S., and 750,000 in jails.⁸ This is a 10% decline from 2009 but still significantly higher than 1980 when “mass incarceration” began.⁹

A study¹⁰ that was released in September of 2014, conducted by Kristin Turney, PhD., of the University of California in Irvine, found significant health and behavioral problems in CIP. The most striking finding was that in some cases, parental incarceration appeared to be more detrimental to a child’s well being than divorce or the death of a parent. When considering these findings within the context of the United States having the highest rate of incarceration in the world, the forecast is alarming, and the need to reduce the prevalence of parental incarceration and mitigate the negative consequences is apparent.

The IMRP determined the below statistics that demonstrate the prevalence of parental incarceration in the United States when compared against other conditions of government-involved separation of parent and child.

In the U.S., it is estimated that...

1 in 346 children has a parent deployed in the U.S. military^{11, 12}

1 in 191 children is in foster care¹³

1 in 28 children has a parent incarcerated¹

⁶Schirmer, S., Nellis, A., & Mauer, M. (2009). *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children: Trends 1991-2007*. The Sentencing Project. Washington, DC. http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cinc_incarceratedparents.pdf

⁷ Mumola, C.J. (2000). *Incarcerated parents and their children*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iptc.pdf>

⁸ Glaze, L. *Correctional Populations in the U.S. 2010*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington, DC. 2011

⁹ Conway, J .M. , Jones, E. (2015). *Seven Out of Ten? Not Even Close. A Review of Research on the Likelihood of Children with Incarcerated Parents Becoming Justice-Involved*. New Britain, CT: The Institute of Municipal & Regional Policy. http://www.ccsu.edu/imrp/projects/files/CIP_Seven_Out_of_Ten_Not_Even_Close3.pdf

¹⁰ Turney, K. (2014). Stress Proliferation across Generations? Examining the Relationship between Parental Incarceration and Childhood Health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 55(3), 302 – 319.

¹¹ Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America’s Commitment. (2011). The White House. Retrieved from https://www.dol.gov/dol/milfamilies/strengthening_our_military_families.pdf

¹² www.ChildStats.gov

¹³ <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp>

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To review summaries of current and former CIP projects supported by the CIP Initiative, visit the Initiative's website at www.CTCIP.org.

For more information regarding children with incarcerated parents, visit the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated website at <http://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>.