



RESOURCES FOR MENTORS 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.

Impact of Parental Incarceration

- Parental incarceration raises the risk of poverty and household instability for children.
- Systemic Inequalities: Generational incarceration and racism heighten children's risks of substance abuse, mental health issues, and educational struggles.
- Developmental Affects by Age Group:
 - Ages 2–6: Separation anxiety, social-emotional delays, traumatic stress, survivor guilt.
 - Ages 7–10: Regression, poor self-concept, self-regulation struggles, avoidance behaviors.
 - Ages 11–14: Behavioral rejection, trauma-reactive behaviors.
 - Ages 15–18: Early independence from the parent.



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.

UConn

INSTITUTE FOR MUNICIPAL
AND REGIONAL POLICY



Tips for Supporting Children with Incarcerated Parents

- Set Goals: Focus on the mentee's growth, goals, and shared interests.
- Build Trust: Foster understanding with a consistent, realistic commitment.
- Engage: Introduce new experiences while respecting the child's comfort.
- Be Mindful: Use sensitive language and acknowledge incarceration stigma.
- Support: Offer judgment-free understanding, education, and active listening.
- Book Recommendations:
 - Ages 3–8: Knock Knock, Our Moms
 - Ages 9–12: Harbor Me, A Card for My Father
 - Ages 13+: The Opposite of Everyone
 - For more recommendations see: [CTCIP Books](#)



www.ctcip.org



ctcip@uconn.edu



[@CTCIPInitiative](https://www.facebook.com/CTCIPInitiative)



[@ct.cip](https://www.instagram.com/ct.cip)



959-200-3820



Helping Kids Cope with Trauma

Provide Reassurance:

- Use touch, words, and quality time to build trust and ease anxiety.
- Validate their feelings, encourage open expression without judgment, and create safe spaces at home.

Create Routines and Habits:

- Maintain regular meals and a consistent bedtime routine.
- Provide healthy food and hydration. Prepare them for schedule changes and use a visual schedule for structure.

Practice Coping Skills:

- Take breaks for exercise/active play.
- Participate in calming activities together.
- Discuss potential scenarios that might occur, and role play how best to navigate them.