

Children of Incarcerated Parents

- 1 in 28 children have a parent in jail; 2/3 of these children's parents in for non-violent offenses
- 1 in 15 black children, 1 in 41 Hispanic children, 1 in 110 white children with an incarcerated parent
- 1/3 of female prisoners' children in one study did not know their moms were in prison. Some children worry they might disappear too or another caregiver will disappear
- Children: chronic sleeplessness, difficulty concentrating, depression
- Embarrassment, stigma, blame selves, at fault, teased, retaliate for teasing

- Ages 2-6 separation anxiety, S-E development, traumatic stress, survivor guilt
- Ages 7-10 developmental regressions, poor self concept, traumatic stress
- 16%-temporary school phobia for up to 6 weeks after incarceration
- 20% clinically significant internalizing problems (depression, anxiety, withdrawal),
- 33% clinically significant externalizing problems (aggression, attention problems, disruptive behavior) vs. 10% in general population

- Boys: more delinquency & aggression
- Girls: more internalizing and attention problems
- Ages 11-14 rejection of behavior limits, traumatic stress
- Ages 15-18 premature termination of dependency relationship
intergenerational crime and incarceration
- Children 3X more likely to be in justice system-fewer disruptive or
anxious behaviors
- With dad incarcerated 23% more likely than other children to be
expelled or suspended (4%)

- 1/3 Children living with a grandparent or other caregiver---no health insurance
- 2/3 little financial support
- 70% parents in state prison exchange letters with kids, 53% spoke with child on phone, 42% personal visit
- Continuously stay in touch with parent—fewer anxious or disruptive behaviors

Tips for Families and Counselors

- Be honest with child or teen about their parent. They will find out.
- Prepare child for separation, keep photos, projects, video-audio recordings.
- Provide support and psychoeducation for the caregiver or relative.
- Keep open lines of communication between teachers and caregivers/relatives.
- Prepare child for phone calls, visitations (glass windows, body searches, long lines, noise). Child may not want to see parent or go to a prison.

Bibliotherapy and Psychoeducation

- Use developmentally appropriate books and bibliotherapy.
- *My Daddy's in Jail*
- *The Prison Alphabet: An Educational Coloring Book for Children of Incarcerated Parents*
- *Far Apart: Close at Heart: Being a Family When a Loved One is Incarcerated.*
- *Clarissa's Disappointment: And Resources for Families, Teachers, and Counselors of Children of Incarcerated Parents*
- Agency websites for teens by teens

Homecoming and Visits

- Prepare the parent for the visit. Child may be scared, quiet or act out.
- Provide support groups for kids and teenagers.
- Expect regressive behavior from children.
- When a parent returns home it may evoke a range of feelings in child from relief and joy to resentment and rejection.