

Contemporary  
Research and Analysis  
on the Children of  
Prisoners



# Contemporary Research and Analysis on the Children of Prisoners:

*Invisible Children*

Edited by

Liz Gordon

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Invisible Children

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**Kasandra Dodd** is a clinical social worker in the Washington, DC metro area. She has 13 years of experience in the child welfare field, specializing in work with adolescents in foster care. She has accrued a wealth of knowledge as a case carrying social worker, diagnostic therapist,

Independent Living Specialist and managing supervisor. She has assisted in the development of various older youth initiatives, and policies at the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Ms. Dodd is also a member of an interdisciplinary think tank that draws on their individual expertise to resolve issues related to social justice. She received her Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Georgia and her Masters in Social Work from Howard University.

**Ann Adalist-Estrin** is Director of the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated at Rutgers University, Camden New Jersey where she also teaches in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice. Under Ann's leadership, NRCCFI has provided training and consultation to government and non-government agencies and community programs worldwide. Her consultations and publications include Sesame Street's "Little Children, Big Challenges Incarceration"; "Dependent Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Educational Video for Judges and Legal Professionals"; The Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children in the Child Welfare System Curriculum; Responding to Children and Families of Prisoners: A Community Guide; and The Children of Incarcerated Parents Library on line at [www.nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu](http://www.nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu). In 2013 she was honoured by the Obama White House as a "Champion of Change" for her work as an advocate for children and families of the incarcerated.

**Michael Trout**, MA, entered the mental health field in 1968, and private practice in 1979, where he continued his study of early development and focused his clinical attention on problems of attachment. He was the founding president of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and the International Association for Infant Mental Health, was on the charter Editorial Board of the *Infant Mental Health Journal*, and served as Vice-President for the United States for the World Association for Infant Mental Health. His writings—including 3 books and 16 documentary films—were efforts to better understand how early experience influences, particularly loss and trauma, affect later development. He won the Selma Fraiberg Award in 1984, for "...significant contributions to the needs of infants and their families", and a Lifetime Achievement Award by ATTACH, "for his decades of work with children of loss and trauma".

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**Natalie Booth, PhD**, is an Early Career Academic Fellow at De Montfort University, Leicester in England. She recently completed her doctorate in social policy at the University of Bath, which critically explored the intersection between family life and prison life when a mother is convicted and imprisoned in England and Wales. Her research interest in the children and families of prisoners started during her time working at the Ministry of Justice, the government department responsible for prisons. She also has first-hand experience of working in a women’s prison whilst undertaking a placement with the Prison Advice and Care Trust, a national voluntary sector organisation working with prisoners’ families.

**Aileen Keays Yeager, M.S.**, is Project Manager for the Children with Incarcerated Parents (CIP) Initiative at Central Connecticut State University. As such, she works closely with leaders of Connecticut’s criminal justice agencies, community members, not-for-profits, faculty, advocates and legislators to promote effective public policy and practice through research, consultation, training, project management, program development and evaluation. In addition, she has authored a Frequently Asked Questions booklet for families impacted by parental incarceration, led the development of a child-friendly website to support CIP (<http://ctcip.org/main-childrens-page/>), and is a proud member of the International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents. In spite of

her extensive involvement working on behalf of and with those affected by incarceration, she found herself completely unprepared for the effects of having a loved one incarcerated when it encroached into her life. The experience will forever impact her work for, and with, those affected by incarceration.

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**Ron and Catherine Tijerina** are the Founders and Executive Directors of The RIDGE Project, Inc. Together, they have created the award-winning TYRO Dads® curriculum which attacks the culture of entitlement, incarceration, and cycles of generational poverty that fragment families and destroy legacies. Their work in the Ohio prison system and across the nation has strengthened thousands of families impacted by incarceration and has garnered national attention. Currently Ron and Catherine speak in venues across the United States and abroad to spread their vision of permanent transformation for families using evidenced based programming that champions positive youth development, healthy marriage, effective re-entry and fatherhood, and workforce empowerment. The couple resides in the state of Ohio in the United States with their daughter and are the proud parents of two adult sons, two daughters-in-law, and grandparents of four grandchildren.

**Mr. Geoffrey Johnson** is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of DC Project Connect, a charity located in the United States. In his previous line of work, he was an auditor and criminal investigator, dedicated to detection and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse both domestically and overseas for the United States government. He has over 30 years of executive and legislative branch experience in finance and the criminal justice domains. During his tenure as the Assistant Inspector General for Investigations at the Peace Corps, he directed hundreds of investigations

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**Monique Y. Tate**, PhD has been a public-school educator and community leader and organizer for the past 20 years in the United States of America (USA), facilitating school mentoring and enriching programs for struggling youth and their families. Dr. Tate has since resigned from public education upon completing her doctoral studies in Human Services at Walden University, moving on to fulfil her duty as Principal Chieftess and director of health and human services of Coosa Nation of North America (CNNA-USA), a grassroots Native American Aborigine movement. In her dual roles, Dr. Tate provides holistic family intervention services and therapeutic-educational planning for children struggling in traditional education settings as well as advancing human rights advocacy for indigenous people. Dr. Tate is also a member of the Advocacy in Action Coalition with the International Prisoners Family Conference based in Texas, USA. She is a devoted constituent promoting the Mass Incarceration Continuum as a human rights issue.

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Thanks to Francis Ssuubi and Ben Raikes for their work in forming the INCCIP network, and to all of you who came to our first conference in March 2017. It was a great international gathering, and I am looking forward to the next one.

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Finally, nga mihi nui (grateful thanks to all) to the board and staff at Pillars, who are so supportive of our international goals and who have embarked with enthusiasm on this INCCIP journey. In particular, thanks to Verna McFelin, Pillars' founder and Chief Executive, for her vision and support.

Liz Gordon  
Christchurch, New Zealand,  
December 2017.



## FOREWORD

“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.”  
—John F. Kennedy

The San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights says, “I have a right not to be judged, blamed, or labelled because my parent is incarcerated.” I believe every child in the world has the right to live a happy and successful life. No child should suffer the stigma of parental incarceration. After I found out my father went to jail, I was inspired to write a book for every child in the world with an incarcerated parent. I wanted them to know they were not alone or invisible to the world.

My book has reached people from all around the world. The greatest gift brought me to the 2017 International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP) conference in New Zealand. I met the world’s leading researchers, advocates, and policy makers of parental incarceration. This collection of research and ideas from conference will help give a stronger voice to every child of the world.

I never thought in a million years I would be able to address so many people from around the world about children of incarcerated parents. These incredible people have helped my dream come true of helping every invisible child in the world feel visible and valid.

Madison Strempek,  
Author of ‘Everyone Makes Mistakes’



INTRODUCTION:  
FOSTERING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT  
FOR CHANGE BY MAKING  
THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

LIZ GORDON

The convicted person stands in the court, awaiting sentence. Over ninety percent of the time, the person will be male (but if she is a female, she faces a different set of issues arising around caring for children). She or he is more likely than not to be a parent, but, while family members may be in court, the children are unlikely to be present. Neither is their existence or needs likely to be considered in any pre-sentencing reports. As the person faces sentence, she or he is 'wo/man alone'. If the sentence is custodial, it is likely to have significant ongoing effects on the children, but consideration of this is not part of the justice process. With the rise of mass incarceration systems and a harsh penal environment, longer stretches in prison are part of the penal landscape, and have been implemented by policy-makers apparently without thought to the social and familial harm such policies may cause.

If the sentence involves incarceration, in general there is no consideration of the needs of family in deciding where the prisoner will serve his or her term. The question of the needs of the children to continue a relationship with their loved incarcerated parent is never taken into account at the sentencing. It is the individual who is sentenced, it would be argued; the family is irrelevant. Yet, all the research, advocacy and practice discussed in these articles makes it clear that the family, both adults and children, are sentenced too when a parent goes to prison.

Not only that, but the skewing of incarceration towards indigenous groups, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged communities means, under mass incarceration systems, that certain groups are losing their young men to prison in alarming numbers. Gaps appear in the social and economic fabric of such communities that have potent and lasting effects. The harm that is

caused reaches from one generation to the next, with the children of prisoners more likely to themselves end up in prison due to trauma, deprivation, anger, racism or any number of causes.

This book is about a global movement to bring about change, from research through to practice. This movement has many strands. Some focus on reducing the trend of mass incarceration (Wakefield and Wildeman, 2014), which punishes by incarceration many crimes that could be dealt with better by treatment rather than imprisonment. The numbers of people with mental illnesses or drug and alcohol addictions in prisons around the world is huge, and is the single biggest effect of the massive increase in prison numbers over the past 30 years. Finding alternatives to punitive models of prosecution and incarceration (Green, 2015), improving treatment and support services, and looking towards restorative justice (Karp and Frank, 2016) are some of the themes of this research.

A second theme aims to pay more attention to familial links, to benefit both prisoners and their children. There is significant evidence now that keeping families together improves the outcomes for all members of the families, and reduces recidivism. One theme of such work is the development of ‘family friendly’ prisons, where children can interact with their incarcerated parent safely.

A third theme includes working with the families and children to reduce the harm caused by parental incarceration. Some work to reduce recidivism through programmes in the community, including youth interventions, family social work services, therapy programmes and mentoring for children. Others investigate and seek to overcome the trauma caused by parental incarceration. Others participate in advocacy programmes at the local or national level. Many NGOs offer diverse programmes to improve outcomes for the children of prisoners, including youth mentoring, camps, provision of support services, counselling and others.

The focus then is on evidence-based practice for advocacy and change. This means that the research literature lies at the heart of, and informs, advocacy and practice, and the various strands work closely together, providing a common underpinning for the International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP) organisation.

## About INCCIP

There has been significant networking around the children of prisoners over the past twenty years. In Europe, the COPE network (Children of Prisoners Europe) was originally set up in 1993 as the European Action Research Committee on Children of Imprisoned Parents (Eurochips). It is a child-focussed organisation, with a mission to:

...safeguard the social, political and judicial inclusion of children with an imprisoned parent, while fostering the pursuit and exchange of knowledge which enhances good practices, and contributes to a better understanding of the psychological, emotional and social development of these children.

The network has fostered research across Europe, including the four-nation COPING project between 2010 and 2012. It is a membership-based organisation, with both organisational and individual members. It is also a campaigning organisation, using the slogan: 'not my crime, still my sentence' in its annual pan-European campaign. This organisation has strong links to the United Nations, especially through the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO).

Within the United States, there are a number of network-type organisations working within and across States. There is no federal membership organisation covering the 50 States. The closest to a national forum is the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated, hosted at the Family and Corrections Network in Philadelphia. The Director, Ann Adalist-Estrin, holds seminars and training across the USA. As well, the annual International Prisoners Families Conference in Dallas, Texas is attended by organisations and individuals from around the United States and, in recent years, a number of other countries, with a focus on families and also children. The INCCIP network, which is represented in this volume, developed out of meetings at that conference, as did the Advocacy in Action Coalition, another US and international coalition with an advocacy focus.

INCCIP was the brainchild of Francis Ssuubi of Wells of Hope in Uganda, and Ben Raikes from the Coping Project (Ben is based at the University of Huddersfield, UK). The organisation was launched at the 2015 Dallas conference. At the conference, the team from Pillars (Inc), a New Zealand charity, suggested holding a conference of the network in 2017 and offered to host it. In 2016, it was confirmed that the inaugural conference would be held in New Zealand.

The inaugural conference of INCCIP, the International Coalition for the Children of Incarcerated Parents, was held in Rotorua, New Zealand in March 2017. Researchers, advocates and NGO workers met together over three days, providing 20 keynote addresses and nearly 40 papers, symposia and workshops. Many of the presentations are available on YouTube, and a list of speakers and titles is included as an appendix to this book.

An unusual aspect of the INCCIP network is that it is highly inclusive of the many parties involved with the children of prisoners. In practice, this means that the various strands of research, advocacy and practice operate side by side. All were represented at the conference and all find the INCCIP forum useful. A particular feature of the conference was the relatively large number of public and private prisons represented there that were also keen to outline their own work in prisons. At the same time, some of the advocacy groups were critical of the role of prisons in society, prison privatisation and also that prison organisations (which by definition foster penal harm) were welcome in INCCIP. This is a challenge for the organisation moving into the future. Can advocacy work and prison work exist alongside each other within one organisation?

The network also includes participation from the families of prisoners and, in principle more than practice so far, the children of prisoners. Madison Strempek, who wrote the Foreword to this book, provides one model of how children can work effectively within organisations such as INCCIP. Madison was already an advocate and published author when we got to know her, and was very happy to come to New Zealand as a keynote speaker. She also made quite a splash on television news. The question of how we engage children in an ethical and empowering way needs to be addressed by the network in its work programme.

## **The children of prisoners**

The basis on which we are able to develop a network and work together is three important factors:

1. The experiences of the children of prisoners are very similar across nations and jurisdictions, despite many differences in prison numbers and systems;
2. There is a marked confluence between the advocacy, research and practice work among individuals and organisations in this field; and

3. There is a wide evidence base arising from both quantitative and qualitative and large and small studies providing a firm basis for an international network.

Indeed, so strong is the evidence that Catherine Flynn, in her keynote at the INCCIP conference, argued forcibly that the time had come for not more research, but for better policies and practices to combat the harm caused by parental imprisonment:

Although research has been arguably sporadic, the findings from a range of international studies are consistent, that the outcomes for children are both negative and long-lasting. We are now faced with a challenge, not to do more research, but to ensure that the findings from research conducted have a meaningful impact (2017, abstract).

So, what is the evidence of harm, and where does it come from? A number of studies have sought to summarise and analyse the evidence over the years. An early influential paper was written for the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Hairston, 2007). This report covered the whole field, first examining statistics about the number of parents incarcerated, their prior parental status, who the child lived with and other data. The second section examined the evidence around children visiting their parent in prison, looking at the factors that affected visiting, making calls and other forms of contact. This section also examined the conditions of visiting, and found there was little consistency in prison policies and practices, which heavily affected the quality of the visit. The report noted (2007 p. 9):

The conditions of prison visiting rooms and visitor processing areas vary widely. Some are hot, dirty, overcrowded and lack basic amenities such as drinking fountains. Others are clean, well maintained and equipped with vending machines. Some have special visiting areas for children and activities, reading materials and games for adults and children. The latter types of facilities allow informal, relaxed interactions between prisoners and visitors while allowing prison staff to monitor visits and maintain security.

As with subsequent research, this study found that in most families, children did want to visit their incarcerated parent, while most prisoners also wanted their children to visit. The section also considers a range of other circumstances.

The next section of Hairston's (2007) report considers the emotional, economic and social consequences of parental incarceration. She notes the "tremendous sense of loss" that families and prisoners may experience, the

emotional problems that arise, and problems with stigma and discrimination. Children may suffer significant psychological harm as a result of parental imprisonment, she notes; an area that has subsequently been the focus of much research (e.g. Gordon, 2009). There is significant agreement in the literature that children may suffer a wide range of age-related and trauma-related conditions, which are treatable but often untreated. The health problems link with difficulties in learning, often stemming from worry and concern about the incarcerated parent, bullying at school, difficulties in the home and similar factors.

There is also significant agreement in the literature that the problems children face with a parent as prisoner can lead them into a position where they are themselves likely to commit offences as they grow up. These may be driven by anger, by school failure, by trauma and a number of other factors. There is no dispute that “children of prisoners are at risk of poorer outcomes”, but significant variance of views around how big this effect is and what causes it (Murray, 2007 and Ministry of Justice, 2007).

There is also an ethical debate among practitioners and researchers over attempts to quantify the risk to the children of prisoners. Some researchers and practitioners (see Adalist-Estrin, this volume) are concerned at the harm that can be caused through restigmatising children of prisoners as people more likely than others to end up in prison. The alternate view is that we need to know the risks associated with these children in order to mitigate them through better social policies and programmes.

There is also concern about the accuracy of the figures (Conway and Jones, 2015). In New Zealand, Pillars’ research-led figure that children of prisoners are 9.5 times more likely to end up in prison before age 25 derives from a longitudinal study (Gordon, 2009). Recently, this was reinforced by an analysis of administrative data by the New Zealand Treasury (Treasury, 2016) which concluded that children of prisoners from benefit-led homes in New Zealand are ten times more likely to end up in prison.

A factor not discussed in depth in Hairston is what Adele Jones (2017) called ‘child blind justice’. Her argument is that at every point in the justice system, from arrest to trial to incarceration, children are ignored by the system. Thus, any harm that adduces to them becomes a kind of collateral damage. It is neither anticipated nor counted, and the system fails to take responsibility for any harm caused. Particular harm may result from police or arrest procedures, where children become caught up in the



arrest of a loved parent. There were several examples of this in the Pillars research, including several households awakened by police and dogs carrying out raids, children not allowed access to food, drink or toilets over several hours, and at times seeing their parent dragged away in handcuffs. As this was occasionally the last time a child had seen their parent, it is not surprising that the children experience a high level of anxiety over the parent's treatment in prison.

Research has also focussed on prison visiting. While it is concluded that visiting is generally beneficial for parent and children, there is nevertheless a widespread view among many that prison is no place for a child to visit. Prisons such as Parc in Cardiff (as present by Corin Morgan-Armstrong to the INCCIP conference) have recognised the value of good prison visiting and have put in place impressive programmes, such as homework centres, open days and other systems.

This collection of articles is not definitive. For many reasons, including time, space and other commitments, only a selection of conference submissions was able to be included here. Nevertheless, these represent a wide range of current research and practice viewpoints on the children of incarcerated parents.

In terms of research to bring about change, many researchers and NGOs now hold up the so-called 'Bill of Rights for the Children of Prisoners', developed a number of years ago by a partnership in San Francisco. If the Bill of Rights is adopted as good practice in justice jurisdictions, many argue (Gordon, 2009), much of the harm caused by parental incarceration may be mitigated. The text follows:

**Bill of Rights for the children of prisoners**

I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.

I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.

I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.

I have the right to be well cared for in my parent's absence.

I have the right to speak with, see and touch my parent.

I have the right to support as I face my parent's incarceration.

I have the right not to be judged, blamed or labelled because my parent is incarcerated.

I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

The Bill of Rights acknowledges the research on the effects of parental incarceration, provides a direction for advocacy and informs the pathways to practice.

### **This volume**

Aspects of all of the key themes outlined in Hairston and the other literature in this field are covered in this volume. Pridmore and Levy examine the harms that parental imprisonment may cause children, from health effects to a loss of personal agency. Their article considers the findings of a “children of prisoners” report from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the extent to which the recommendations had been implemented in the region. Unfortunately, the authors report these recommendations were not implemented, and they argue for a system with public transport, children’s advocacy and a much-improved system of prison visiting, including extended family visits.

Avon Hart-Johnson explains the advocacy tool the ‘Mass Incarceration Continuum’ to explore approaches to advocacy for the families and children of prisoners. She notes that children of prisoners are at risk not only from poor outcomes, but also from punitive or irrational policy decisions that impact on the children. She discusses the recent ‘non-contact’ rule for all visitors to prisons in the state of Maryland. The continuum was first developed by a group formed at the 2015 Dallas Prisoner Family Conference, the same meeting that spawned INCCIP. In her article Hart-Johnson explains the theoretical underpinnings of the continuum, how it can be applied practically and the need for continual advocacy for policy and practice change.

Martin Schönsteich discusses the issue of pre-trial detention, calling it an abuse of human rights as the person is subject to punishment before they are convicted or sentenced. His article focuses, however, on another element of pre-trial detention – the effects on the economic and social situation of the person and their family. It focuses on a three-country study in West Africa, where detained persons were interviewed on these matters. Most of the respondents were “breadwinners in the prime of their working lives”. Issues such as economic damage, social stigma, the changing role of women in the household and the health of the detainees were of widespread concern in the case studies.

Kat Brady’s analysis of the situation of imprisonment in the paradise of Hawai’i contrasts the loveliness of the Hawai’ian islands and lifestyle with

the reality that the mass incarceration trends of the USA impact significantly on the indigenous people. She traces through the findings of reports and inquiries into the situation of this group, and discusses the new move to open a large new jail on the island of O'ahu. There is strong resistance to this with even within the establishment. With virtually zero support for family contact and few alternatives to incarceration, the indigenous people are imprisoned at an alarming rate. With the main state prison currently run by a private company and housed in Arizona, the landscape is bleak for change.

Simmons, Muhammad and Dodd explore the legal and moral requirement on police to act to protect and take into account the needs of children and young people at the time of parental detention or arrest. The authors note a general reluctance or refusal by the courts to acknowledge that police have a specific duty of care to children in the arrest situation, and that there is little or no acknowledgement that observing a parental arrest, even when the child is left by themselves in a property or is lost outside, is harmful to the children. The authors outline case studies collected from children on the effects of parental imprisonment. They urge that statutory guidelines be followed and that inter-disciplinary research continue in this space.

In her article, Ann Adalist-Estrin presents her twelve guiding principles for responding to the needs of the children and families of the incarcerated. Based on her expert seminars run throughout the United States, she outlines the responsibilities of jurisdictions in programme and policy development in this field. She is rigorous in requiring policy makers to be self-reflective, to take into account wider themes such as race, to use evidence carefully, recognise stresses, but also resilience, in working with families, advocate effectively, provide a safe environment and challenge media portrayals of prisoners and their families. There are other principles, too. Her final comment is the need for agencies to collaborate effectively to reduce the harm of parental imprisonment.

Michael Trout's article challenges us to clear our minds, be quiet, reflect on and listen to babies and young children whose parents have gone to prison. He begins with a useful definition of trauma - events "which threaten to overwhelm". He argues that memory is a building block of society, and trauma lodges within the minds of babies, even when this is not apparent. He describes the gamut of meaning-making that a baby goes through as the basis for explaining why children are "as they are". Thus,

the effects of incarceration on children can significantly affect the child's development at a basic, neural, level. Trout suggests ways to overcome this trauma through adaptation and alternative messages.

Long and Parrish note that people committed involuntarily to a psychiatric hospital face difficulties at least as complex as prisoners, in relation to their children. Their study involved a small qualitative study of women who have been 'sectioned'. They note that women are traditionally held in psychiatric hospitals longer than men, and there is little research on the children. The women note various challenges to parenting, including stigma, not having access to their children, 'complicated' visiting arrangements and lack of child-friendly facilities were all mentioned. The mothers worry about the additional burden being placed on other family members as a result of their involuntary placement in hospital. The authors note the need for further research in this space.

Bahiyyah Mohammad's study of children of prisoners who are resilient in the face of parental imprisonment is an important one. It is easy to move from the notion that many children have poor outcomes to the idea that they all do. This article is a timely reminder that some children of prisoners do well, and cope effectively with parental incarceration. The article derives from a detailed ethnographic study. The author got very close to the children, including visiting with them at their parent's prisons. She notes that five factors are important in building resilience: prior relationship with parent; life goals; involvement in activities; maintaining contact with parent and support systems. Her paper contains many examples of both resilient and non-resilient children and the factors that have affected them. She provides rare insights into the actual lives, views and failings of the children of prisoners.

The article by Natalie Booth traces the growing disparity between a policy discourse of encouraging family involvement in prisons, and the reality of few resources to support this. The focus in this article is on women in prison and their children. Her research identified a number of issues around contact between the mothers in prison and their families. One policy discussed is the guideline that all prisoners be given a reception phone call within 24 hours. Only one third were given such a call. Some caregivers waited a week, not knowing where their loved ones were nor if they were OK. Other areas discussed include the letters policy and practice, email and prison visiting, where there is often little opportunity to interact effectively from a 'designated seat'. The author calls for a

statutory unit to be set up to “bridge the disparate gap between the current policy discourse and penal practice” for parents in prison.

Yeager, Hurwitz and Kumar have written about an academic-community partnership at Central Connecticut State University, based on a model of civic engagement aimed at alleviating social problems such as poverty. Through the Connecticut Children with Incarcerated Parents (CTCIP) Initiative, the university fosters many ways of working with the community, including interns, volunteers, student activities and course projects in collaboration with faculty research programmes. Within a policy context looking for alternatives to imprisonment, the university has been working to facilitate and fund positive interventions for at-risk youth with incarcerated parents. Programmes have been evaluated using the university’s resources across faculties. One programme, the Youth Voice project, seeks to respond to both the health and trauma-related aspects of parental incarceration. The paper also discusses theoretical approaches, and the rewards and costs of such approaches, the role of academics and the potential for further development of the university-community collaboration model.

Nancy Loucks canvasses what, for many, is forbidden ground: the families and children of those convicted of sexual offences, whether within or outside of families. She points out that the issues these families face are, in most respects, identical to those facing any family of a prisoner, including income, health, housing, travel and other factors. The main difference, she notes, lies with the additional stigma associated with sexual offending. This occurs in three different ways within these families. First, the family may not speak of the offence. Second, family members may be witnesses or may have known about the offending. Finally, sexual offences can be very public, putting the family in a spotlight not of their own making, but highly damaging (and heart-breaking). One person summarised it: “He’s in his prison, and I’m in mine”. Loucks concludes with a discussion about support options for these families.

Katie Kramer and Carol Burton outline the findings of their descriptive study relating to the children of prisoners in two US jail systems. The aim was to gather comprehensive information to inform policy and practice around children’s wellbeing. Most of the incarcerated persons were parents, which meant that on any given day in the two counties, more than 3000 children had parents who were jailed. Information was also provided about multiple incarcerations, how close the children lived to the jail, and

what the interviewees thought should be done to improve visits. Differences were noted depending on whether the person in jail was a father or a mother. Most parents wanted to be involved in their children's lives after release.

Ron and Catherine Tijerina explain the genesis of their work in Ron's fifteen-year spell in prison and their struggle to survive as a family. Out of that struggle was born the TYRO programme for incarcerated fathers. The aim of the programme is to break cycles of self-destruction and to restore families within the context of, in most cases, poverty. The programme teaches new skills and offers new tools. It is about personal change that affects families and communities. The programme identifies various 'zones': shock, denial, anger, grief, acceptance. These zones are described in the article. They note acceptance may mean a 'victim' or a 'victor' mentality, the latter indicating a new ability to take charge of their lives. Moving towards healing, participants must recognise and own their life story and renew their lives. Then rebuild, re-invent and re-invest.

Johnson, Johnson and Tate examine how prison leadership and staff shape the conditions of family visiting. They visited prisons in the UK to identify best practices for potential application in the USA. The multiple case study approach investigated prison environments for family visiting through the lens of an ecological systems approach. They identified a pervasive tension between serving in a controlled environment and wanting to offer good visitation for children. They called this the 'this is a prison' – 'this is not a prison' bifurcated identities. This often shows in the security versus good treatment dichotomy. The authors give examples from each side of the prison/ not prison dilemma. They conclude by discussing how different environments affect the visiting experience of children.

## References

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