

**CT CHILDREN WITH
INCARCERATED PARENTS
INITIATIVE**

**ACTIVITIES
REPORT
2023-2024**



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About CTCIP

The **Children with Incarcerated Parents (CIP)** Initiative aims to improve the quality of supports for children with incarcerated parents by using the various data and knowledge it gains to inform public policy and practice.

The CIP Initiative operates out of the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (IMRP) located at the University of Connecticut's School of Public Policy.

The CIP Initiative is Connecticut's primary resource center for information on and for children affected by familial incarceration. We serve as the state's think-tank for policy and practice recommendations involving and impacting children with incarcerated parents.



CTCIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 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

Fostering Family Connections: Child-Friendly Visiting



York Correctional Institution

The 1st outdoor playground at a Connecticut correctional facility (maybe the 1st in New England) has opened! Through its collaborative work with CT DOC, most notably with Warden Trina Sexton, CTCIP purchased a playscape for children and youth visitors at York Correctional Institution. The ability for children to play with their parents in a playground during visits is expected to yield significant positive outcomes for children, the incarcerated women, and hopefully staff who supervise visits.



MacDougall-Walker Correctional

CTCIP worked with the warden, deputy wardens, and counselor supervisors to transform MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution's visiting and waiting areas into child-friendly and engaging spaces. This included painting the visiting room and waiting areas, purchasing small tables and bright color chairs for families with children to sit during visits instead of long tables where they are next to strangers, and purchasing books, toys, wall activity centers, coloring books and crayons. This transformation aims to help children feel comfortable in the waiting and visiting rooms, and to support and encourage play between parents and their children during visits.



Building a Community of Support



CT Caregivers of CIP Facebook Group

The Children with Incarcerated Parents (CIP) Caregivers' Group is a virtual space designed to foster a sense of community among caregivers. Here, caregivers can connect with one another, offer mutual support, and share information on visiting rules/tips/suggestions, when facilities are in lockdown, where families can access assistance with basic needs, skills development opportunities, and the sharing of household and children's items (as children outgrow clothes, donating them to a family in need).



Faces of Courage Series

1 in 2 Americans has had a family member in jail or prison. Yet, the stigma of incarceration leave many families ostracized and suffering in silence. The Faces of Courage series illuminates the experiences of families with an incarcerated loved one, challenging stigmas and highlighting their resilience.



Cybulski Family Dance

CTCIP cosponsored Cybulski Correctional Institution 2nd daddy family dance! This event, was a wonderful opportunity for fathers to enjoy attending a party with their families with dancing, food, games, table activities, and party favors (including children's books) for children as they left. Families were permitted full contact throughout the 3 hour event.



This year we...

TRAINED

We developed a Family Engagement Training to equip correctional professionals with greater awareness and understanding of the experiences and dynamics faced by families impacted by incarceration. The training also focused on increasing staff's understanding of the goals of family engagement, and identifying strategies to foster meaningful family connections. Participants explored methods to support incarcerated parents' relationships with their families, and discussed concerns related to these efforts. The training provided a practical framework and a forum for open dialogue to enhance family-centered practices within the CT correctional system.



We collaborated with the CT Department of Children and Families, CT Department of Correction on a 3-year federal grant offered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to support families. Through this collaboration, CTCIP will work together with DCF and DOC to bring awareness and educational based resources to create effective relationships with families of those affected by incarceration. CTCIP will facilitate these educational based trainings and ongoing technical assistance throughout the duration of the project.

AWARDED

We awarded scholarships to two UConn Hartford students who have been personally impacted by having a family member incarcerated. These scholarships provide financial assistance to help alleviate the burden of educational expenses, empowering recipients to focus on their academic goals and personal growth. By offering this support, we aim to reduce barriers to higher education and provide encouragement to students navigating the challenges associated with familial incarceration.



CTCIP has contracted Dr. Kari Adamsons, a professor in UConn's Human Development and Family Sciences program, to lead a Needs Assessment study focused on identifying the best ways to support caregivers and children with an incarcerated parent in Connecticut. The study, which includes a survey and focus groups, is currently underway and is expected to conclude in 2025.

CONTRACTED

HOSTED

We hosted a free Community Connection event focused on supporting children, youth, and caregivers impacted by parental incarceration. The event fostered community building through engaging workshops, fun activities, and exposure to the UConn Hartford campus. The event successfully combined practical support, inspiration, and enjoyment, making a meaningful impact on attendees.



The Department of Social Services (DSS)' CT Fatherhood Initiative Strategic Plan Domain 4 Committee: Men Involved in the Criminal Justice System Supported in Being Responsible Fathers. Domain 4 hosted a training focused on supporting fathers involved with the criminal justice system for the top leaders of each criminal justice agency in the state and their training academy staff.

CO-CHAired

LED

In December 2024, we led a free webinar for educators titled "What About the Kids? How to Support Children with Incarcerated Parents in Education Settings." The interactive session provided educators with tools to reflect on current practices and explore strategies to support students affected by parental incarceration. Participants gained valuable insights into how the CIP initiative collaborates to enhance support for these students both in and out of the classroom.



Programs & Resources

The CIP Initiative is dedicated to providing information and resources that may be helpful to those with a loved one in a Connecticut correctional facility.



FAQ Booklet

CIP Children Website



CIP Scholarship

WHAT WE HOPE TO DO

CTCIP will continue the very important work of identifying, developing and implementing policies, services and resources for children affected by familial incarceration. We will continue to collaborate with our state and national partners to expand the scope of resources and services.

We will further provide awareness and outreach across the state in order to de-stigmatize the issue and to provide better support and networks for CIP and families.

We will gain additional understanding of the CIP population in our state, nation and across the world, as well as the specific service-needs of CIP through research, evaluation, and outreach.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

ASSIST a child dealing with parental incarceration by visiting our kid-friendly, CIP-specific [website](#).

GIVE to the CIP Initiative Fund to provide support for scholarships and programming for students impacted by familial incarceration.

FOLLOW US on social media to stay updated on our work.

CONTACT us anytime.

WWW.CTCIP.ORG

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: A BILL OF RIGHTS

I. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.

II. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me

III. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.

IV. I have the right to be well cared for in my parent's absence.

V. I have the right to speak with, see and touch my parent.

VI. I have the right to support as I struggle with my parent's incarceration.

VII. I have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of my parent's incarceration.

VIII. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

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