



The Cabinet-level Reentry Council is working to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

Children of Incarcerated Parents

On any given day, close to 2.7 million children, or 1 in 28, have a parent in prison or jail—an increase of more than 80 percent since 1991. For African-American children, the rate is 1 in 9. The arrest and incarceration of a parent can have significant consequences for a child's well-being. Though each family's experience is unique, many families struggle to cope with the sudden loss of

the incarcerated parent's income and the costs related to incarceration. Children of incarcerated parents may also face increased risk of homelessness, household disruption, problems at school, and behavioral and emotional difficulties, including depression, fear for their incarcerated parent, confusion, and anger towards the criminal justice system. Despite the strength and resilience of many children, the shame and stigma associated with incarceration may cause these children to feel isolated and alone. Reentry Council agencies are putting strategies in place to ensure that children of incarcerated parents' chances for success are not negatively impacted by their parent's incarceration.

Accomplishments to Date

- In June 2013, the White House held a [Champions of Change event](#) honoring 12 individuals who have devoted their careers to helping children of incarcerated parents and their families.
- Reentry Council agencies partnered with Sesame Street Workshop to disseminate materials from the [Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration](#) campaign, including a storybook for young children about having an incarcerated parent and tips for caregivers on how to talk about this sensitive issue.
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) held its first ever [Universal Children's Day](#), a visiting event for incarcerated parents and their families. The weekend provided an opportunity for parents to improve their parenting skills through various activities and workshops.
- Reentry Council agencies launched the [Children of Incarcerated Parents Web Portal](#), an online consolidation of the federal resources available to support children and families impacted by incarceration, including six [Myth Buster Fact Sheets](#) that clarify existing federal policies concerning families of children of incarcerated parents.
- The Department of Health and Human Services and BOP developed a [toolkit](#) to better prepare child welfare and federal prison staff to help incarcerated parents with children in the child welfare system.
- The Department of Justice held a [listening session](#) to solicit input from mentoring organizations, service providers, mentors, and youth on what makes mentoring programs for children of incarcerated parents successful.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development partnered with the [National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#) to facilitate a new capacity-building training to teach local service providers how they can tailor their programs to meet the unique needs of children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers.
- The American Bar Foundation and the National Science Foundation hosted a [Research Workshop](#) at the White House that brought together leading scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss the impacts of parental incarceration on children and to build a research agenda for advancing understanding on this issue.

Agenda Moving Forward

Provide Training and Technical Assistance

Reentry Council agencies will develop materials designed to improve services offered to children of incarcerated parents and their families and disseminate them to corrections officers, child welfare agencies, judges and court personnel, and other service providers.

Strengthen Federal Policy and Programmatic Initiatives

Reentry Council agencies will continue their commitment to strengthen programs that improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents and connect these programs with research that documents, measures, and highlights improvements.

Encourage Research and Improve Data

Reentry Council agencies will support information gathering, data collection, and analysis to better understand children of incarcerated parents and their needs. One priority will be to explore how states have collected data on these children and encourage best practices.

Improve Outreach and Raise Awareness

Reentry Council agencies will work to raise awareness about the common challenges faced by children of incarcerated parents and provide information and resources to educate communities on how to create supportive environments.

Key Resources (Children of Incarcerated Parents)

Children of Incarcerated Parents Web Portal

<http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents>

Children of Incarcerated Parents Myth Busters

http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/COIP-Mythbusters_first-6.pdf

Children in Out-of-Home Care with Incarcerated Parents

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/casework/children/incarcerated.cfm>

National Institute of Corrections—Children of Incarcerated Parents

<http://nicic.gov/coip>

Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents Listening Session

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/about/MentoringCOIP2013.pdf>

National Center for Homeless Education

<http://center.serve.org/nche/>