



Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration

January 25, 2017



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National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

- DHHS/ACF Office of Family Assistance funded national resource to support fathers and families.
- Resources are available for dads, fatherhood programs, researchers, and policy makers.



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Contact

- Visit the NRFC: www.fatherhood.gov.
 - www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit for *Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit*.
 - www.fatherhood.gov/webinars for archives of all our webinars.
- Contact us: info@fatherhood.gov
- Encourage fathers or practitioners to contact our national call center toll-free at:
 - 1-877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411).
- Engage with us via social media:
 - **Facebook** - Fatherhoodgov
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Our Goals Today

Today's webinar will share information about:

- The impact of incarceration on children and families.
- Strategies to help incarcerated fathers focus on parenting, relationship and employment skills prior to community reentry.
- Ways to respond to the needs of the children of incarcerated fathers.
- Programs that are helping fathers as they return to the community.
- Resources for more information, including a new (soon to be released) section of the NRFC's Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit.



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Today's Presenters

- **Ann Adalist-Estrin**
National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated. Camden, NJ.
- **Tina Naidoo**
Texas Offender Reentry Initiative. Dallas, TX.
- **Mary Weaver**
Dads Back! Academy, Friends Outside in Los Angeles County. Pasadena, CA.



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Estimated Numbers

- On any given day, there are 2.7 million children who have an incarcerated parent.
 - **That is 1 in 28 children.**
 - *Based on Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) formula in combination with random sampling.*
- 5-10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lifetime.
 - **This is equivalent to 1 in 14 children.**
 - Based on data analysis and BJS formula.
- Some data do not include all forms of incarceration/supervision.
- Some data do not include non resident parents.





Recent Reports

- *A Shared Sentence: The Devastating Toll of Parental Incarceration on Kids, Families and Communities.*
 - Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Policy Report (April 2016).
- *Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to Their Children?*
 - Child Trends (October 2015), *analysis of 2011-12 National Survey of Children's Health.*



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Guiding Principle



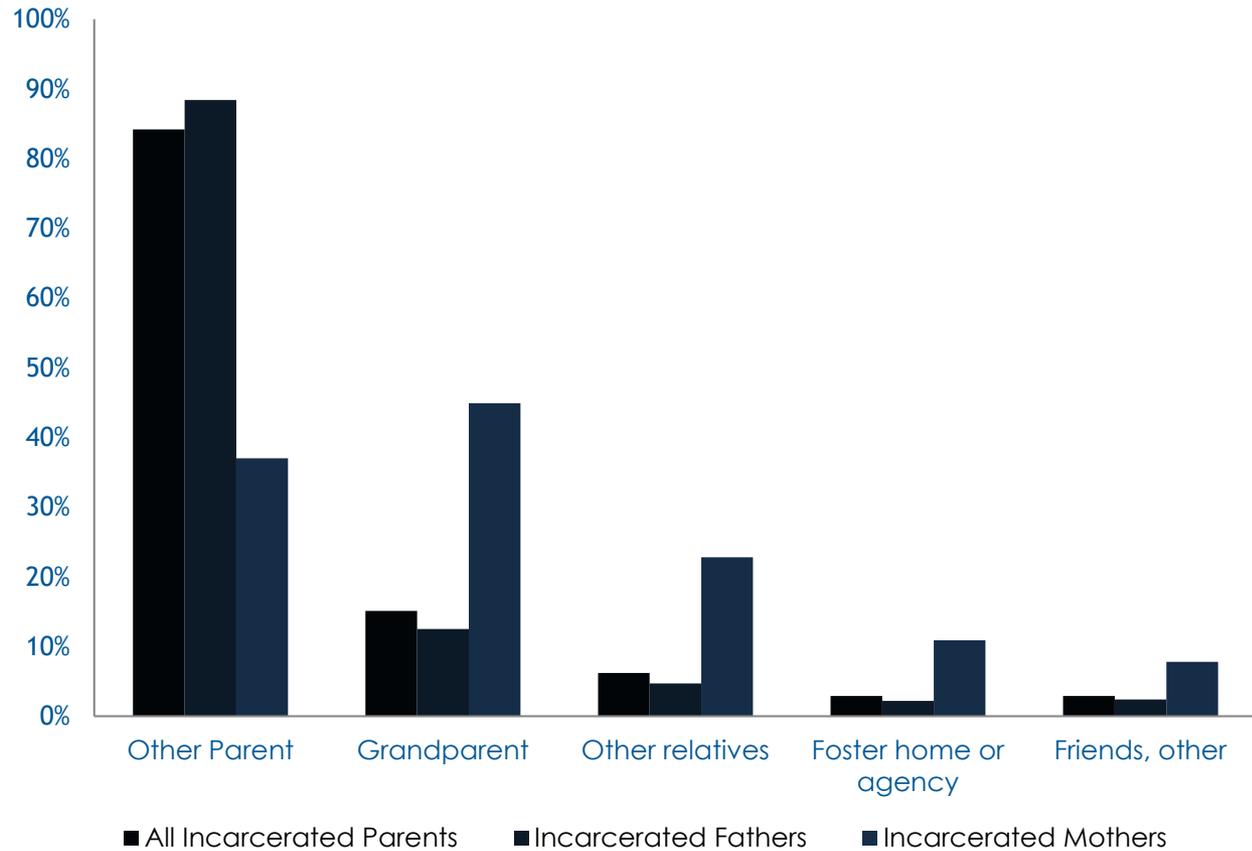
This is Not One Monolithic Group
Honor the Themes and the Variations





Data: Caregivers

Caregiver for Children During Parent's Incarceration



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Parents in Prison and their Minor Children*. Aug 2008





Caregivers: Implications for Reentry

Caregivers as Supports and Gatekeepers: Resolving Resentment

- Financial stress and hardship.
- Elevated levels of emotional stress.
- Additional strains placed on interpersonal relationships.
- Increased difficulty in monitoring and supervising children.

See: Turanovic, J. J., Rodriguez, N., & Pratt, T. C. (2012). The collateral consequences of incarceration revisited: A qualitative analysis of the effects on caregivers of children of incarcerated parents. *Criminology*, 50(4), 913-959.



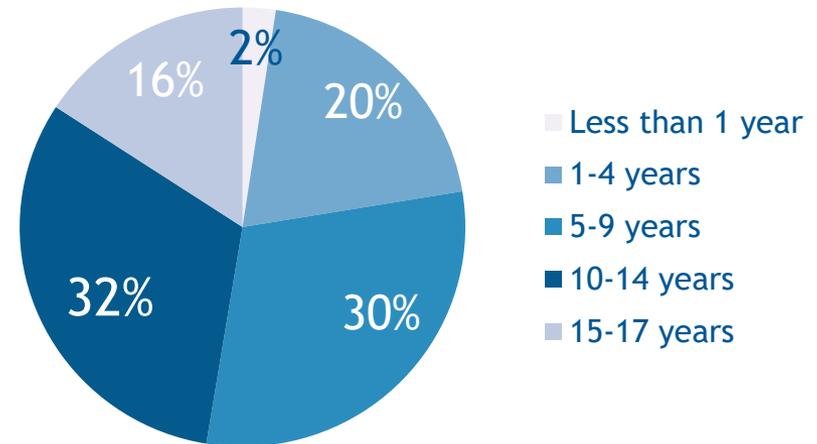
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Data: Ages of Children

- Over 50% of children who have an incarcerated parent are age 9 or younger.



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Parents in Prison and their Minor Children* (Aug 2008).

Children's age was a significant predictor of post-release father-child relationship quality. Fathers of younger children reported higher parental warmth and better relationship quality with their children than fathers of older children. They also engaged in more activities with their children. (Lindquist et al, 2016)



Unique Stress of Parental Incarceration for Children

- Trauma of Separation
- Ambiguous Loss
- Disenfranchised Grief
- Toxic Stress
- Economic Hardship
- Absence of Relevant Support
- Stigma and Shame
- Conspiracy of Silence
- Loyalty Conflicts





Cumulative STRESS of Parents' Criminal Justice System Involvement for Children

- Arrest: Fear, Confusion, Panic.
- Pre-Trial/Trial: Anxiety, Frustration.
- Sentencing: Hopelessness, Helplessness.
- Initial Incarceration: Abandonment, Stigma, Loyalty Conflict, Worry.
- Incarceration Stage 2: Resentment, Balance, Idealization.
- Pre-Release: Fear, Anxiety, Anticipation.
- Post-Release: Celebration, Ambivalence, Chaos.





Adverse Childhood Experiences

Growing up experiencing any of the following conditions in the household prior to age 18:

- Recurrent physical or emotional abuse or neglect.
- Sexual abuse.
- Alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household.
- Incarcerated household member.
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal.
- Mother is treated violently.
- One or no parents.



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Trauma and Toxic Stress: Impact on Brain Development

- Impulse Control
- Cause and Effect Thinking
- Predictability
- Emotional Regulation
- Reciprocal Engagement



These effects ,caused by increased levels of cortisol, can be lasting and lead to poor school performance, increased drop out rates, gang involvement, early pregnancies and drug use, abuse and addiction. The presence of parents and primary relationships decreases cortisol, raises dopamine and provides a buffer against the most damaging aspects of trauma and toxic stress.



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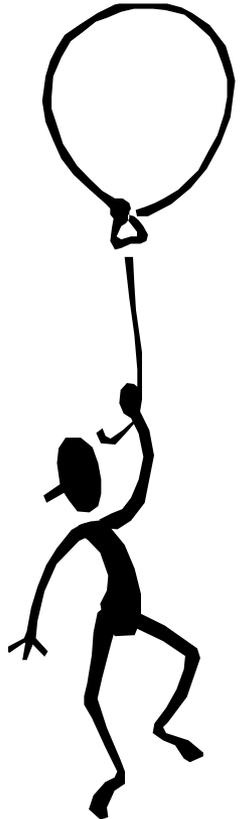
Children of the Incarcerated: Resilience and Protective Factors

*“Risk factors are not predictive factors
- because of protective factors.”*

David Satcher, M.D., Former U.S. Surgeon General

Protective Factors include:

- PARENTS and other Primary attachments.
- Other adult bonds.
- Skills - confidence.
- Emotional competence.
- Faith, hope, ability to find meaning.



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Promoting Reentry Success Strategies to Support Incarcerated Parents as Protective Factors

- **Promote Parental Identity**

(See Joyce Arditti 2012; Lynne Haney Forthcoming)

- Inclusion in School and Child Welfare case planning.
- Visiting contexts that support parent-child relationships.
- Visit support -before and after visits.

- **Promote Family Embeddedness**

(see Holly Foster 2010)

- Parenting Program Contexts relevant to reentry realities.
- Caregiver resources and connections.



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Preparing and Supporting Reentry: Stages of Adjustment

- **Honeymoon:** Everyone's at their best and trying to please but often there is anxiety under the surface.
- **Suspicion:** Once children are comfortable letting some of the negative feelings emerge, they often question their previously incarcerated parent's activities, roles, motives and most of all the permanence of their presence.
- **Resistance:** During this stage, children test the limits of the rules and with their actions ask the question "how bad can I be and will you still love me?"
- **Expression/Withholding:** Can I show my feelings and ask my questions or should I "stuff" them?





In the words of the experts: Formerly incarcerated fathers

- “I wasn’t prepared for my son’s anger. And it didn’t come out ‘til I got a job.”
- “My wife stuck by me, but she was set in the ways of parenting she took on when I was gone - and didn’t realize she was leaving me out or challenging my decisions.”
- “No-one understood how hard it was for me coming home because I thought I hadn’t changed at all, and was really hit hard by the fact that I had.”
- “I had to deal with how different my kids were, jump through all the hoops of parole, struggle with my own adjustment, and try to mend relationships I had destroyed. Sometimes it was overwhelming, but I was under a microscope.”





Homecoming: Advice from formerly incarcerated fathers

- Remember the stages of adjustment, but respect the parallel process for you compared to your family.
- Learn about your kids' feelings; talk to them before and after reentry.
- Tell the truth, or deal with the aftermath of the lies.
- Be prepared to have to adapt your expectations as a parent.
- Communicate with the other adults in your child's life.
- Learn to express concerns and hear constructive criticism.
- Be patient with yourself and your family.



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Program Service Variations

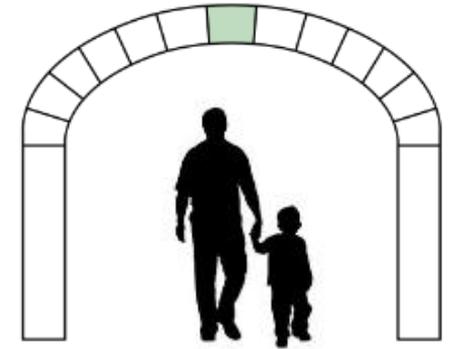
- **Purposeful:** Programs designed specifically for Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP).
- **Incidental:** Programs serving at risk children/youth that include COIP.
- **Universal:** Programs serving all children with COIP unknown.
- **Peripheral:** Programs serving incarcerated or returning parents/caregivers, with benefits for children.
- **Not Serving**





For Programs: ARCH

- **Attitude:**
Be self reflective.
- **Relevance:**
“Nothing about us without us.”
- **Complexity:**
Strive for comprehensive, collaborative initiatives.
- **Healing:**
Be trauma informed and responsive.





R NRCCFI at Rutgers Camden

- Disseminating accurate data.
- Training, inspiring, preparing and connecting those working in and around the field.
- Guiding family strengthening policy and practice.
- Including the families in defining the problem and designing solutions.

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Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration



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Overview of Friends Outside in Los Angeles County (FOLA)

- Brief History and Programs.
- Re-entry Fatherhood Programs since 2008.
 - Office of Family Assistance.
 - Dads Back! (2011).
 - Re-entry is broadly defined; most fathers are non-custodial; components were elective.
 - Successes - Job placements; reduce/freeze child support payments (inmates); increased contact.
 - Lessons Learned - Employment was primary need; marketing.
 - Dads Back! Academy (2016).
 - Cohort-based, intensive, immersion experience with supportive services and stipends.
 - South Los Angeles, a high-need/high-crime area.





Overview of Today's Presentation*

- Intake statistics - impacts of incarceration on children and families.
- Referral Strategies - data on why dads joined the program.
- Program Services - how we help dads focus on parenting, relationships, and employment services.
- Focus Group Responses - parenting, relationship, and employment.
- Program Examples - responding to needs of fathers and families.

* Based on data “snapshots” of what we’re seeing at this early stage from our federal data-reporting system and local evaluation.



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Intake Statistics



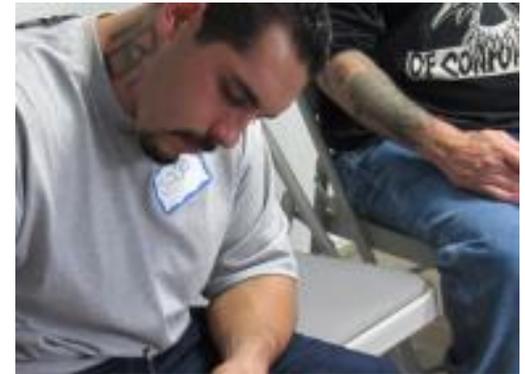
- 64 dads have enrolled to date (annual goal = 170).
- More than half are struggling to afford the cost of basic household necessities (food, clothing, housing, transportation, medical care).
 - 12% indicated they were *never* able to afford these.
 - 42% indicated they could *sometimes* afford them.
- Two-thirds are unable to do something with the family each week.
 - 36% indicated they *rarely* did something together.
 - 32% indicated they *never* did something together.





Referral Strategies

- Most of the dads heard about the program from staff, an event, or word-of-mouth (importance of reputation with targeted population and targeted community).
- The most common reason for enrolling was to *learn about being a better parent*.
- *Finding a better job and learning how to improve relationships* were also cited as important reasons for joining the program.





Program Services - Dads Back! Academy

- One month; Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 4:00.
- Case Management.
- Family Engagement Night (e.g., “Reading with Dad,” “Cooking with Dad”).
- Life Skills (e.g., Computer Basics; Personal Finance/Budgeting).
- Curricula: *TYRO Dad*, *Within My Reach*, *P2P* (“*Parole to Payroll*”).
- Alumni Support Groups; Alumni Council.





Strategies to Help Fathers Focus on Parenting, Relationships, and Employment

- Parenting (*TYRO Dad*)
 - 20-hour curriculum.
- Healthy Relationships (*Within My Reach*)
 - 10-hour curriculum.
- Employment (*FOLA's P2P*)
 - 20-hour curriculum focuses on the dads' needs as re-entry job-seekers; emphasis on “soft skills.”
 - After graduation, job specialist assists dads to access vocational training and employment.

Curricula are conducted throughout the Academy.

All curricula are evidence-based/evidence-informed.



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Focus Group Responses: Parenting (*TYRO Dad*)

What Have you Learned About Being a Dad?

- “I used to be known as a number, but now I'm known as a man. A man who gives respect, who loves and cares. A man who's grateful. A man of morals.”
- “It takes hard work to be a good dad.”
- “You're responsible to discipline your child, but without hitting them, and to communicate with them.”



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Focus Group Responses: Relationships (*Within My Reach*)

What Have You Learned About Healthy Relationships?

- “I was able to express thoughts and words which I have never done before.”
- “We come from lonely places where there’s no physical contact or friendship and we got together and broke that.”
- “Today was a wonderful day. It started off with laughter, handshakes, smiles. We are all a part of the crowd.”





Focus Group Responses: Employment (*P2P*)

What Have You Learned About Getting and Keeping a Job?

- “You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Dress for the job interview.”
- “I learned what to say about my criminal record on my resume and during a job interview.”





Program Examples: Responding to Needs of Fathers and Families

- Doing “mock interviews” was very helpful. (*Focus group data*)
- Learning how to budget and doing it in Excel was also noted by dads as very helpful. (*Focus group data*)
- Enhancing communication skills with their family. (*Staff shared*)
- Helping clients learn how to effectively cope with conflict. (*Staff shared*)
- Importance of providing linkages to additional resources. (*Staff shared*)





Parting Thoughts

- Importance of being non-judgmental and “real” with clients.
 - The bond you form with them is very important!
- They can be your most appreciative clients.
 - But do not underestimate where they are at the beginning of services in terms of their needs.
- Celebrate accomplishments, e.g., certificates.
- Incentives are very important.
- A cohort approach is a best practice.
- Hire them!





Supporting Fathers and Families Impacted by Incarceration



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T.O.R.I.

- The Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative (T.O.R.I.) is a program of the Metroplex Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded by Bishop TD Jakes to bridge the economic voids in urban America.
- After working inside prison walls delivering messages of hope and inspiration to inmates across the world, Bishop Jakes recognized the need for reentry assistance for inmates returning home to their communities.
- Bishop Jakes convened professionals attending his church (including judges, lawyers, social workers, counselors, and business people) to form a team of talented people who could commit to helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society.





T.O.R.I.

- Mission - guide and empower ex-offenders to:
 - Maximize their potential.
 - Increase their opportunities for successful reintegration into society.
 - Become productive citizens of their communities.
- T.O.R.I. began offering services in January 2005.
- Over the past 10 years, we have served over 10,000 formerly incarcerated individuals across Texas.



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Basic Human Needs

'Ladder of Needs'

Spiritual needs

- Purpose
- Creativity
- Growth
- Morality
- Contribution
- Spontaneity
- Support
- Acceptance

Mental needs

- Career
- Confidence
- Money
- Problem-solving
- Success
- Power
- Respect

Emotional needs

- Happiness
- Empathy
- Love
- Freedom
- Belonging
- Trust

Physical needs

- Breathing
- Home
- Water
- Movement
- Food
- Rest
- Space
- Sex

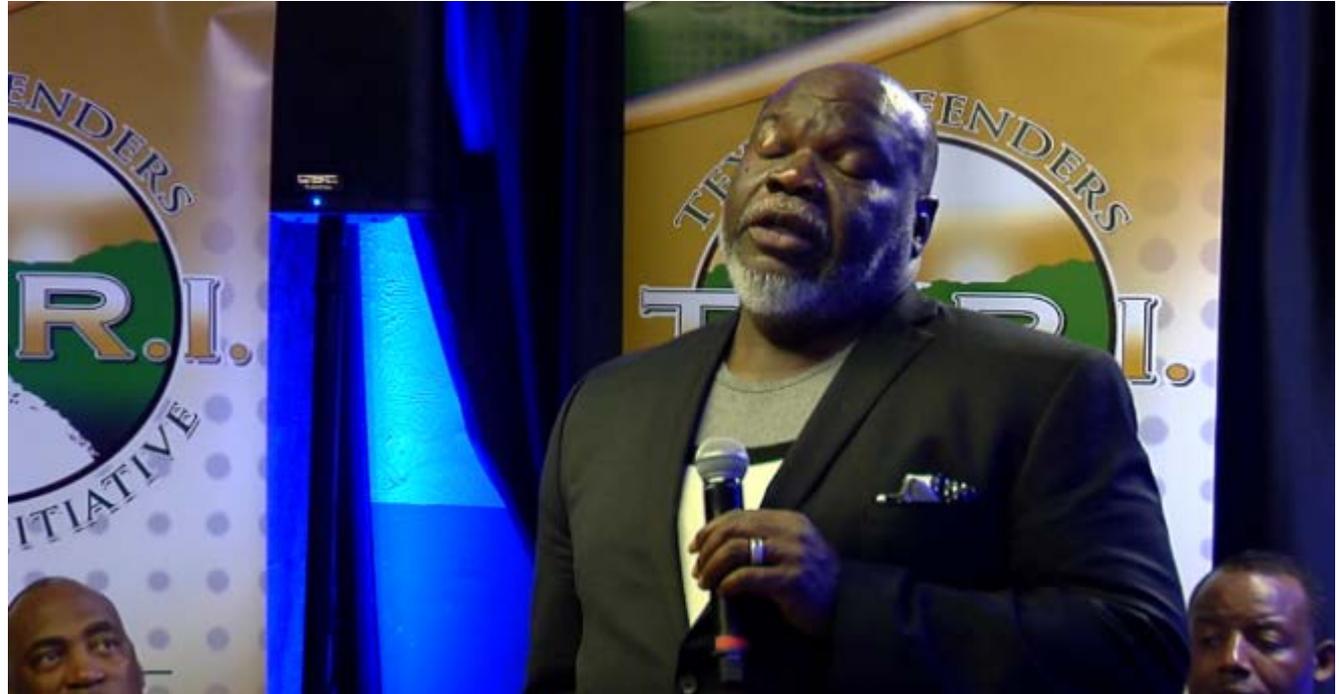


Mixed Reach ladder





Children with Incarcerated Parents



- The incarcerated parent is absent from the home and child's life. "1 in 28 children in the U.S. have an incarcerated parent on any given day." (The Osborne Association).
- The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) reported in 2008, that 70% of children with an incarcerated parent are likely to be imprisoned themselves at some point in their lifetime.





The Impact of Father Absence

- **Juvenile Detention Rates:**
 - 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (Kirchhoff, 2010).
 - Boys who grow up with fathers absent are twice as likely to be incarcerated as their counterparts with fathers (Parker, 2004).
- **Suicide:** 63% of youth who commit suicide are from fatherless homes (Kirchhoff, 2010).
- **Behavioral Disorders:** 85% of youth who exhibit behavioral disorders are from fatherless homes (Kirchhoff, 2010).
- **Educational Attainment:**
 - 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (Kirchhoff, 2010).
 - Children living in single-parent homes report lower educational expectations from their parents, less parental monitoring of school work, and less overall social supervision than children from father present families (Astora, McLanahan, 1991).





Family Strengthening Programs

- Visher and Travis (2003) found that family involvement in post-release programming is associated with:
 - Decreased drug use.
 - Fewer physical and emotional problems.
 - Decreased recidivism among fathers.
- Types of programs available for returning prisoners and their families include:
 - Diversion programs to help fathers pay child support.
 - Faith-based programs that connect fathers to services on release.
 - Support groups for fathers' partners.
 - Mentoring programs to support children of incarcerated fathers.
 - Services that address more basic needs such as housing, food, and employment.
- Crossover between these efforts is needed to best support couples and families after fathers return to the community (Bauer et al., 2007).





Family Strengthening Programs (Communication Tool)

KLLP™

The KLLP is a communication instrument tool that reveals communication style, character, passions, and effectiveness.

It can:

- Improve Communication
- Develop Character
- Enhance Relationships
- Increase Effectiveness
- Enhance Success



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Impacting Generations

- Parenting Classes
- Father's Day Breakfast
- Community Block Parties
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- Angel Tree
- Mentorship





Family Reunification



- Children's Impact on Parents Who Have Been Incarcerated
- Fostering Family Communication and Support
- Meeting the Family's Practical Needs



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#DadLifeProject

- Last year T.O.R.I. was fortunate to be chosen as 1 of 7 recipients across the country to receive the OJJDP Second Chance Act Strengthening Relationships Between Young Fathers and Their Children Grant.
- As a recipient of this Federal Award, T.O.R.I. will provide pre-release and post-release mentoring and reentry services to young fathers between the ages of 18 and 24 for two years.



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Contact:

NRFC:

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- Please send your comments/questions, suggestions for future webinar topics, and any information or resources that you recommend we share with others.

Today's presenters:

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