

### Incarceration Rates

among founding NATO countries

Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans.

The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, by far, with 2.2 million citizens in prison or jail. The National Justice Institute cites the massive increase in incarceration since the 1970s as the reason why more mothers and fathers with dependent children are in prisons.

- More than 2.7 million children in the United States have an incarcerated parent. That is 1 in 28 children;
- Approximately 10 million children in the United States have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives; in the United States, approximately half of children with incarcerated parents are under ten years of age;

## Risk Factors

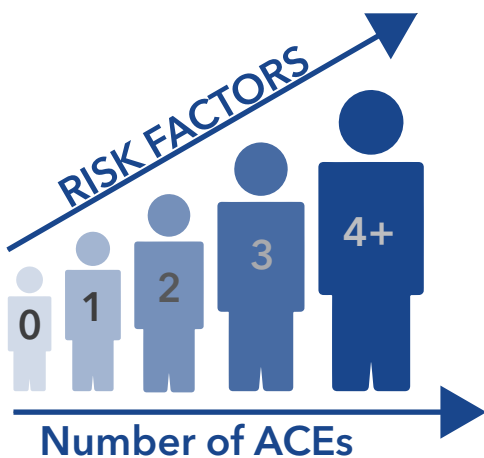
The hardships children of an incarcerated parent endure include psychological strain, antisocial behavior, suspension or expulsion from school, economic hardship, and criminal activity. These hardships are examples of what are referred to as "risk factors".

**Risk Factors, as defined by the substance abuse and mental health services administration are "characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes."**

Children of people who are incarcerated are likely to experience more risk-factors during their lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

**Children with an incarcerated parent are 6 times more likely to become incarcerated themselves.**<sup>6</sup>

A study done in 1998 by Kaiser Permanente brought together 10 questions about childhood experiences that could be linked with adult health and wellbeing. As the number of ACEs or Adverse Childhood experiences increases, so does the risk for alcoholism and alcohol abuse, depression, illicit drug use, financial stress, poor academic achievement and many other negative health and well being outcomes.<sup>7</sup>



You can find an expanded version of this worksheet, created by Children's Museum of Manhattan by following the QR code on page 10.

- What are the strengths of your organization that you can bring to this partnership?
- Articulate the goals of your partnership:
- What kind of additional funding would this partnership need?
- How does helping support families impacted by incarceration support the mission of your organization?
- Who else in your community is doing work like this?
- How might you measure the impact of your partnership?

## Citations

- 1 Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility", The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew Center on the States, Washington, DC. 2010 [https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2010/collateralcosts1.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1.pdf)
- 2 Prisons Today." Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site. <https://www.easternstate.org/explore/exhibits/prisons-today>.
- 3 Ashley Nellis, P. D. (2022, December 16). The Color of Justice: Racial and ethnic disparity in state prisons. The Sentencing Project. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/the-color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons-the-sentencing-project/>
- 4 Schirmer, Sarah, Ashley Nellis, and Marc Mauer. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children - Trends 1991 - 2007." February 09. Pdf.

- 5 "Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility", The Pew Charitable Trusts: Pew Center on the States, Washington, DC. 2010 [https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2010/collateralcosts1.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1.pdf)
- 6 "Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children." National Institute of Justice. Accessed March 29, 2019. <https://nij.gov:443/journals/278/pages/impact-of-incarceration-on-dependent-children.aspx>.
- 7 "Violence Prevention," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 14, 2016, , accessed November 04, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>.
- 8Cramer, Lindsay, Margaret Goff, Bryce Peterson, and Heather Sandstrom. "Parent-Child Visiting Practices in Prisons and Jails." Low-Income Working Families Initiative, April 2017. Urban Institute.

**1 in 28 children in the United States have an incarcerated parent.**

- Use it to learn about how your work could be applied to create better outcomes for children and families impacted by incarceration.
- Use it as a reference for your own research.
- Make copies of it and share it with your colleagues. **There's a link to print your own on page 10.**
- Show it to organizational partners in your community who are working to support families impacted by incarceration.

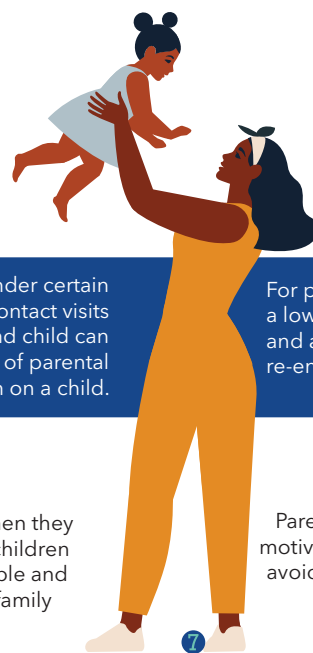
## How to use this Zine

Partnering with correctional facilities and families impacted by incarceration provides museums with a way to be further inclusive of marginalized populations and families impacted by incarceration to make a meaningful impact in their communities.

## Why Museums?

## Strengthen Families Through Visits

**When parents have opportunities to maintain their relationship with children while incarcerated, parental attachment is supported and a bond is maintained.**



Studies show that under certain circumstances, contact visits between a parent and child can lessen the effects of parental incarceration on a child.

For parents, benefits include a lower rate of recidivism and a more successful re-entry after release.

Visits are most beneficial when they are made in a place where children feel welcome and comfortable and occur in conjunction with a family strengthening program.<sup>8</sup>

Parent-child relationships can also help motivate people who are incarcerated to avoid disciplinary action and participate in correctional programming that supports their needs.<sup>9</sup>



**More resources can be found here:**

- Hands On Children's Museum**  
Ongoing partnership with Washington Department of Corrections
- Kansas Children's Discovery Center**  
Play Free: An Ongoing Partnership with Kansas Department of Corrections
- Children's Museum of Manhattan**  
Family Connections partnership with NYC Department of Corrections

**These museums are already doing this work:**

**Find the Need**  
Not all prisons prioritize visiting programs or family programs, so they may not be the best fit for finding ways to reach families experiencing incarceration. Finding organizations that are already working with the audience you're interested in accessing, will help you and your institution discover what needs aren't already being covered, and will help you find a need that is the right fit for your institution.

**Listen**  
Recognize that you are communicating with people who have had their freedoms and privileges stripped and are likely worried about their families. Being aware of the trauma families are experiencing is critical. Leave your preconceived notions at the door and know that your role is not to judge or wonder why a prisoner is there, it is to listen, observe, and help them find ways to connect with their families.

## Considerations

## Notes

- 9 Christian, Steve. "Children of Incarcerated Parents." National Conference of State Legislatures , Mar. 2009, pp. 4-5., [www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/childrenofincarceratedparents.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/childrenofincarceratedparents.pdf).



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## Keeping Families Intact

Creating Spaces for Families Impacted by Incarceration



Zine developed by Adrienne Testa in partnership with colleagues from Hands On Children's Museum, Children's Museum of Manhattan, Kansas Discovery Children's Museum, and Washington Department of Corrections