



Memorandum I 12/12/2025 | D'Adre Cunningham
Bibliography of Research, Reports, Law Reviews, & Articles

Reports (in alphabetical order)

- [Children and Families of Incarcerated Parents Advisory Committee Annual Report to the Washington State Legislature](#) (2010)

This report to the Washington State Legislature and Washington State Governor makes recommendations on how to improve services to children, incarcerated parents, and families experiencing and impacted by parental incarceration. It also reports progress on the advisory committee's recommendations, including but not limited to, surveying statewide resources and needs for these families and providing technical assistance via toolkits to local governments.

- [Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers](#), by Jessica Nickel, Crystal Garland, & Leah Kane, The Council of State Governments Justice Center (2009)

This report noted that outcomes for children of incarcerated parents warrant improvement, (and at the time of publication had only received minimal attention at the national level). The authors developed an action plan to raise awareness about these children's needs, inform policies and practices to better address them, and to encourage policy changes that help improve the outcomes for children who have a parent in prison or jail.

- [Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility](#) – Pew (2010)

Incarceration affects an inmate's path to prosperity. Collateral Costs quantifies the size of that effect, not only on offenders but on their families and children. Before being incarcerated more than two-thirds of male inmates were employed and more than half were the primary source of financial support for their children. Incarceration carries significant and enduring economic repercussions for the remainder of the person's working years. This report finds that former inmates work fewer weeks each year, earn less money and have limited upward mobility. These costs are borne by offenders' families and communities, and they reverberate across generations.

- [Intentions and Results: A Look Back at the Adoption and Safe Families Act](#) by Olivia Golden and Jennifer Ehrle Macomber, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Urban Institute (2009)

Twelve years after the law was enacted, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) in partnership with the Urban Institute co-sponsored this series of papers to examine effects of the ASFA law and its implementation.

- [Mother Behind Bars](#) by The Rebecca Center for Human Rights, National Women's Law Center (October 2010)

This report is a state-by-state report card that provides an analysis of related federal laws and policies regarding conditions of confinement for women in federal prisons and immigration detention facilities. Additionally, it assesses how the federal government funds state programs that serve incarcerated pregnant or parenting women. The authors do not give the federal government a grade but do provide specific recommendations for areas that need improvement.

- [Shattered Families](#) (2011)

This report researched, as of 2011, the number of children living in foster care who are prevented from uniting with their detained or deported parents, concluding, among other things, that families are more likely to be separated where local police aggressively participate in immigration enforcement. The researchers also examine how most child welfare departments lack systemic policies to keep families united when parents are detained or deported. Published by Applied Research Center, now Race Forward.

Social Research (in alphabetical order)

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences and Psychosocial Well-Being of Women Who Were in Foster Care as Children](#) by Delilah Bruskas and Dale H Tessin

This study assessed the relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and psychosocial well-being in women who were in foster care as children, taking into account prior research that has often attributed psychosocial problems as adults ofr former foster children to cumulative adversities and a lack of supportive caregivers.

- [Attachment and caregiving relationships in families affected by parental incarceration](#) by Rebecca J. Shlafer and Julie Poehlmann, 12 Human Development 4, 395-415 (2010).

Monthly interviews were conducted with children, caregivers, and mentors during the first six months of program participation, and questionnaires were administered at intake and six months to assess caregiver–child and incarcerated parent–child relationships, contact with incarcerated parents, and children’s behavior problems. The researchers’ assessments of children nine years old and older revealed in part that having no contact with the incarcerated parent was associated with children reporting more feelings of alienation toward that parent compared to children who had contact.

- [Characteristics of Incarcerated Fathers and Mothers](#) by Kjellstrand, 34 Child Youth Serv Rev. 12: 2409-2415 (2012)

Mothers and fathers were similar on a number of dimensions including age, education-level, number and age of children, and family criminal history, but differences were observed on key

variables relevant to outcomes for children and families, including employment history and income, substance use, mental health, trauma experiences and criminal history. Implications for prevention programs are discussed.

- [Child Protection and Adult Crime: Using Investigator Assignment to Estimate Causal Effects of Foster Care](#) by Joseph J. Doyle, Jr., Working Paper 13291, National Bureau of Economic Research (2007)

The author notes that nearly 20% of young prison inmates spent part of their youth in foster care - the placement of abused or neglected children with substitute families. Little is known whether foster care placement reduces or increases the likelihood of criminal behavior. This paper uses the placement frequency of child protection investigators as an instrument to identify causal effects of foster care placement on adult arrest, conviction, and imprisonment rates.

- [Child Protection and Child Outcomes: Measuring the Effects of Foster Care](#) by Joseph J. Doyle, Jr., 97 American Economic Review 5, 1583-1610 (2007)

This paper uses a measure of the removal tendency of child protection investigators as an instrumental variable to identify causal effects of foster care placement on child outcomes for school-age children and youth. The results, which apply in particular to children receiving welfare benefits and between the ages of 5 and 15 at the time of the initial investigation, point to better outcomes when children on the margin of placement remain at home.

- [Children's Contact With Their Incarcerated Parents: Research Findings and Recommendations](#) by Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Danielle Dallaire, Ann Booker Loper, and Leslie D Shear, 65 American Psychology 6, 575-598 (2010)

The researchers in this article present a conceptual model to provide a framework within which to interpret findings about parent-child contact when parents are incarcerated and then summarize recent research examining parent-child contact in context. Their initial recommendations for children's contact with incarcerated parents also suggest areas for future intervention and research with this vulnerable population.

- [Childhood Disrupted – Volunteers of America](#) - Meyerson, et al. (2010)

Despite the explosive growth in the number of mothers who are in prison—and the potentially devastating effects of this incarceration on future generations—there are, at present, only a handful of prisoner reentry programs in the U.S. that are specifically designed to support incarcerated mothers and their families. The purpose of the Look Up and Hope initiative is to address this critical gap in services. Five pilot sites with a strong history of service to incarcerated women and their families—Volunteers of America Dakotas, Volunteers of America Illinois, Volunteers of America Indiana, Volunteers of America Northern New England and Volunteers of America Texas—are currently involved in designing and implementing the initiative.

- [Children's Contact with Their Incarcerated Parents](#) – Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, 65 A, Psychol. 6: 575-598 (2010)

In this article, the researchers present a conceptual model to provide a framework within which to interpret findings about parent– child contact when parents are incarcerated. They then summarize recent research examining parent–child contact in context. Finally, they present initial recommendations for children's contact with incarcerated parents based on the research presented and suggest areas for future intervention and research with this vulnerable population. Published in Journal of American Psychology, 2010.

- Children of Incarcerated Parents – Christian (2009) – [Policy Report](#)

This report of the National Council of State Legislatures poses a list of questions about the experience of children whose parents are incarcerated. Each question is followed by a discussion that is intended, not so much as a definitive answer, but as general background information. The information identifies only general trends, since specific answers to the questions posed will differ by state, depending on factors such as the existing policy context and service array, demographic trends and available data.

- [Children of Parents in Jail or Prison](#) - University of Pittsburgh (2011)

Many small-scale studies have looked at issues related to children's contact with parents in jails and prisons. Despite methodological limitations, such as small sample size, these studies provide some insight into how a parent's incarceration can affect such issues as a child's development and behavior, those who care for them at home, and family resources. Special report starts at page 5.

- [Do Maltreated Children Who Remain at Home Function Better than Those who Are Placed?](#) by Ferol E. Mennen, Matthew Brensilver, and Penelope K. Trickett, 32 Child Youth Serv Rev. 12, 1675–1682 (2010)

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the mental health functioning of an ethnically diverse sample of 302 maltreated children and 151 non maltreated children ages 9–12 to see if there were differences between those who remained at home, those placed in kin care, non-relative foster care or a comparison group of children who were not maltreated. Findings of the study include that the maltreated children did not differ by placement type but did score significantly higher than the comparison children on many measures.

- [Estimating the "Impact" of Out-of-Home Placement on Child Well Being: Approaching the Problem of Selection Bias](#) by Lawrence M Berger, Sarah K Bruch, Elizabeth I. Johnson, Sigrid James, David Rubin, 80 Child Development 6, 1856-1876 (2009)

This study used data on 2,453 children age 4 to 17 from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being and 5 analytic methods that adjust for selection factors to estimate the impact of out-of-home placement on children's cognitive skills and behavior problems.

- [Impact of Continued Contact with Biological Parents](#) – McWey, et al. (2010)

Findings indicated that more frequent contact with the biological mother was marginally associated with lower levels depression and significantly associated with lower externalizing problem behaviors. The association with externalizing problem behavior was significant even after controlling for gender and exposure to violence. Further, differences with regard to gender were revealed. Specifically, girls had higher depression scores than boys even after controlling for exposure to violence. Results suggest that supporting frequent, consistent, visitation may impact the levels of depression and externalizing programs children in foster care exhibit.

- Incarcerated Parents and Their Children Trends 1991-2007 – The Sentencing Project (2009) – [Report](#)

This briefing paper evaluates data from reports compiled by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics citing data from 1997, 2004, and 2007. It also includes information from and comparisons to data from 1991, where possible, to allow analysis of trends over the last two decades.

- [Incarceration and Family Relationships: Examining the Nature of Family Involvement Among Inmates](#) – (2010)

This fact sheet provides data on the nature of family involvement among inmates. It presents research on factors that strain family relationships (in both the context of romantic relationships and parenting) when one partner is incarcerated. It also describes some of the efforts underway to maintain marriages and parent-child relationships during incarceration.

- [Mass Imprisonment and Racial Disparities in Childhood Behavioral Problems](#) by Sara Wakefield and Christopher Wildeman, 10 Criminology & Public Policy 3, 793-817 (2011)

This research examines the question of whether and how much mass imprisonment influence racial inequities not just among adult men but also among their children. The researchers extended current research by providing the first insight into how large the long-term consequences of mass imprisonment might be for the intergenerational transmission of racial inequality.

- Mothers, Infants, and Imprisonment – May (2009) -[Research](#)

In this report, Women's Prison Association (WPA) highlights two different responses to women who give birth while under criminal justice supervision: prison nurseries and community-based residential parenting programs. WPA provides an overview of both types of programs, review the literature on the subject, and offer recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

- [Paternal Incarceration and Father–Child Contact in Fragile Families](#) - Geller (2013)

This report examines father–child contact among incarcerated fathers and found that most incarcerated fathers maintained a degree of contact with their children, through either coresidence or visitation. Moreover, the results revealed robust reductions in both father-child coresidence and visitation when fathers are incarcerated—between 18% and 20% for coresidence, and 30% to 50% for the probability of visitation.

- [Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children](#) – Glaze and Maruschak, BJS (2010)

The findings in this report are based on self-reported data collected through personal interviews with prisoners participating in the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ (BJS) 2004 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities (SISFCF), which is comprised of two separate surveys. One survey is conducted in state adult correctional facilities and the other is conducted in federal correctional facilities.

- [Parental Imprisonment, the Prison Boom, and the Concentration of Childhood Disadvantage](#) by Christopher Wildeman, 46 Demography 2, 265–280 (2009)

This research estimates the risk of parental imprisonment for children whose parents did not finish high school, finished high school only, or attended college. The findings showed the rate of parental incarceration experienced by white or Black children born in 1978 and 1990 respectively by the level of education attained and reports the risks of incarceration for children of college educated parents among other things.

- [Practitioner Review: Children in Foster Care – Vulnerabilities and Evidence-Based Interventions that Promote Resilience Processes](#) by Leslie D Leve, Gordon T Harold, Patricia Chamberlain, John A Landsverk, Philip A Fisher and Panos Vostanis, 53 J. Child Psychol Psychiatry 12, 1197-1211 (2012)

Children in foster care are at increased risk for a host of negative outcomes encompassing emotional, behavioral, neurobiological, and social realms. Although the development of evidence-based interventions that improve outcomes for foster children has lagged behind the delivery of interventions in other service sectors (e.g., mental health and educational sectors), several interventions across childhood and adolescence offer promise.

- [Relationship processes and resilience in children with incarcerated parents](#) by Julie Poehlmann, J Mark Eddy, Danielle H Dallaire, Janice L Zeman, Barbara J Myers, Virginia Mackintosh, Maria I Kuznetsova, Geri M Lotze, Al M Best, Neeraja Ravindran, Ann Booker Loper, Caitlin Novero Clarke, James P McHale, Selin Salman, Anne Strozier, Dawn K Cecil, Charles R Martinez Jr, Bert Burraston, 78 Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development 3, vii–129 (2013)

Taken together, these studies further our understanding of resilience processes in children of incarcerated parents and their families and set the groundwork for further research on child

development and family resilience within the context of parental involvement in the criminal justice system.

Law Reviews (in alphabetical order)

- [Prison, Foster care, and the Systemic Punishment of Black Mothers](#), by Dorothy E. Roberts, 59 UCLA L. Rev. 1474 (2012)
- [Parental Incarceration: What We Know and Where we Need to Go](#) by Christopher Uggen & Suzy McElrath, 104 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 597 (2014)

Articles (in alphabetical order)