

Resources

1. Books for Children and their Caregivers

The following books are written to help children understand the experience of having a mother or father in prison or jail. When a parent, counselor or caregiver reads with a child, it can create the opportunity to talk more about the child's feelings, helping them process and cope.

What Will Happen to Me?

By Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz (2011). In their own words, children describe the experience of having an incarcerated parent. These portraits and stories offer other children insights into their own situation and the reassurance that they are not alone. Includes information for caregivers on supporting children throughout a parent's incarceration.

The Night Dad Went To Jail

By Melissa Higgins (2012). Ages 3-8. What to expect when someone you love goes to jail. A very useful book that depicts and explains the events, including the arrest. Dogs, cats, and mice are the characters. In this story, the father has a 6 year sentence.

Kofi's Mom

By Richard Dyches (2011). Ages 3-6. The story of a young boy whose mom is sent to prison. Explores feelings of loss and confusion. He begins to talk to friends at school about his mom and finds out he's not the only one.

Doogie's Dad

By Richard Dyches (2011). Ages 4-7. The story of a young boy and his sister whose father is sent to prison. Explores their feelings of loss, fear and frustration at not being told what's going on until their mom finally takes them to see their dad.

Visiting Day

By Jacqueline Woodson (2002). The experience of a young girl and her grandmother who take the bus to visit her father in prison. With tenderly rendered prose and illustrations, the book offers comfort to children, especially as they deal with the sadness that follows a visit.

Mama Loves Me from Away

By Pat Brisson (2004). Heartbreaking yet loving example of a mother and a child separated by a prison, and how they stay connected with stories.

My Daddy's in Jail

By Anthony Curcio (2015). Written by a formerly incarcerated father, a story of two bears whose dad is in prison, narrated by a friendly cockroach who breaks a law and goes to prison himself for a little while, and comes to the conclusion that "These animals are good, for goodness sakes! Sometimes good animals just make bad mistakes!" At the end, there is a photo of the author with his two daughters, and readers learn this is a true story.

When Dad was Away

By Liz Weir and Karin Littlewood (2012). A story for young children, shows how one family comes through the difficult time of separation when dad is sent to prison. Depicts visiting in prison, even at Christmas time.

Nine Candles

By Maria Testa (1996). Every Sunday a child travels with his dad to visit his mom in prison. This Sunday is special because it is his 7th birthday; he celebrates in prison with his mom and looks forward to his 9th birthday when she will be home.

Amber was Brave, Essie was Smart

By Vera B. Williams (2001). A heartwarming story told in poems and pictures about two sisters and how they take care of each other when dad goes to prison and mom is working all the time. Together they can do anything.

Knock Knock: my dad's dream for me

By Daniel Beaty (2013). The author's father was his principal caregiver until the boy was three and his father became incarcerated. A powerful and inspiring book showing the love that an absent parent can leave behind, and the strength that children find in themselves as they grow up and follow their dreams.

2. Books that are not specifically about incarceration, but address relevant themes

The Invisible String

By Patrice Karst (2000). A simple story that reminds children and adults that people who love each other are always connected by a very special string. Specifically written to calm a child's fear of being separated from a parent.

How to Mend a Broken Wing

By Bob Graham (2008). A small boy finds an injured bird and stops to help. An urban fable, told mostly in pictures, about a broken wing, caring and patience, hope and healing.

A Terrible Thing Happened

By Margaret Holmes (2000). This gently told and tenderly illustrated story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode. An afterword for parents or caregivers offers extensive suggestions for helping traumatized children.

Healing Days

By Susan Farber Straus (2013). A useful guide for children who have experienced trauma. To be read with a parent or therapist, helps children understand they are not to blame, and that they can get help, and look forward to a happy future.

3. Books that provide guidance and resources for teachers, care providers, counselors

My Daddy is in Jail

By Janet Bender (2008). Helping children, K through 5, to cope with the incarceration of a loved one. It includes a read-aloud story, discussion guide and optional small group counseling activities.

Empowering Children of Incarcerated Parents

By Stacey Burgess, Tonia Caselman and Jennifer Carsey (2014). For children in grades 2-6, a workbook for counselors, social workers, psychologists and teachers. Can be used with students individually or in small groups.

Two in Every Hundred

By Richard Dyches, Ph.D. (2011). A workbook with exercises designed to be conversation starters to facilitate kids talking about their concerns and feelings.

All Alone in the World

By Nell Bernstein (2005). In-depth discussion of the effects of parental incarcerations. Award-winning journalist takes an intimate look at parents and children at all stages of the criminal justice process as they are affected by US incarceration policy.

4. Videos for children and caregivers

Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration

A Sesame Street program, with videos for the kids to watch, materials to read, and worksheets that can be printed on your home printer. In addition to materials for children, there are also materials for parents and caregivers.

See: WWW.SESAMESTREET.ORG/PARENTS/TOPICSANDACTIVITIES/TOOLKITS/INCARCERATION

Echoes of Incarceration

An award-winning documentary initiative produced by youth with incarcerated parents. The project explores the issue of mass incarceration and its effects on families, and creates documentary films told from the life experiences of the filmmakers themselves.

See: [HTTP://ECHOESOFINCARCERATION.ORG](http://ECHOESOFINCARCERATION.ORG)

See Us/ Support Us

The Osborne Association is a national organization with 80-years' experience working with currently and formerly incarcerated men, women, and children and families affected by the incarceration of a loved one. Their website is worth exploring for the wealth of resources available; in the "See Us / Support Us" section are some excellent videos.

See: WWW.OSBORNENY.ORG

5. Children of Incarcerated Parents Library

The CIPL is an online library maintained by *The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated* (Rutgers University – Camden). Information sheets designed for people serving children of prisoners and their caregivers, available free online.

Duplication is permitted and encouraged, so long as the materials are not altered or sold.

Copied below is the index to this excellent resource library.

See: [HTTP://NRCCFI.CAMDEN.RUTGERS.EDU](http://NRCCFI.CAMDEN.RUTGERS.EDU)

Facts and Issues

- 101: Introduction to Children Incarcerated Parents
- 102: Why Maintain Relationships?
- 103: Conversations – Questions Children Ask
- 104: Risk and Protection
- 105: Visiting Mom or Dad
- 106: Jail and Prison Procedures
- 107: Communication Tips for Families

Materials For Caregivers

- 201: Caring for Children of Incarcerated Parents
- 202: Questions from Caregivers
- 203: What Do Children of Incarcerated Parents Need?
- 204: Tips from Caregivers for Caregivers

Materials for Health Care Providers

- 301: Impact of Parental Incarceration
- 302: Challenges for Health Care Providers
- 303: Common Stress Points
- 304: Different Children/Behaviors
- 305: Strategies for Intervention
- 306: Tips for Fostering Trust & Safety
- 307: The Caregiver's Situation