Children of Incarcerated Parents: Developmental Trajectories of Externalizing Behavior.

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Figure 2. Rate of Incarceration in Selected Nations

United States (2008) 754
Russian Federation (2010) 610
Israel (2009) 325
South Africa (2009) 325
United Arab Emirates (2006) 238
Iran (2010) 223
Mexico (2009) 204
Saudi Arabia (2009) 178
England and Wales (2010) 152
Australia (2009) 134
China (2005) 119
Canada (2007) 116
France (2008) 96
Germany (2009) 88
Sweden (2008) 74
Japan (2008) 63
India (2007) 32

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800
Persons incarcerated per 100,000 population

Incarceration data were collected on the varying dates listed and are the most current data available as of February 2010.

Source of data: Bureau of Justice Statistics (for U.S.); World Prison Brief, International Centre for Prison Studies, King’s College of London, http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/worldbrief/
BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

• Over a similar period…

• Number of minor children in the U.S. with incarcerated parents has increased from 1 million in 1991 to 1.7 million in 2007.

• An additional 3.2 million children with parents who have recently been released from prison/jail, or on parole.

• An estimated 5 million more children whose parents have been in system but not currently under correctional supervision.

• Over 10 million children have a parent who is or has been imprisoned.
• High risk for psychopathology, substance abuse, delinquency, school difficulties, and future criminal behavior.

• Up to 70% develop emotional/psychological problems.

• 50 - 83% have problems in school.

• 24 - 52% have delinquency problems.
HOW PARENTAL INCARCERATION AFFECTS CHILDREN

• Likely to be complex.

• Incarceration of family member does not necessarily mark beginning of problems.
  • Poverty, low education, substance abuse difficulties, mental health problems, trauma, unstable home life, domestic abuse, and community violence
  • 60 - 88% of children with incarcerated parents had four or more risk factors across contextual levels.
**Economic Factors**
- Neighborhood poverty
- Family Poverty, Livable wage jobs
- Education & Vocational training

**Health Issues**
- Physical, Mental Health, Family Support, Substance Abuse
- Access to affordable and health services and resources.

**Caring Parents and Adults**
- Parenting
- Family Functioning
- Mentors

**Quality Education and Care**
- Affordable/quality day care
- Quality Instruction
- Positive environment

**Physical, Social, Emotional, Intellectual**

**Healthy Child Outcomes**

**Immediate Influences**

**Physical Environment**
- Quality housing/buildings
- Neighborhood design
- Land use
- Absence of toxic influences
- Access to nutritious food/activity

**Social Environment/Neighborhood**
- Prosocial norms
- Informal social control
- Healthy community norms
- Community Integration & connectedness
- Social Support

**Positive Peers**
- Pro-social
- Healthy opportunities
- Reduced exposure to AOD, violence

**BACKGROUND INFLUENCES**
DATA

• Linking Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) study (Eddy, Reid, Stoolmiller, & Fetrow 2003).

• Began in 1991 and continued through 2009 (16 waves of data).

• Population-based randomized intervention trial to evaluate effectiveness of a multimodal prevention program.

• Total sample size = 655 families (target youth/their parents)

• Controlled for intervention in analyses.
STRENGTHS OF DATA

• Standardized instruments

• Longitudinal design

• Multiple measures and sources to measure many of constructs which reduces single method/reporting biases

• Normative comparison group

• Large sample size

• Attrition rate very low
ANALYTIC APPROACH

• Latent growth mixture modeling to identify distinct trajectories of externalizing behavior for youth.

• Relations of the identified trajectories with the variables of interest were then examined using one-way between groups ANOVA with planned comparisons and Chi-square tests.
Figure 1. Externalizing Growth Curves for Children from 10 – 16 Years

Growth trajectories for externalizing behaviors

- Chronic High
- Borderline-Stable
- Mid-Increasing
- Low-Stable

Externalizing Score

Age 10  Age 12  Age 14  Age 16
### RESULTS

**Percentages of Children in each Trajectory Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trajectory Class</th>
<th>Total Percent of Youth</th>
<th>Percent of Youth with Parental Incarceration</th>
<th>Percent of Youth with No Parental Incarceration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 647)</td>
<td>(n = 67)</td>
<td>(n = 580)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Stable (n = 488)</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>59.7&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>77.2&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderline-Stable (n = 75)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>17.9&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.9&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Increasing (n = 63)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>22.4&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.3&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic-High (n = 21)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.0&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.6&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ²(3, n = 647) = 19.7, p = .000, phi = .18
RESULTS

• Low-Stable: (75.4%)
  • Strong mother/child relationship
  • Low likelihood of maternal depression
  • Low levels of trauma
  • Consistent and non-harsh discipline

• Borderline-Stable (11.6%)
  • Weaker parent/child relationship
  • Higher level of maternal depression
  • Less consistent parenting

• Low-Stable
  • Least likely to participate in delinquent acts
  • Fewer deviant peers
  • Least amount of substance use
  • Least likely to be arrested or incarcerated

• Borderline-Stable
  • More delinquent acts (mainly minor)
  • More arrest as juvenile (4x)
  • More substance use (2 – 4x)
  • As adults over twice as likely to be arrested or incarcerated
RESULTS

• Mid-Increasing: (9.7%)
  • Weaker mother/child relationship
  • Harsher parenting
  • More trauma

• Chronic-High (3.2%)
  • Weaker mother/child relationship
  • Higher level of maternal depression
  • Less consistent and harsher parenting
  • More trauma (marginally significant)

• Mid-Increasing
  • More delinquent acts (minor and major)
  • More deviant peers
  • More substance use
  • More juvenile arrest (5x)

• Chronic-High
  • Highest levels of delinquent acts (minor and major)
  • More likely arrested as juvenile (8x)
  • More substance use
  • As adults more likely to be arrested (6x) or incarcerated (3x)
SUMMARY

• As a group…children face many of the same risks and challenges

• Individually, they are exposed to different factors at the individual, family, and community levels.

• Development varies.

• Those children with strong parent/child relationships, consistent and appropriate parenting, healthy parental mental health, and low levels of trauma
  - more likely do well over time
  - were at lower risk for later substance use and criminality

• Those who exhibited higher levels of parenting/family dysfunction and high levels of externalizing were less likely to fare as well during the late adolescent and early adult years.
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- A “one-size-fits-all” approach to address the child and family needs is not appropriate.
- Rather a tailored, multi-level approach which focuses on the children, family, and broader contextual issues might be best suited for this group.
  - Parent/child relationship
  - Parental mental health (maternal depression)
  - Parenting (consistent/non-harsh)
  - Trauma
  - Peers
IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

• Examine diverse web of interacting influences
• Take a more individualize approach rather than grouping all together
• More research on children, families, and communities as well as potential interventions to help support families
Questions?
Thank you!