

CHILDREN AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION FOR REENTERING PEOPLE

Internet Resources

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When Survivors Reenter their Communities after Jail or Prison
developed by the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women.

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Introduction

Despite the growing number of mothers returning to communities from jail or prison, the internet has relatively few resources that address the specific needs of reentering women reunifying with their children.

This listing includes resources on reunification and the issues and challenges facing reentering parents, specifically mothers, with children. Some resources focus exclusively on motherhood, mothers, and their role as primary caregivers before incarceration; others look more generally at parents and reunification and reentry and are written for both mothers and fathers.

It is well established that incarcerated parents' contact with their families is often associated with a more effective reunification and reentry. With that in mind, we also included resources about visitation while a parent is still incarcerated and resources that explore the importance of family support.

AUDIENCE

Reentering women and practitioners and advocates working with reentering women and reentering parents.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Labels can often stigmatize people and create barriers between those using the labels and those being labeled. Some of the resources included in this listing use the term "women offender" for women returning home from jails and prisons. It is not a term we use at the National Clearinghouse. Many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women have objected to that term. We believe it is critical that individuals not be defined by their crime/alleged crime. Instead, we use terms such as "reentering woman," "person returning from jail/prison," or "formerly incarcerated woman."

In this resource listing we changed words like "offender" or "inmate" when they did not appear in the title and when it did not affect the integrity of the document being described.

If you know of additional online resources that should be added to this list, please contact the National Clearinghouse. We would also like to know if you find errors or changes in any of the web addresses. Thanks.

This resource is part of a series of internet listings about When Survivors Reenter their Communities after Jail or Prison published by the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women. Copies of these resources are available at www.ncdbw.org/reentry_resources.htm. Or email us at ncdbw@ncdbw.org and we will forward copies.

Background Information

This section includes general background information about incarceration of mothers, parents in general, and the impacts of parental incarceration on children and families. These resources are not intended to be a complete primer on the topic, but we include them here as a starting point for those seeking a basic overview.

NOTE: The materials in each section are listed by year from the most recently published to those published longest ago. Within each year, they are listed alphabetically by title.



Mother-Specific Incarceration

DUAL PUNISHMENT: INCARCERATED MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

by Julie Smyth (2012)

Author's Abstract: "Children with incarcerated parents are among the most at-risk populations in the United States. The recent trend toward mass incarceration in the United States, especially of women, has harmful implications for children because often their primary caregiver becomes incarcerated. Research indicates that children with incarcerated mothers are at heightened risk for attachment disturbance, leading to depression, anxiety, and other trauma-related stress. Such children are often subject to frequent changing of caregivers within the foster care system, which exacerbates these problems. Child welfare legislation is becoming more sensitive to the needs of children of incarcerated parents, but less reliance on prisons and more alternatives to incarceration are needed in order to mitigate the harmful impact of maternal incarceration on children. This review will focus on the following: (1) a history of the mass incarceration of women; (2) emotional, psychological, and social risk factors for the children of incarcerated women; (3) the intended and unintended repercussions of child welfare legislation; and (4) a case study of an alternative to incarceration program."

<https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8TM7MZB>

PRISON, FOSTER CARE, AND THE SYSTEMIC PUNISHMENT OF BLACK MOTHERS

by Dorothy E. Roberts (2012)

Author's Abstract: "This article analyzes how the U.S. prison and foster care systems work together to punish black mothers in the service of preserving race, gender, and class inequality in a neoliberal age. The intersection of these systems is only one example of many forms of overpolicing that overlap and converge in the lives of poor women of color. I examine the statistical overlap between the prison and foster care populations, the simultaneous explosion of both systems in recent decades, the injuries that each system inflicts on black communities, and the way in which their intersection in the lives of black mothers helps to naturalize social inequality. I hope to elucidate how state mechanisms of surveillance and punishment function jointly to penalize the most marginalized women in our society while blaming them for their own disadvantaged positions."

<http://www.uclalawreview.org/pdf/59-6-2.pdf>

INCARCERATED WOMEN, THEIR CHILDREN, AND THE NEXUS WITH FOSTER CARE

by Susan George, Roland Holst, Haeil Jung, Robert LaLonde, and Rekha Varghese (2007)

Author's Abstract: "This study shows how state administrative data can be used to assess the relationships between the criminal justice and child welfare systems. After matching corrections data on [justice-involved females] from Illinois to the state's child welfare records, we examine the incidence of childhood foster care spells among incarcerated women, the incidence of female prisoners having their own children in foster care, and how time in prison or jail is associated with different foster care outcomes, such as the loss of parental rights."

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/234110.pdf>

INCARCERATED MOTHERS: MENTAL HEALTH, CHILD WELFARE POLICY, AND THE SPECIAL CONCERNS OF UNDOCUMENTED MOTHERS

by Pamela Stowers Johansen (2005)

Author's Abstract: "This study presents a single case that illustrates the special concerns of incarcerated mothers with undocumented immigrant status. Current immigration, criminal justice, and child welfare policies, lack of agency coordination, staffing difficulties, and limited resources can create challenges for any incarcerated parent attempting to maintain custody of minor children. For a parent without legal immigration status, the likelihood of reunification with children is nearly impossible. This paper examines current policies impacting incarcerated mothers, the special needs of families involved in justice systems, and recommendations for more humane practice, education, and public policies."

http://www.cjhp.org/Volume3_2005/Issue2/130-138-johansen.pdf

General Parent Incarceration

PARENTS IN STATE PRISONS PUBLICATION

by the Sentencing Project (2013)

This short report charts the numbers of mothers and fathers incarcerated in state prisons illustrating the vast numbers and cost of mass incarceration. Excerpt: "Imprisoning parents for non-violent offenses can be a costly way of holding parents accountable for their misconduct. In 2010, states spent \$48.5 billion operating prisons. States also incurred additional expenses for mental health, child welfare, medical, and economic services for incarcerated parents' children, who use these services at higher rates than do other children. In this era of economic strain, policymakers would do well to task state agencies with determining their collective total expenditures on incarcerating parents and exploring sentencing options that reduce the demand for state services while recognizing public and child safety concerns."

http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/cc_Parents%20in%20State%20Prisons%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

PARENTS IN PRISON: REVISED EDITION

by the Sentencing Project (2012)

Written for a general audience, this resource highlights some of the broad issues and statistics regarding the incarcerated parents of children. Sections of this publication include statistics regarding children who have parents in prison; contact with children before and during incarceration; children's living situations while their parent is incarcerated; missed opportunity for

intervention addressing parents' needs; and the collateral consequences of incarceration and legislative barriers to parenting.

http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/cc_Parents%20in%20Prison_Factsheet_9.24sp.pdf

INTENTIONS AND RESULTS: A LOOK BACK AT THE ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT

Olivia Golden and Jennifer Ehrle Macomber (2009)

Author's Abstract: "The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), signed into law on November 19, 1997, was the most significant piece of legislation dealing with child welfare in almost twenty years. The ambitious new law aimed to reaffirm the focus on child safety in case decision making and to ensure that children did not grow up in foster care but instead were connected with permanent families. Twelve years after the law was enacted, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in partnership with the Urban Institute co-sponsored this series of papers to examine effects of the ASFA law and its implementation."

<http://webarchive.urban.org/publications/1001351.html>

Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children and Families

A SHARED SENTENCE: THE DEVASTATING TOLL OF PARENTAL INCARCERATION ON KIDS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016)

Author's Description: "More than 5 million U.S. children have had a parent in jail or prison at some point in their lives. The incarceration of a parent can have as much impact on a child's well-being as abuse or domestic violence. But while states spend heavily on corrections, few resources exist to support those left behind. *A Shared Sentence* offers commonsense proposals to address the increased poverty and stress that children of incarcerated parents experience."

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-asharedsentence-2016.pdf>

PARENTS BEHIND BARS: WHAT HAPPENS TO THEIR CHILDREN?

by David Murphey and P. Mae Cooper (2015)

Excerpt: "Children do not often figure in discussions of incarceration, but new research finds more than five million U.S. children have had at least one parent in prison at one time or another – about three times higher than earlier estimates that included only children with a parent currently incarcerated. This report uses the National Survey of Children's Health to examine both the prevalence of parental incarceration and child outcomes associated with it. Based on our analyses, we found that more than five million children, representing seven percent of all U.S. children, have ever had a parent who lived with them go to jail or prison. This proportion is higher among black, poor, and rural children. Our figure of more than five million is almost certainly an underestimate, since it does not include children with a non-residential parent who was incarcerated.... While the best long-term solution may be to reduce reliance on imprisonment as a sanction for some categories of criminal behavior, there may also be ways to mitigate the harm of parental imprisonment for children. Research on interventions for children with incarcerated parents is limited, but work so far suggests that reducing the trauma and stigma these children experience, improving communications between the child and the incarcerated parent, and making visits with the incarcerated parent more child-friendly may alleviate some of the negative effects of this separation."

http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB_23_4K_6.pdf

SEPARATION BY BARS AND MILES: VISITATION IN STATE PRISONS

by Bernadette Rabuy and Daniel Kopf for the Prison Policy Initiative (2015)

This overview piece could be helpful to policymakers who are looking to reduce hardships for families connecting with their incarcerated loved one. Excerpt: "Almost by definition, incarceration separates individuals from their families, but for decades this country has also placed unnecessary burdens on the family members left behind. Certainly in practice and perhaps by design, prisons are lonely places. Analyzing little-used government data, we find that visits are the exception rather than the rule. Less than a third of people in state prisons receive a visit from a loved one in a typical month.... Despite the breadth of research showing that visits and maintaining family ties are among the best ways to reduce recidivism, the reality of having a loved one behind bars is that visits are unnecessarily grueling and frustrating."

<http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/prisonvisits.html>

SEVEN OUT OF TEN? NOT EVEN CLOSE: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS BECOMING JUSTICE-INVOLVED

by James M. Conway and Edward T. Jones (2015)

Excerpt: "It has been widely claimed without documentary evidence that children with incarcerated parents (CIP) are six times more likely than other children to become justice-involved, and that seven out of ten CIP will become justice-involved. These undocumented claims are important because (a) they have been used to justify public policy and (b) they are potentially stigmatizing to CIP. We reviewed six sources using representative sampling methods in a variety of countries and providing eight estimates of the likelihood of CIP involvement. Our first conclusion was that no estimate from any country even approached the "seven out of ten" claim, and the mean across estimates was slightly more than three out of ten (32.8%). Our second conclusion was that CIP were more likely than non-CIP to become justice-involved, but not nearly six times as likely – on average CIP were about three times as likely as non-CIP to become justice-involved. Third, of the three studies employing control variables, in only one of them were the results consistent with the idea that parental incarceration may be the cause of elevated justice-involvement in CIP. Because the "six times more likely" and "seven out of ten" claims are unsupported by the data and potentially stigmatizing, these claims must be abandoned."

<https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/Review%20of%20Research%20on%20Children%20with%20Incarcerated%20Parents,%20Children%20with%20Incarcerated%20Parents%20Initiative,%202015.pdf>

LOOK UP AND HOPE

a program of the Volunteers of America (2015)

Host's Description: "The program offers prisoners, their children and the children's caregivers a comprehensive array of coordinated support services, including vocational training and employment services; educational programming and support for all family members; cognitive behavioral therapy; mental health and substance abuse treatment; group and family counseling; life-skills and parenting classes; caregiver support groups; graduated visitation opportunities; family-centered assessments; strengths-based service planning; and mentoring."

<http://www.voa.org/look-up-and-hope>

COPING WITH INCARCERATION

a creation of Sesame Workshop (2014)

This resource is a series of videos, topics and activities created for providers, caregivers, and parents who interact with children whose parent is incarcerated and can use these resources with them. Author's Description: "The incarceration of a loved one can be very overwhelming for both

children and caregivers. It can bring about big changes and transitions. In simple everyday ways, you can comfort your child and guide her through these tough moments. With your love and support she can get through anything that comes her way. Here are some tools to help you with the changes your child is going through.”

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/incarceration/>

CHILDREN IN HARM’S WAY: CRIMINAL JUSTICE, IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT, AND CHILD WELFARE
by the Sentencing Project (2013)

This resource is a collection of articles that provides a multifaceted look at some of the problems that potentially arise for children when the criminal justice, immigration enforcement, and child welfare systems converge in their parents’ lives. They provide information and offer insights reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences and lay out a range of recommendations for policy and practice reform.

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/children-in-harms-way/>

FOSTER CHILDREN WITH AN INCARCERATED PARENT: PREDICTORS OF REUNIFICATION
by R. Anna Hayward and Diane DePanfilis (2007)

Author’s Abstract: “Compared to other children who need child welfare services, children with incarcerated parents have needs that are not easily met and when placed in foster care may be less likely to achieve permanency through reunification. Prior research has not identified under what circumstances these children are more or less likely to reunify with a family member. Using administrative data from the Adoption and Foster Care Administrative Reporting System (AFCARS) this paper explores whether factors that predict reunification for children in foster care (e.g., child age, race, mental health, disability, family structure, placement history) also predict reunification for children who have at least one incarcerated parent ($n = 40,751$). Use of logistic regression suggested that school age children and children with behavioral or substance abuse problems were more likely to reunify. In contrast, controlling for the impact of other variables in the model, the following factors significantly decreased the likelihood of reunification for children with at least one incarcerated parent: kinship foster care placement, African American ethnicity, age under 2, child disability, housing problems, single-parent family structure, and placement history. Practice and policy implications related to children of incarcerated parents in out-of-home care are discussed.”

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740907001132> (not free access)

NEW STUDY SHOWS CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED MOTHERS EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE CHALLENGES
by Julie Poehlmann (2003)

Excerpt: “The United States incarcerates 700% more women than it did twenty years ago. Nearly three-quarters (70%) of incarcerated women are mothers of dependent children, and over 1.3 million children have mothers in the corrections system including jail, prison, and parole. Yet despite this new trend, little research examines the family impact of incarceration. What happens to children while their mothers are in jail or prison? How does incarceration affect the relationships between mothers, children, and caregivers? A new study by Professor Julie Poehlmann of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the Waisman Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is based on 60 Wisconsin families with children, aged 2½ to 7, who had a mother in a state prison. Almost two-thirds (60%) of the participants in Poehlmann’s study were women of color, three quarters were single, and their mean annual income before incarceration was \$14,288.”

https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/fia_nlarticle_v3i2.pdf

DAMAGE TO FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AS A COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCE OF PARENTAL INCARCERATION

Philip M. Genty (2002)

Author's Abstract: "A review of available statistical information shows the irreversible and detrimental impact on parents and children of family separation due to imprisonment. Specifically, it looks to data on parental incarceration, the impact of incarceration upon families, and the difficulties of remedying the consequences to families of parental incarceration. Finally, the Article argues that alternatives to imprisonment should be used where the parent is not subject to high security confinement and that the parental role should be a relevant factor in sentencing."

<http://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1878&context=ulj>

Reunification and Reentry

The resources below are focused on reunification between children and their parent following their parent's incarceration and the intersection of reunification and an individual's reentry. Included are resources that discuss reunification issues unique to mothers and their reentry back into the community.

NOTE: The materials in each section are listed by year from the most recently published to those published longest ago. Within each year, they are listed alphabetically by title.



Mother-Specific Reunification and Reentry

FROM INCARCERATED MOTHER TO COMMUNITY ROLE MODEL: UNIQUE PARENTING PROGRAM IN BEXAR COUNTY CREDITED WITH INMATE'S TURNAROUND

by Rosanne Hughes (2016)

Author's Description: "Bexar County Jail began MATCH more than 30 years ago. The program provides participants with structured educational classes, e-books, and parent-child contact visits. In March 2014 the program began partnering with *Bibliotech*, a bookless library in Bexar County. The collaboration provides mothers in the program with e-books on parenting. Participants in MATCH are now housed together which allows them to support and learn from each other. The program addresses many of the issues unique to incarcerated women – addiction, trauma, homelessness, and being a single parent. Michele Brown is one of the program's success stories. She participated in the program in the 1990's. Initially she joined the program because she thought it would look good to a judge. She now credits the program with changing the direction of her life. After completing her sentence, Michele went on to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree from Texas A&M University. She then returned to Bexar County as a reentry specialist. Her success story highlights why programs like MATCH are important in breaking the cycle of drug addiction and crime."

http://www.aca.org/ACA_PROD_IMIS/Docs/Corrections%20Today/2016%20Articles/January%202016/Hughes.pdf

MOTHERS' REENTRY INTO FAMILY LIFE FOLLOWING INCARCERATION

by Joyce A. Arditti and April L. Few (2005)

Author's Abstract: "The experiences of a group of mothers reentering the community after a period of incarceration are explored. The authors are particularly interested in how incarceration and subsequent reentry influence mothers' family relationships and primary risk and protective factors. Eighty-min interviews are conducted with 28 women probationers who had at least one minor child and had undergone incarceration at least 2 months prior to release. Descriptive analyses reveal that mental health risks characterize many mothers in this study, resource adequacy and parenting stress are significantly related, and family support is an important factor in successful reentry. It also appears that incarceration, even for short periods, is associated with shifts in family configuration on mothers' release by increasing the likelihood of divorce and decreasing the likelihood that mothers will reside with the father of at least one of their biological children. Implications for intervention and directions for future research are discussed."

<http://www.convictcriminology.org/pdf/arditti/CJPR%20Publication%20Mothers%20Reentry.pdf>

COLLATERAL COSTS OF IMPRISONMENT FOR WOMEN: COMPLICATIONS OF REINTEGRATION

by Mary Dodge and Mark R. Pogrebin (2001)

This article discusses unique stigmas that reentering women may experience. This resource could be helpful to anyone working with formerly incarcerated women trying to reunify with their children and reentering into the community. Author's Abstract: "This article examines issues of family separation and community isolation as experienced by women on parole. Qualitative data, based on unstructured, in-depth interviews with 54 former [prisoners], offer retrospective reflections and current accounts that delineate many of the unintended costs of imprisonment. The narratives portray the difficulties these women experienced in parenting, relationships, and community reintegration. Social stigma and self-shame are important definitional and reactional elements of their efforts to reestablish social bonds. The collateral costs of imprisonment are related to diminished investment in self and others that is created by continued internal and external shaming."

<http://www.sagepub.com/prccj3/overviews/pdfs/Dodge.pdf>

Family Reunification and Reentry

PRISON PARENTING PROGRAMS: RESOURCES FOR PARENTING INSTRUCTORS IN PRISONS AND JAILS

by Jerry Bednarowski for the Correctional Education Association Wisconsin (2015)

Excerpt: "Prison Parenting Programs: Resources for Parenting Instructors in Prisons and Jails is a publication of the Parenting Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Correctional Education Association (CEA) and the Correctional Education Association Wisconsin. This directory has been created to help correctional educators enhance existing or create new parenting programs in their correctional facilities. Prison Parenting Programs is intended to be a living document.... The Parenting SIG was created in 2004 with the goals of helping incarcerated parents to become more caring, concerned, and informed and minimizing the intergenerational cycle of incarceration. The Parenting SIG seeks to improve communication and cooperation among correctional educators engaged in providing parenting programs in a variety of correctional settings and encourage the development of new programming opportunities. Since its onset the Parenting SIG has sought to create a professional network not only for the instructors of parenting classes; but also for the supervisors of children of incarcerated parent programs, coordinators of parent/child reading projects, and organizers of parents' fairs."

<https://ceanational.org/sites/ceanational/uploads/resources/Prison-Parenting-Programs.pdf>

PROMISING AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: ARREST THROUGH PRE-ADJUDICATION [WEBINAR]

hosted by the Urban Institute and the National Institute of Corrections (2015)

Host Description: "Nearly three million children under the age of 18 have a parent in jail or prison, and millions more have experienced their parents being arrested. Due to their parent's criminal justice involvement, a growing body of research indicates that these children often experience trauma, family disruption, and the loss of their primary caregiver, which can lead to financial hardship, residential instability, and an array of emotional and behavioral problems. In response, several community-based organizations and government agencies across the country have implemented programs and practices aimed at reducing this trauma and mitigating the potentially harmful outcomes associated with parental criminal justice involvement. The Urban Institute and the National Institute of Corrections hosted a live webinar highlighting these promising and innovative programs and practices."

<http://www.urban.org/events/promising-and-innovative-practices-children-incarcerated-parents-arrest-through-pre-adjudication>

CLOSE TO HOME: BUILDING ON FAMILY SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LEAVING JAIL

by Ryan Shanahan and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo for the Vera Institute (2011)

Excerpt: “Vera’s interviews and surveys with jail staff, incarcerated men and women, and family members at all three facilities found that social networks are important for the populations studied. Regardless of their sentencing status or length of incarceration, jailed men and women indicated they relied on family and friends to support them and assist in planning for reentering the community. Their stated reentry needs, besides emotional support while in jail, included housing, employment, and child care, and they said they anticipated relying on their loved ones throughout the process of reentry. Among the many types of support that participants received or expected to receive from their families, the most commonly voiced were the expectations that their families would help them stay drug free and meet their parole obligations.”

[https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/vera/Close to home report.pdf](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/vera/Close%20to%20home%20report.pdf)

IMPACT OF FAMILY-INCLUSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT ON REENTRY OUTCOMES: INTERIM REPORT ON THE SAFER RETURN DEMONSTRATION EVALUATION

Jocelyn Fontaine, Douglas Gilchrist-Scott, and Megan Denver for the Urban Institute (2011)

Author’s Abstract: “This interim report details the first two years of the Urban Institute’s evaluation of the family-inclusive case management component of the *Safer Return Demonstration* a reentry program based in Chicago’s Garfield Park neighborhood. The report presents the logic of the case management model and summarizes family members and formerly incarcerated persons experiences and perceptions, based on interviews and focus groups. In general, family members were highly supportive of returning prisoners and, despite a typically disadvantaged socioeconomic status, provided substantial material support to their returning family members, particularly housing. The implications of these findings for the *Demonstration* and reentry planning are discussed.”

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/27576/412408-Impact-of-Family-Inclusive-Case-Management-on-Reentry-Outcomes-Interim-Report-on-the-Safer-Return-Demonstration-Evaluation.PDF>

SETTING AN AGENDA FOR FAMILY-FOCUSED JUSTICE REFORM

by Margaret diZerega and Jules Verdone (2011)

Excerpt: “Since its work began nearly a decade ago, the Family Justice Program at the Vera Institute of Justice has provided training and consultation to help people in the juvenile and criminal justice fields adopt a family-focused approach. In practice, this has meant developing simple tools and techniques that help front-line staff talk with incarcerated people (or those on probation or under parole supervision) about family members who can make a positive difference in their lives. It also means guiding management to create policies and environments that encourage such interactions. Recognizing that there is still much room for improvement in this arena, the Family Justice Program convened a roundtable of national experts to discuss opportunities for enhancing family-focused justice work. In addition to leaders from adult corrections and juvenile justice, the roundtable included experts on related topics, such as public policy research, child support, and youth and community development. This report, a product of that discussion (with additional input from a handful of individuals whose perspectives the authors deemed essential – such as Norris Henderson, a formerly incarcerated man who founded a grassroots support organization in New Orleans for people reentering the community from detention, jail, or prison) presents an agenda for family-focused justice reform going forward.” The Vera Institute of Justice brought together

national experts from a range of fields to talk about the next steps for family-focused justice reform, given that research shows that incarcerated persons who have contact with supportive family members have better post-release outcomes. This finding has obvious implications for the corrections, community corrections, and juvenile justice fields, but it also has significant, if sometimes less apparent, consequences for other systems, such as schools, child welfare agencies, health care, and law enforcement. The conversation sharpened the definition of a family-focused approach as one that has four key characteristics: it is multidisciplinary, it adopts a broad definition of family, it is strength-based, and it is applicable along the continuum of a person's involvement with the justice system."

<https://www.vera.org/publications/setting-an-agenda-for-family-focused-justice-reform>

PILOTING A TOOL FOR REENTRY: A PROMISING APPROACH TO ENGAGING FAMILY MEMBERS

by Margaret diZerega and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo (2011)

Excerpt: "Staff of the Vera Institute of Justice's Family Justice Program developed the Relational Inquiry Tool (RIT) to help correctional case managers encourage people to better access this untapped source of assistance. The RIT, a series of questions designed to prompt conversations with incarcerated individuals about their family members and other loved ones, can help incarcerated people identify positive support that can be integrated into their plans for the future, after release. The Reentry Is Relational project provided training and technical assistance to pilot the tool in Oklahoma and New Mexico. As part of the pilot process, Vera program staff interviewed agency staff to learn about current practices. They also gathered information – through surveys and interviews – from incarcerated people and their families about the impact of incarceration on family relationships and the potential for the RIT to help men and women plan for their return to the community."

<https://www.vera.org/publications/piloting-a-tool-for-reentry-a-promising-approach-to-engaging-family-members>

FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND: THE HIDDEN COSTS OF INCARCERATION AND REENTRY

by Jeremy Travis, Elizabeth Cincotta McBride, and Amy L. Solomon (2006)

Written for policy makers, practitioners, and other community stakeholders in contact with families with incarcerated parents to give an overview of the issues and needs in the area of strengthening families. Excerpt: "With incarceration rates in America at record high levels, the criminal justice system now touches the lives of millions of children each year. The imprisonment of nearly three-quarters of a million parents disrupts parent-child relationships, alters the networks of familial support, and places new burdens on governmental services such as schools, foster care, adoption agencies, and youth serving organizations. Few studies have explored the impact of parental incarceration on young children or identified the needs that arise from such circumstances. Little attention has focused on how communities, social service agencies, health care providers, and the criminal justice system can work collaboratively to better meet the needs of the families left behind. This policy brief is intended to help focus attention on these hidden costs of our criminal justice policies."

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/50461/310882-Families-Left-Behind.PDF>

Visitation and Incarcerated Parents

These resources focus on families and the impact of strengthening relationships through visitation while a parent is incarcerated to lead to a more successful reunification after a parent returns.

NOTE: The materials in each section are listed by year from the most recently published to those published longest ago. Within each year, they are listed alphabetically by title.



A NEW ROLE FOR TECHNOLOGY? IMPLEMENTING VIDEO VISITATION IN PRISON

by Léon Digard, Margaret diZerega, Allon Yaroni, and Joshua Rinaldi (2016)

Author's Abstract: "Research shows that prison visitation is integral to the success of incarcerated people, reducing recidivism, facilitating their reentry into the community, and promoting positive parent-child relationships. However, people are often incarcerated long distances from their home communities in areas that are difficult to reach by public transport, creating significant barriers to in-person visitation. Departments of corrections are therefore exploring the use of technology as a means to address some of the visitation needs of those in custody in a cost-effective way. Video visits may not only help bridge the distance between incarcerated people and their loved ones, but may also expand visiting to include a broader array of people who are unable to make in-person visits. While there has been some controversy around the introduction of video visitation in local jails (with some jail jurisdictions eliminating in-person visits entirely), less is known about the use of the technology in state prison systems. This report examines the current landscape of video visitation in prisons nationwide and offers a detailed case study of the Washington State Department of Corrections, an early adopter."

<https://www.vera.org/publications/video-visitation-in-prison>

VIDEO VISITING IN CORRECTIONS: BENEFITS, LIMITATION, AND IMPLEMENTING CONSIDERATIONS

by Alison Hollihan and Michelle Portlock for the Osborne Association and the National Institute of Corrections (2014)

Written for corrections implementing or considering implementing video visitation, this report takes a closer look at some of the costs and benefits to this technology. Excerpt: "Chapter One provides a brief overview of the benefits known to be associated with in-person visiting and discusses the benefits and limitations of video visiting. Chapter Two focuses on how to assess whether video visiting is an appropriate fit for a particular setting and discusses issues that should be considered upon implementation. Chapter Three provides tools for conducting a process evaluation and preparing for an outcome evaluation. An implementation toolkit and sample evaluation tools are included in the appendices. The appendices also include information about other uses for video conferencing in a correctional setting, video visiting with children, and a listing of relevant resources."

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.nicic.gov/Library/029609.pdf>

HARD DATA ON HARD TIMES: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF MATERNAL INCARCERATION, FOSTER CARE, AND VISITATION

Timothy Ross, Ajay Khashu, and Mark Wamsley (2004)

This report was written for the Administration of Children's Services in New York by the Vera Institute to examine the implications of maternal incarceration for foster care visitation. This resource, though NY specific, is a good overview of some of the issues that arise when women are

incarcerated and their children are placed in foster care. Excerpt: “Despite the rise in maternal incarceration, research regarding the criminal and incarceration histories of the biological parents of foster children is almost non-existent. The authors of this study participated in the first large-scale effort to examine the prevalence of incarceration among the biological mothers of foster children. The report produced from that work found that over a third of all biological mothers of foster children experienced an arrest that led to a conviction at some point in their lives. In addition, over a fifth experienced detention in jail or prison. This study uses a similar dataset to examine the overlaps between child placement and maternal incarceration, discusses the impact of this phenomenon on mother-child visitation, and provides broader policy implications for both the Administration of Children’s Services and the criminal justice system.”

https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/vera/245_461.pdf

KEEPING INCARCERATED MOTHERS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS TOGETHER: GIRL SCOUTS BEYOND BARS

by Marilyn C. Moses (1995)

Excerpt: “‘Girl Scouts Beyond Bars’ may sound like a tabloid headline. It is not meant, however, to convey the notion of a group of Girl Scouts absconding with the proceeds from their annual cookie sale. It designates an [incarcerated] mother-child visitation program that began as a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) demonstration project in November 1992. This first-of-its-kind Girl Scout troop consists of more than 30 daughters whose mothers live at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW). The girls meet with their mothers at the corrections facility 2 Saturdays a month, and on alternate Saturdays they meet at a Baltimore church where they work closely with Girl Scout volunteers on projects just as girls in other troops would.”

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/girlsct.pdf>

Guides and Manuals

This section includes guides and manuals for parents and practitioners related to reunification and parents' rights when justice-involved. Since we were able to locate very few reentry-specific guides and manuals, we included resources that we believe will be helpful to parents and practitioners to understand the unique issues experienced by parents and their families as a result of incarceration.

NOTE: The materials in each section are listed by year from the most recently published to those published longest ago. Within each year, they are listed alphabetically by title.



For Incarcerated Mothers

MY LIFE CHOSE ME: A YOUNG MOTHER'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE SYSTEM

by Maria Fuentes, Shaquay Johnson, Rachel Felix, Ashely Graham, and Sophia Sanchez (2010)

Excerpt: "We made this book so that mothers and their families would be better able to understand their rights. So many mothers have lost their children, because of lack of information and access to resources. It is our dream that this book provide young mothers with some information that will help them make better decisions, and better understand their situations. Our mission in writing this book is to try and give mothers a better chance of keeping their children. We also hope children who have been taken from their mothers through CPS or due to their mothers' incarceration will read this book. Maybe they might understand a little better why mom wasn't able to be there. And hopefully this book will help keep families together, and more kids will get to stay with their moms. . . . As young women came to the Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) to participate in groups and activities, it hurt us to hear the echoes of breaking hearts as girl after girl would say "I miss my child so much" and share their pain. A group of young mothers came together one afternoon to discuss the barriers that formerly incarcerated parents face, and began exchanging stories of the injustices they experiences while locked up as pregnant women and young mothers. Story after story we realized these were not isolated incidents but a trend in young women being neglected by a system that they most likely were a product of as children in foster care and would stay in their lives, even after they moved on into adulthood, by taking their children away from them. What became of these discussions is the 'Incarcerated Young Mothers Bill of Rights' a ten-point declaration to reclaim the rights of pregnant and parenting incarcerated mothers in San Francisco. This is the beginning of their group, The Young Mothers Organizing Project's journey to change the system one step at a time."

<http://www.f2f.ca.gov/res/pdf/MyLifeChoseMe.pdf>

For Incarcerated Parents

GUIDE FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) (2015)

Excerpt: "The purpose of this guide is to help parents involved in the criminal justice system work with the child welfare system to stay in touch with their children and stay involved in decisions

about their children's well-being. The guide also includes important information on steps required by the child welfare system for reunification, or having children return home to their family after foster care."

<http://youth.gov/sites/default/files/COIP-Parent-Guide-508.pdf>

FACTSHEETS FOR FAMILIES SERIES

by the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2014)

These publications are written for parents who are caring for children who have experienced trauma, abuse, and neglect. While not specifically about justice-involved parents, these two pieces from the *Factsheets for Family Series* could be helpful information when formerly incarcerated parents reunite with their children. Author's description of the *Factsheet for Families Series*: "Accessible information for families and nonprofessionals on topics in adoption, foster care, and parenting."

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/catalog/serieslist/?CWIGFunctionsaction=publicationCatalog:main.dspSeriesDetail&publicationSeriesID=3>

- ***Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma***

by the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2014)

Author's Abstract: "This factsheet discusses the nature of trauma, especially abuse or neglect, the effects of trauma on children and youth, and ways to help a child who has experienced trauma. Parents or foster parents who do not understand the effects of trauma may misinterpret their child's behavior, and attempts to address troubling behavior may be ineffective or, in some cases, even harmful. By understanding trauma, parents and foster parents can help support a child's healing, the parent-child relationship, and their family as a whole.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf>

- ***Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Abuse or Neglect***

by the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013)

Author's Abstract: "Children who have been abused or neglected need safe and nurturing relationships that address the effects of child maltreatment. This factsheet is intended to help parents (birth, foster, and adoptive) and other caregivers better understand the challenges of caring for a child who has experienced maltreatment and learn about the resources available for support."

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/parenting_CAN.pdf

STAYING CONNECTED: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INCARCERATED PARENTS IN WISCONSIN

by the Family Law Project at the University of Wisconsin Law School and Family Connections of Wisconsin (2011)

A Wisconsin specific resource for incarcerated parents, this resource aims to educate parents on some of the issues about their rights and responsibilities to their children while they are incarcerated. Excerpt: "Just because you are a parent serving time in prison does NOT mean that you are not still a parent. Staying connected with your children is still very important to you and to your children. Staying connected with your children helps your children develop in a healthy way, decreases the negative effects of your being separated from them, makes the separation easier to deal with, and will make your family stronger. Staying connected to your children also helps you. Studies show that staying connected with their children encourages parents to participate in programs while in prison and reduces the likelihood that they will go back to prison. While you must face many of the same problems that other parents do in trying to stay connected with their children, you also must deal with additional challenges due to incarceration. These include difficulties communicating with courts, staying involved with your children's lives through visits or

other forms of contact, and representing yourself without the assistance of a lawyer. Staying Connected was created to help incarcerated parents in Wisconsin do their best when dealing with the legal issues and obstacles they will often face while incarcerated.”

http://www.set-apart-ministries.org/files/PrisonerParentsHandbook/Staying_Connected-w_cover.pdf

INCARCERATED PARENTS MANUAL: YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

by Carol Strickman, Josephine Alioto, and Joseph Clarke for Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and Prisoner Legal Services (2010)

Written for incarcerated parents to educate them about their parental rights, this resource is California-specific and is intended not to give legal advice but to help parents answer some basic child custody questions. Excerpt: “This booklet is designed to answer many of the legal and practical questions that incarcerated parents have about custody of their children, both during and after the time they are in prison or jail. It is not intended to replace your lawyer. If you have a lawyer, use him/her: ask questions, give information, and tell him/her what you want for your family. The booklet is based on California law as of June 2010. All code sections refer to California law (for example, “Penal Code” is the California Penal Code). Laws are different in other states, but many of the suggestions may be useful. Be sure to check the relevant legal codes to make sure that the information and forms are up to date.”

<http://www.prisonerswithchildren.org/pubs/ipm.pdf>

FLORIDA MANUAL FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS

by Virginia Hamner and Mikayla Bucci (2008)

Written for incarcerated parents to better understand their rights and responsibilities as parents while incarcerated, this manual is not intended to give legal advice. Excerpt: “This Manual is designed to help parents who are incarcerated in Florida prisons and jails understand their rights and responsibilities as parents. Whether you have children when you become incarcerated, or they are born during your incarceration, caring for your children while you are incarcerated becomes a very difficult task. Many things can happen that can affect how much control you can have over your child’s care and well-being when you are in jail or prison.”

<http://www.f2f.ca.gov/res/pdf/FloridaManual.pdf>

For Practitioners

TOOLKIT FOR DEVELOPING FAMILY-FOCUSED JAIL PROGRAMS (2015)

by Bryce Peterson, Lindsey Cramer, Emma Kurs, and Jocelyn Fontaine

This resource is written for programming correction practitioners and community-based practitioners working with prisoners and jail staff. Excerpt: “Through no fault of their own, millions of children have been exposed to and affected by the criminal justice system by witnessing their parent being arrested, by seeing their parent in court, or by visiting their parent in jail or prison. Indeed, many of the thousands of adult men and women who are arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated each year leave behind minor children who must grapple with their parent’s absence for days, months, or years. Although such exposure does not always result in negative outcomes for children, the extant research does suggest that parental involvement in the criminal justice system can put children at risk of residential instability, economic strain and financial hardship, mental health problems, poor academic performance, and antisocial and delinquent behavior. Parental involvement in the system can be traumatic for children and can hinder the quality of the relationship they have with their parent. . . . This toolkit and the strategies and experiences

described herein are intended for people who are interested in developing family-focused jail programs in their own jurisdictions, such as jail practitioners and community-based organizations working with jail administrators and jail detainees."

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000255-Toolkit-for-Developing-Family-Focused-Jail-Programs.pdf>

PRIDEBOOK – REUNIFICATION TRAINING FOR CAREGIVERS

by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (2012)

Written for practitioners training caregivers of children of incarcerated parents, this resource offers suggestions and strategies to encourage reunification of families. Excerpt: "Caseworkers across the state have been trained in Permanency Planning Toward Reunification. Caregiver Institutes held in the spring of 2007 gave caregivers a preview of this initiative. Now, this training presents information specifically for caregivers. The importance of permanency for children and the need to support reunification are not new to caregivers. Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE pre-service training mentions reunification in the first session and reinforces its importance throughout all nine sessions. Two of the five competency categories at the foundation of all PRIDE training are:

- Supporting relationships between children and their families, and
- Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime.

Each of us – parent, caregiver and caseworker – has responsibility for seeing that a child has safety, permanency and well-being. In this training we emphasize the role caregivers play in reunification, including the early reunification of families. Reunification is more likely with the support and time caregivers can give not only to the children in their care but to the parents of those children as well."

<https://www.dcfstraining.org/vtc/business/download.do?file=Reunification Training.pdf>

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH CHILDREN OF THE INCARCERATED, THEIR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

by Washington State Department of Social and Health Service, Children's Administration, Resource Family Training institute (2012)

Host Description: "These video modules are designed to help social workers and other social service providers understand the particular needs of families with an incarcerated parent and learn effect[ive] practices in working with children of the incarcerated, their parents and caregivers."

View each video module online for free at:

- **Introduction**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyivmCZQ_z4
- **Caregivers**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loO8CiOPLUs>
- **Children**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGjIWj8RWnc>
- **Community**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IISpcSMYPY0>
- **Parents**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtkl6IrVhPs>
- **Parents' Voices**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leYhb326azA>
- **Partner Agency**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EVROYfoxO4>

- **Stakeholder**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leYhb326azA>
- **Youth Panel**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSKlMVUFj84>

BEYOND THE WALLS: A GUIDE TO SERVICES FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY INCARCERATION, 2ND EDITION
by Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (2009)

Even though this resource is Washington state-specific, this may be useful as an example of a helpful guide for those working with parents reentering. It describes the services available in the state from the Department of Social and Health Services, but also includes information about services available from other agencies that could help reentering individuals, their families and practitioners.

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCQQFjAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dshs.wa.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FSESA%2Fpublications%2Fdocuments%2F22-1288.pdf&ei=cLhxVZYCjoLJBJeFgyA&usg=AFQjCNFi7ssrGDCH_YOef_vNLd56mwggdA&sig2=bEAnAbT1EgyOzRojTzQ_Cw&bvm=bv.95039771,d.b2w&cad=rja

WHEN “FREE” MEANS LOSING YOUR MOTHER: THE COLLISION OF CHILD WELFARE AND THE INCARCERATION OF WOMEN IN NEW YORK STATE

by Julie Kowitz Margolies and Tamar Kraft-Stolar (2006)

This New York-specific resource is written for policymakers and other practitioners working with incarcerated mothers, offering some social policy recommendations to build a more effective reunification between incarcerated parents and their children. Excerpt: “Whatever their living circumstances, children of incarcerated parents have committed no crime, yet are punished by the loss of their parents and the accompanying emotional hardship, including feelings of anxiety, guilt, fear and depression. Beyond experiencing short term damage to their well-being, children of incarcerated mothers are more likely than their peers to become involved in illegal activity, to abuse substances, and to have difficulties in school. For many who are in foster care, being “freed” for adoption does not bring relief from a troubled family situation: it simply means losing their mother forever. The overwhelming majority of people interviewed for this report felt that visits are vital to maintaining familial relationships and reducing the trauma of separation. Also prevalent was the strong conviction that current prison conditions discourage visiting by creating undue hardships for adult visitors and children alike. Interviewees described the long distances visitors must travel to some women’s facilities as expensive and exhausting, security procedures as burdensome and humiliating, and treatment by some correction officers as disrespectful. Although certain visiting facilities were singled out for praise, interviewees criticized most facilities as having few, if any, age-appropriate activities for children, limited space, and little to eat. Interview participants also described the need for more programs to assist families separated by incarceration.”

<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/15159>

National Websites

The following websites are some of the organizations that offer additional resources related to reunification for parents and caregivers of children with an incarcerated parent, and practitioners working with families impacted by incarceration.



THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS

Host Description: “We are an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Institute is headed by a Director appointed by the U.S. Attorney General. A 16-member Advisory Board, also appointed by the Attorney General, was established by the enabling legislation (Public Law 93-415) to provide policy direction to the Institute. . . . We provide training, technical assistance, information services, and policy/program development assistance to federal, state, and local corrections agencies. . . . Through cooperative agreements, we award funds to support our program initiatives. We also provide leadership to influence correctional policies, practices, and operations nationwide in areas of emerging interest and concern to correctional executives and practitioners as well as public policymakers.”

<http://nicic.gov/>

THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF THE INCARCERATED

This comprehensive website hosted by Rutgers University Camden includes a directory of national, state, and local programs for and about the children and families of the incarcerated, fact sheets with relevant information and statistics, a library of helpful and downloadable materials, and research resources to help the incarcerated, their families and advocates learn more.

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>