



RESOURCES FOR PEDIATRICIANS & HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS (CIP)

Why is This Important?

- 1 in 14 U.S. youth has experienced parental incarceration.
- Youth with incarcerated parents face 3x more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
 - The CDC defines ACEs as potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood.

Health Impact of Parental Incarceration

- Parental incarceration increases risks of educational, economic, mental, and physical health challenges.
- CIPs often experience trauma, home instability, fragmented social services, disordered sleep, and poor eating habits.
- They are at higher risk for developmental challenges (chronic-stress related physical and mental illnesses), mental health issues (like depression, PTSD, and anxiety), and drug use.
- Healthcare professionals, including school nurses, should identify and support these children by addressing eating and sleeping problems and advocating for healthier food options and increased mental health resources.



C.A.R.E.S. Approach for Resilience:

Create a safe space for conversation.

Acknowledge and validate concerns.

Reassure children they are not alone.

Encourage play and skill-building

Share age-appropriate information.

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Tips for Supporting Children with Incarcerated Parents

- Treat parental incarceration as a unique childhood experience in care.
- Be aware of “trauma triggers” and provide support.
- Connect families to mental health and social services in the area.
- Use Nationwide Children's community resources for at-risk youth.
- Refer children who witnessed violence to the Center for Family Safety and Healing.
- Avoid stigmatizing language when working with children of incarcerated parents. USE humanizing language.
- Engage supportive adults, like teachers and coaches, and prioritize stability.



Developing Healthy Eating and Sleeping Habits

To promote healthy sleeping habits children should:

- Find ways to ease stress. Ex. reading, drawing, being active, playing outside.
- Establish consistent nighttime routines.

To promote healthy eating habits children should:

- Maintain a consistent eating schedule.
- Eat meals together with family members to encourage positive food habits.