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# INTERSECTION OF CORRECTIONS & CHILD WELFARE FACT SHEET

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## INCARCERATION, PROBATION AND CORRECTIONS

- 1 in every 100 adults in America is in jail or prison.<sup>i</sup> The mandatory sentencing and release laws passed in the 1980s and 1990s lead to a dramatic increase in the incarcerated adult population. During the past quarter-century, the number of prison and jail inmates has grown by 274%.<sup>ii</sup>
- 1 in 31 adults in America are in jail, prison or on probation. During the past quarter-century, the population of probationers and parolees grew so that 3.2 percent of all adults are under the control of the correctional system in the U.S.<sup>iii</sup>
- 1 in every 15 general fund dollars was spent on corrections. In the past two decades, state general fund spending on corrections increased by more than 300%. Only Medicaid spending has grown faster.<sup>iv</sup>
- 5x more men are incarcerated than women - 1 in 18 men vs. 1 in 89 women.<sup>v</sup>
- There has been 80% increase in the number of men in state and federal prison between 1990 and 2001. There has been 114% increase in the number of women in state and federal prison between 1990 and 2001.<sup>vi</sup>
- There has been a dramatic increase in the rate of incarcerated women in the U.S. – between 1995 and 2005, the number of incarcerated women increased by 57% versus 34% for men.<sup>vii</sup>
- There are racial disproportionalities in the rate of incarceration:<sup>viii</sup>
  - 1 in 11 black adults (9.2 percent)
  - 1 in 27 Hispanic adults (3.7 percent)
  - 1 in 45 white adults (2.2 percent)

## PARENTAL INCARCERATION

- 52% of all incarcerated men and women were parents. Two-thirds of the incarcerated parent population is non-white.<sup>ix</sup>
- 75% of incarcerated women are mothers.<sup>x</sup> The number of children under age 18 with a mother in prison more than doubled since 1991.<sup>xi</sup>
- There are racial disproportionalities in the rate of parental incarceration:<sup>xii</sup>
  - 1 in 15 black children have a parent in prison.
  - 1 in 42 Latino children have a parent in prison.
  - 1 in 111 white children have a parent in prison.
- The average age of children with an incarcerated parent is eight years old; 22% of the children are under the age of five.<sup>xiii</sup>

- Incarcerated fathers are more likely to be violent offenders (45% of fathers vs. 26% of mothers in prison) and incarcerated mothers are more likely to be imprisoned for drug and property offenses (63%), although the percentage of women incarcerated due to violent offenses has been rising.<sup>xiv</sup>
- 55% of parents in state correctional facility and 45% of parents in federal correctional facility reported never having had a personal visit from their child(ren).<sup>xv</sup>

## CHILD WELFARE AND CORRECTIONS

- There is a lack of accurate estimates of the number of children in foster care who have an incarcerated parent. Although the Bureau of Justice Statistic (BJS) reports how many inmates identified a given type of caregiver, it does not tell us how many children are in each type of caregiving arrangement, distinguish between relative caregivers who are foster parents and those who provide care outside of formal child welfare system. Other data sources are equally problematic, producing widely varying estimates of this population of children in care.<sup>xvi</sup>
- Mothers were five times more likely than fathers to report that a child was in foster care (11% vs. 2% respectively).<sup>xvii</sup>
- 1 in 8 children who are reported victims of parental maltreatment have a parent who was arrested within six months of the report. At least 1 in 3 child(ren) in contact with the child welfare system has experienced the arrest of a primary caregiver at some point in their lives.<sup>xviii</sup>
- 11% of children in foster care have a mother who is incarcerated for at least some period of time while in foster care; however, 85% of these children were placed in foster care prior to the mother's first period of incarceration.<sup>xix</sup>
- 10% of incarcerated mothers have a child in foster home or other state care. Approximately 2% of children with incarcerated fathers are in foster care.<sup>xx</sup>
- The average stay in foster care for a child with an incarcerated mother is 3.9 years.<sup>xxi</sup>
  - Children of incarcerated mothers are four times more likely to be "still in" foster care than all other children. Children of incarcerated mothers are more likely to "age out" of the foster care system; less likely to reunify with their parents, get adopted, enter into subsidized guardianship, go into independent living or leave through some other means.<sup>xxii</sup>
    - Reunification is 21% for children of incarcerated mothers versus 40% for all children
    - Adoption is 37% for children of incarcerated mothers versus 27% for all children
- According to a 10-year study conducted by the University of Maryland, 13% of non-custodial parents were or are currently incarcerated. Incarcerated non-custodial parents were found to account for 25% of the total arrears owed.<sup>xxiii</sup>

- <sup>i</sup> The Pew Charitable Trust (2008). *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*. Washington, DC. [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing\\_and\\_corrections/one\\_in\\_100.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/one_in_100.pdf)
- <sup>ii</sup> The Pew Charitable Trust (2009). *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Correction*. Washington, DC. [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing\\_and\\_corrections/PSPP\\_1in31\\_report\\_FINAL\\_WEB\\_2-27-09.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/PSPP_1in31_report_FINAL_WEB_2-27-09.pdf)
- <sup>iii</sup> The Pew Charitable Trust (2009). *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Correction*. Washington, DC. [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing\\_and\\_corrections/PSPP\\_1in31\\_report\\_FINAL\\_WEB\\_2-27-09.pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/PSPP_1in31_report_FINAL_WEB_2-27-09.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>v</sup> The Pew Charitable Trust (2009). *One in 31: Behind Bars in America 2009*. Washington, DC.
- <sup>vi</sup> The California Research Bureau (2003) *Children of Arrested Parents: Strategies to Improve Their Safety and Well-Being*. Sacramento, California.
- <sup>vii</sup> Harrison, P.M & Beck, A.J. (2006). *Prisoners in 2005*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Washington DC. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p05.pdf>
- <sup>viii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>ix</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>x</sup> Mumola, C.J. (2000). *Incarcerated parents and their children*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iptc.pdf>
- <sup>xi</sup> Glaze, Lauren E. & Maruschak, L. (Revised 2009). *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Washington, DC. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>
- <sup>xii</sup> Schirmer, S., Nellis, A, & Mauer, M. (2009). *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children: Trends 1991-2007*. The Sentencing Project. Washington, DC. [http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cinc\\_incarceratedparents.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cinc_incarceratedparents.pdf)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Mumola, C.J. (2000). *Incarcerated parents and their children*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iptc.pdf>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xv</sup> Schirmer, S., Nellis, A, & Mauer, M. (2009). *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children: Trends 1991-2007*. The Sentencing Project. Washington, DC. [http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cinc\\_incarceratedparents.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/Admin%5CDocuments%5Cpublications%5Cinc_incarceratedparents.pdf)
- <sup>xvi</sup> Christian, S. (2009). *Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Guide for State Policymakers*. Denver, Colorado: National Conference of State Legislators.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Glaze, Lauren E. & Maruschak, L. (Revised 2009). *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Washington, DC.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Phillips, S. & Gleeson, J. (2007). *Children, Families, and the Criminal Justice System: What We Know Now that We Didn't Know Then About the Criminal Justice System's Involvement in Families with Whom Child Welfare Agencies Have Contact.* Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago. <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/res/pdf/WhatWeKnowNow.pdf>
- <sup>xix</sup> Ross, T. Khashu, A., & Wamsley, M. (2004). *Hard data on hard times: An empirical analysis of maternal incarceration, foster care and visitation*. New York, Vera Institute of Justice. [http://www.vera.org/publication\\_pdf/245\\_461.pdf](http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/245_461.pdf)
- <sup>xx</sup> Mumola, C.J. (2000). *Incarcerated parents and their children*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iptc.pdf>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ross, T. Khashu, A., & Wamsley, M. (2004). *Hard data on hard times: An empirical analysis of maternal incarceration, foster care and visitation*. New York, Vera Institute of Justice. [http://www.vera.org/publication\\_pdf/245\\_461.pdf](http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/245_461.pdf)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Governor's Office for Children and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (2007). *Report to the Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families on Programs and Initiatives in Maryland for Children of Incarcerated Parents*. State of Maryland.