



## Mass Parental Incarceration & Sentencing Reform in Minnesota

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### Consequences to the Child

- Parental incarceration is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), which are known to affect well-being into adulthood.<sup>1</sup>
- **Mental Health**
  - Increased risk of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety,<sup>2</sup> internalizing symptoms, self-injury, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts<sup>3</sup>
  - Increased risk of internalizing and antisocial problems<sup>4</sup>
- **Delinquency, Criminality, and Criminal Justice Contact**
  - Increased physical aggression, increased attention problems, increased risk of arrest, increased behavioral problems and school punishments, increased rule breaking, and other behavioral problems<sup>5</sup>
  - Increased risk of delinquent behavior, arrest, adult probation placement, and criminal conviction<sup>6</sup>
  - More reported violence, anger, and rule violations than other incarcerated individuals<sup>7</sup>
- **Substance Abuse and High-Risk Behaviors**
  - Increased odds of substance-abuse issues in young adults with experiences of parental incarceration, including cigarette smoking, alcohol abuse and prescription drug abuse<sup>8</sup>
  - Maternal incarceration is associated with high-risk behaviors including having sex in exchange for money<sup>9</sup>
- **Physical Health**
  - Recent parental incarceration is associated with a nearly 50% increase in early infant mortality<sup>10</sup>
  - Increased risk of high cholesterol, asthma, migraines, HIV/AIDS, and poor health,<sup>11</sup> obesogenic behaviors, drinking sugary drinks, smoking cigarettes, and having 10 or more sexual partners<sup>12</sup>
- **Health-Care Access**
  - Doubled likelihood of children utilizing emergency room services rather than primary care<sup>13</sup>
  - Increased risk of forgoing health care overall<sup>14</sup>
- **Educational Readiness & Attainment**
  - One in three adults in the United States with less than a high school degree have experienced parental incarceration.<sup>15</sup>
  - Decreased educational attainment in emerging adulthood, as well as significantly lower GPAs, lower levels of education achieved, and lower levels of college completion<sup>16</sup>
  - More grade retention and high school dropout<sup>17</sup>
  - Greater unhappiness in school than peers<sup>18</sup>
- **Economic Hardship**
  - Parents who were incarcerated during their children's youth have less education, fewer work hours, lower incomes, lower socioeconomic status, and receive more government assistance. Thus, children have less family social advantages than their peers.<sup>19</sup>
- **Displacement**
  - Increased risk of experiencing homelessness in childhood and adulthood,<sup>20</sup> and increased risk of foster-care placement<sup>21</sup>

## CITATIONS

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- <sup>9</sup> Nia Heard-Garris et al., *Health Care Use and Health Behaviors Among Young Adults With History of Parental Incarceration*, 142 PEDIATRICS e20174314 (2018), <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/142/3/e20174314/38619/Health-Care-Use-and-Health-Behaviors-Among-Young>.
- <sup>10</sup> WAKEFIELD & CHRISTOPHER WILDEMAN, CHILDREN OF THE PRISON BOOM: MASS INCARCERATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INEQUALITY (2014).
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- <sup>12</sup> Heard-Garris, *supra* note 8.
- <sup>13</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>14</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>15</sup> Peter K. Enns et al., *What Percentage of Americans Have Ever Had a Family Member Incarcerated?: Evidence from the Family History of Incarceration Survey (FamHIS)*, 5 SOCIUS: SOC. RES. DYNAMIC WORLD 1–45 (2019).
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