

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

Ages 2-6 separation anxiety, S-E development, traumatic stress, survivor guilt

Ages 7-10 developmental regressions, poor self concept, traumatic stress

Children: chronic sleeplessness, difficulty concentrating, depression
Embarrassment, stigma, blame selves, at fault, teased, retaliate for teasing

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:

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.

Use developmentally appropriate books and bibliotherapy.

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.

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

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hm9d_O3aoDU&feature=youtu.be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG0JRQwlp4k&feature=youtu.be>

