

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly – July 2013

Six Degrees of Separation

Do you know someone who is incarcerated? My guess is, that though you might not be able to come up with a name off the top of your head, if you employed the "six degrees of separation" theory it probably wouldn't take long for you to come up with a name. The "six degrees of separation" concept which posits that any two people on earth are at the very least, six common acquaintances away from one another.

So think about it again. Do you know someone who knows someone who's incarcerated? Or do you know someone who knows someone who knows someone who's incarcerated? Chances are you won't have to go to all 6 degrees to realize that you're connected, if not directly, at least by a few degrees of acquaintance, to someone who's incarcerated.

Now, do you know if this incarcerated adult you know has children? Chances are good that he or she does. In fact, about 61% of women and 53% of men who are incarcerated in the U.S. are parents (Maruschak, Glaze, & Mumola, 2010). Put another way, in the U.S. in 2007, over 1.75 million children under the age of 18 had a parent in a state or federal prison (Maruschak et al., 2010). In fact, more children have an incarcerated parent than are diagnosed with autism or juvenile diabetes. Furthermore, an estimated 1 in 15 black children in the U.S. have a parent who is incarcerated (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008).

Despite the shockingly high prevalence of parental incarceration, children of incarcerated parents remain largely unidentified and invisible. However, we know that these children are at higher risk for behavior problems, cognitive problems, and delays in school (Eddy & Poehlmann, 2010). Furthermore, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study indicates that individuals who had an incarcerated parent, in conjunction with other adverse experiences as children, are at higher risk for many health problems later in life including depression, substance abuse, and suicide attempts (Felitti et al., 1998). Despite the staggering numbers of children who experience parental incarceration and the disturbing increase of risk factors in these children, this issue has not received much attention from policymakers, practitioners, researchers or even the general public.

So what can you do?

Chances are that many of you who are reading this have met or worked with kids and families who are facing the struggles inherent with parental incarceration, but maybe you don't even know it. So how do you know that you're working with a family struggling with this issue? What are the resources available to you and these families? Where can you learn more about the research about kids of incarcerated parents?

Learn more: Check out CYFC's recent eReview on [Children of Incarcerated Parents](#) which summarizes emerging research and practice strategies, and addresses implications for policy and practice.

Join the conversation: Attend CYFC's upcoming [Lessons from the Field](#) on November 14th, 2013 where researchers and practitioners will discuss many of the complex factors in understanding and working with

children of incarcerated parents, and provide ideas for how you can help.

Tell me how to get to Sesame Street: Check out Sesame Workshop's new materials entitled [Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration](#), a bilingual (English/Spanish) multimedia initiative that provides resources to support and comfort children throughout their parents' incarceration. Find the materials online via the link above. Minnesota professionals, if you'd like to receive FREE Sesame Workshop resource kits (with DVD, a guide for parents/caregivers, and a children's storybook) to provide to the families that you work with, fill out this [form](#).

Stay up to date with what's happening in Minnesota: Follow the [Isis Rising Prison Doula Program Blog](#) to find resources, news, and other information about the topic of parental incarceration in Minnesota. Learn more about Isis Rising, an innovative prison doula program in Minnesota for incarcerated pregnant women and new moms.

Use your "six degrees" for good. Spread the word. The more people who are aware of this issue, the more attention it receives, the more things will change. Tell someone you know to tell someone they know about these invisible children. Together we can make them visible.

Sara Langworthy, Ph.D.
Policy Lead

Consortium News

Save the date for Fall Lessons from the Field!

September 19, 2013

Lessening the Impact of Secondary Trauma

November 14, 2013

Children of Incarcerated Parents: Impact & Interventions

[More information to follow!](#)

Children with Incarcerated Parents – Considering Children's Outcomes in the Context of Complex Family Experiences

Children's Mental Health eReview

The Children's Mental Health eReview summarizes children's mental health research and implications for practice and policy. In this issue, learn about children of incarcerated parents, who are often overlooked in our schools, clinics and social service settings. You'll also learn about some new programs focused on improving the lives of children of incarcerated parents and their families. [Children with Incarcerated parents — Considering Children's Outcomes in the Context of Complex Family Experiences](#) is now available! [Evaluate](#) this issue.

Children, Youth & Family Consortium has a new website!

[Visit us at www.extension.umn.edu/family/cyfc](http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/cyfc)

University & Community Announcements

What makes mother-daughter relationships so challenging, especially as girls approach adolescence?

momenough Podcast

[Listen to a conversation](#) with Psychologist and author Roni Cohen-Sandler as she explores some of the reasons for mother-daughter relationship tension and gives strategies for ensuring that your relationship survives and thrives through the teen years.

2014 Continuing Education Call for Proposals

[Minnesota Psychological Association](#) (MPA)

The MPA is accepting proposals [link no longer active] for presentations during 2014 for their Friday Forums focused on clinical practice issues as well as full-day conferences and special programs. The audience includes MPA members and other mental health practitioners. All program proposals are welcome but the Committee is looking more specifically for research-based treatment, clinical issues throughout the lifespan, health care reform and diversity.

Teens and Sleep Conference

University of Minnesota

Dates: October 3-4, 2013

Location: Double Tree By Hilton

Cost: \$195

[Hear the latest research](#) on teens and sleep and discuss how to change practice and take action to influence public policy. The audience for this conference includes pediatric providers, school district leaders, educators, social service providers, school counselors, legislators, policy-makers and parents.

Job Opportunities

[Executive Director — myHealth for Teens and Young Adults](#)

[Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator \(Senior Public Health Specialist — Youth Development\) — City of Minneapolis](#)

Executive Director, Center for Integrative Leadership — University of Minnesota

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