



PARENTAL INCARCERATION: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROMISING PRACTICES FOR FAMILY CONNECTION



Presenter: Dr. Hilary Cuthrell

AGENDA



Introductions

Learning Objectives

Terms

Populations

Children of Incarcerated Parents

Families & Research

Correctional Facilities & Practices

Final Thoughts

Questions & Discussion

INTRODUCTIONS



NAME

AGENCY

POSITION/TITLE



Please type your responses in the chat!

BRIEF INTRODUCTION: DR. HILARY CUTHRELL



DePaul University–Chicago

- NIDA Study Reentry and Reunification

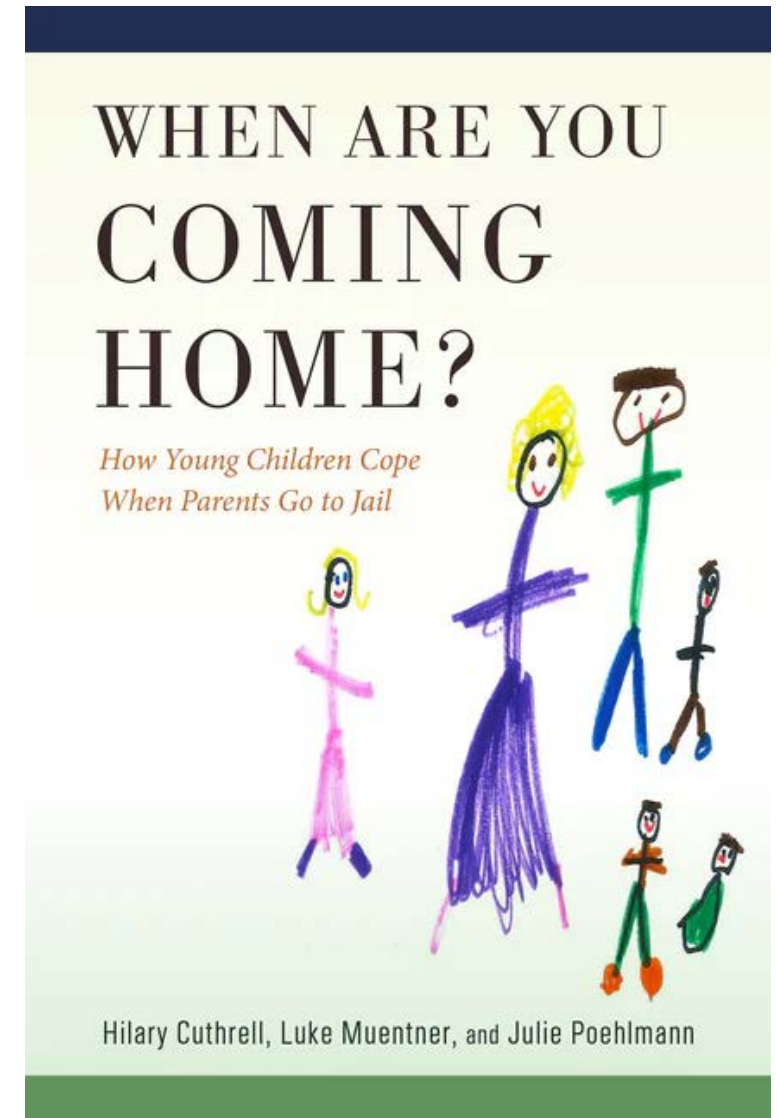
University of Wisconsin–Madison

- NIH Young Children of Incarcerated Parents
- Sesame Street Materials Evaluation

Family Strengthening Project Federal Bureau of Prisons–National
Institute of Corrections

Published “When Are You Coming Home?”

Currently: Child Friendly Family Visiting Spaces in Prisons & Jails
Project Manager/ Technical Assistance Provider

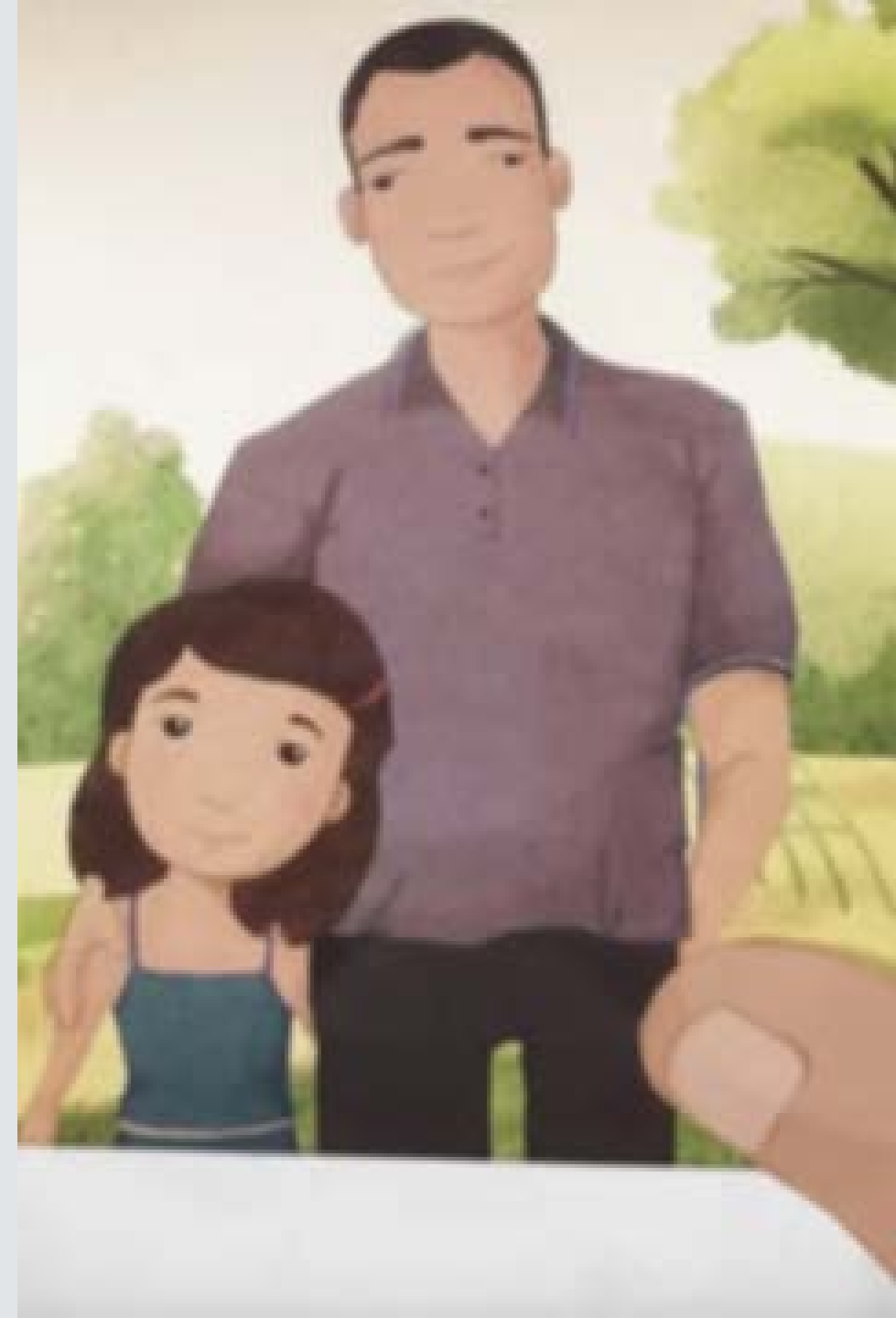


LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this training, you should be able to...



- * Describe incarcerated populations and research centered on children of incarcerated parents
- * Share ethical considerations when working with minor children of incarcerated parents.
- * Recall emerging trends in family-centered approaches to correctional policies and procedures.
- * Describe different insights centered on families entangled in the criminal legal system from the perspectives of families, correctional staff and community partners.



Points of Discussion



Population
Description

Children of
Incarcerated Parents

Families & Research

Correctional Facilities

Terms: Jail & Prison



Population

- *Offence*
- *Sentence*

Security

Programing

Facility Location

The terms jail and prison are often used interchangeably. However, jails and prisons are different in many ways!

Terms: Probation & Parole

Probation refers to adult offenders whom courts place on supervision in the community through a probation agency, generally in lieu of incarceration

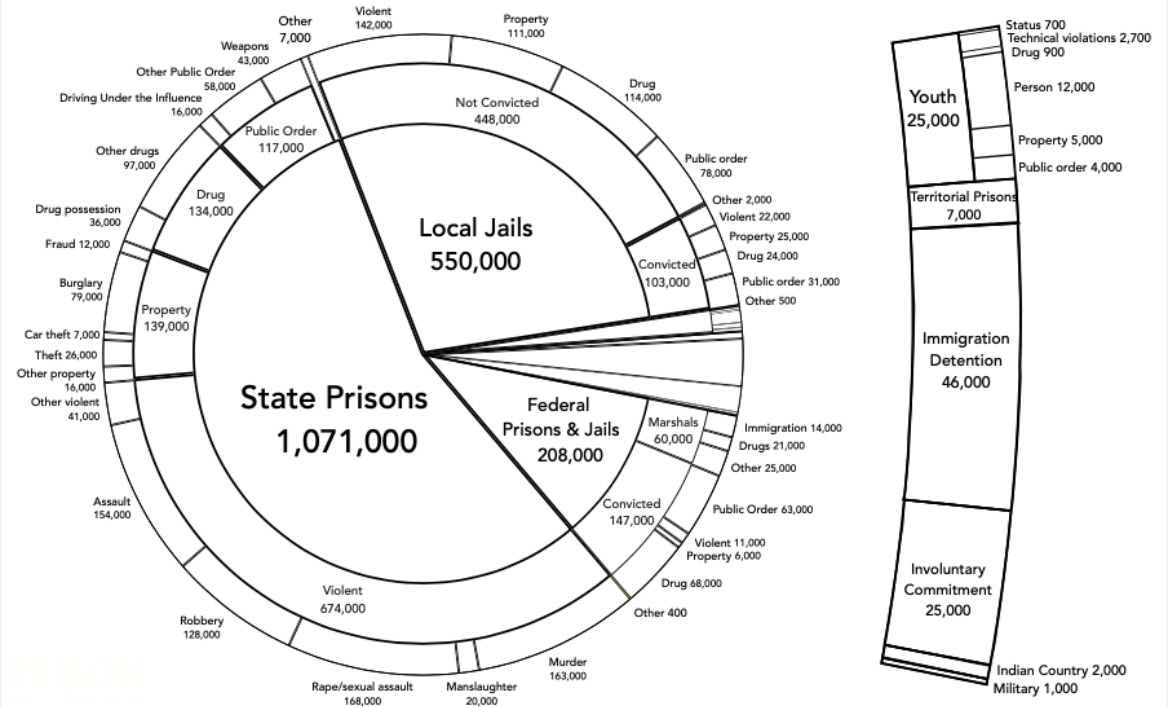
Parole refers to criminal offenders who are conditionally released from prison to serve the remaining portion of their sentence in the community

POPULATION: US INCARCERATION RATES



How many people are locked up in the United States?

The U.S. locks up more people per capita than any other nation, at the staggering rate of 583 per 100,000 residents. But to end mass incarceration, we must first consider where and why 1.9 million people are confined nationwide.



JAIL “CHURINING”



In a typical year, about 600,000 people enter *prison* gates, but people go to *jail* over 10 million times each year

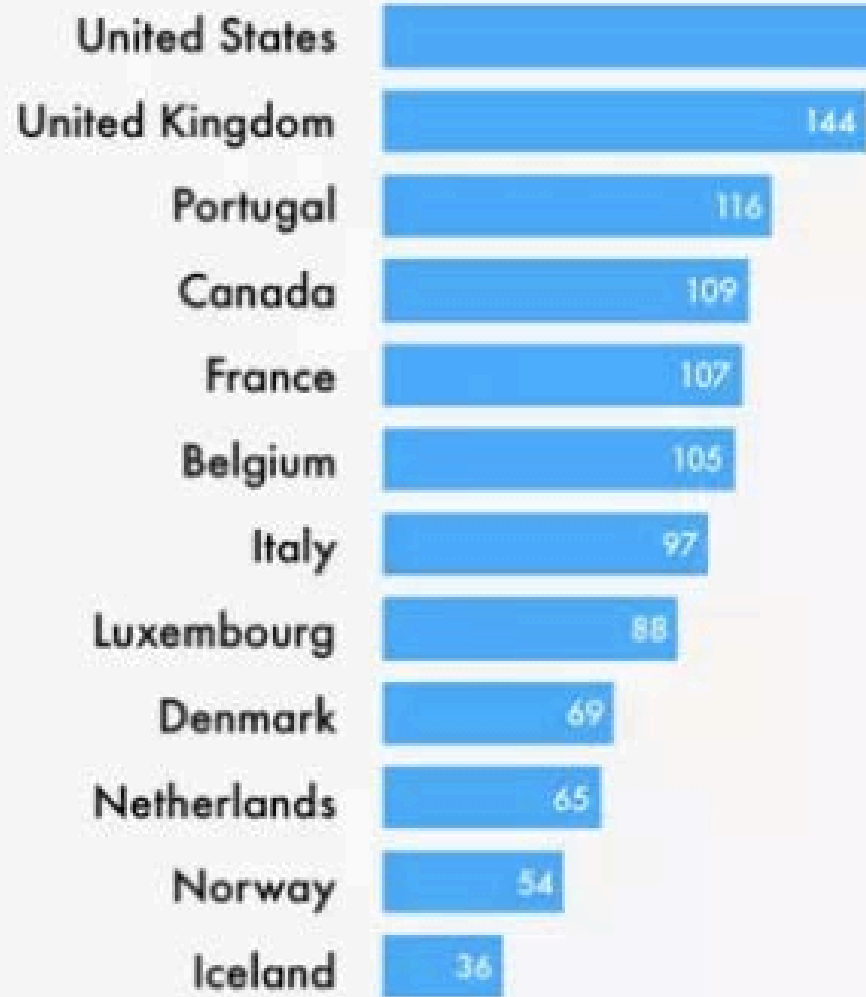
At least 1 in 4 people who go to jail will be arrested again within the same year — often those dealing with poverty, mental illness, and substance use disorders, whose problems only worsen with incarceration

(Sawyer & Wagner, 2022)



INCARCERATION RATES

AMONG FOUNDING NATO COUNTRIES



Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

POPULATION:
GLOBAL INCARCERATION RATES

POP QUIZ!



HOW MANY INDIVIDUALS
ARE INCARCERATED IN
OKLAHOMA?

ARE THERE MORE
INDIVIDUALS
INCARCERATED IN
PRISON FACILITIES OR JAIL
FACILITIES IN OKLAHOMA?

Please type your responses in the chat!

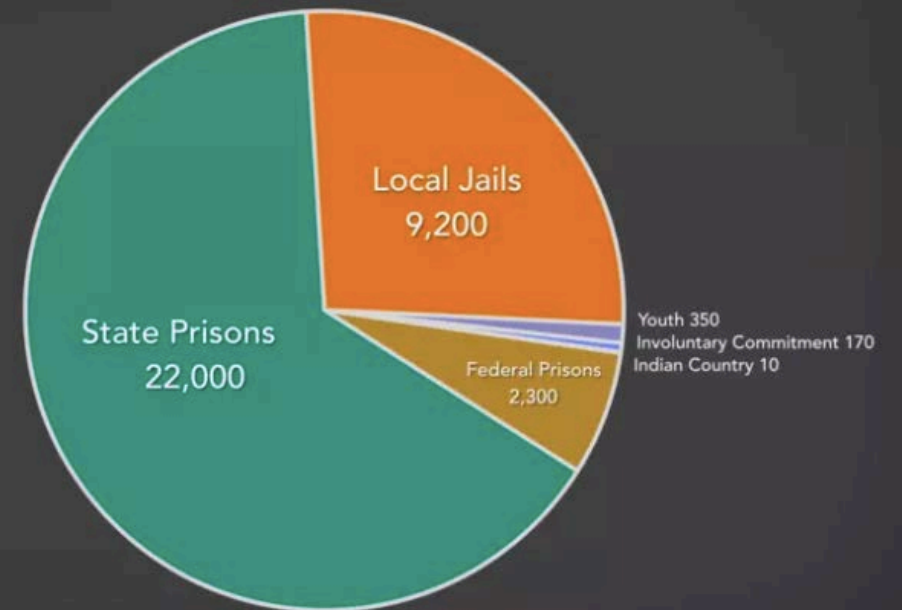
POPULATION:
OKLAHOMA
INCARCERATION
RATES



Answer: 34,000 of
Oklahoma's residents are
incarcerated.

How many Oklahoma residents are locked up and where?

34,000 of Oklahoma's residents are locked up in various kinds of facilities



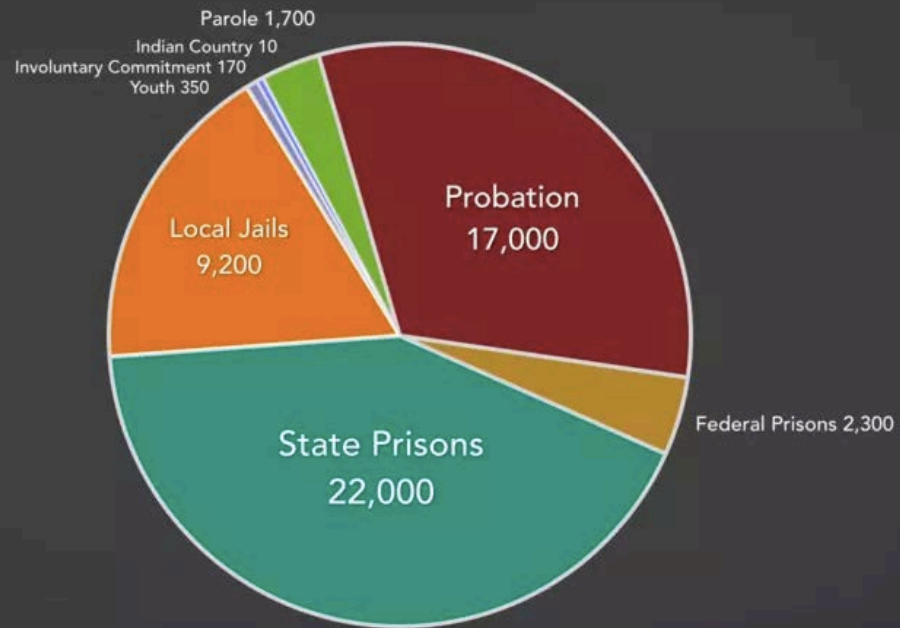
PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Details may not add to total due to rounding.

Sources and data notes: See www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2023.html

How many people are in Oklahoma's criminal legal system?

53,000 Oklahoma residents are behind bars or under community supervision.



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Details may not add to total due to rounding.

Sources and data notes: See www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2023.html

POPULATION: OKLAHOMA CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

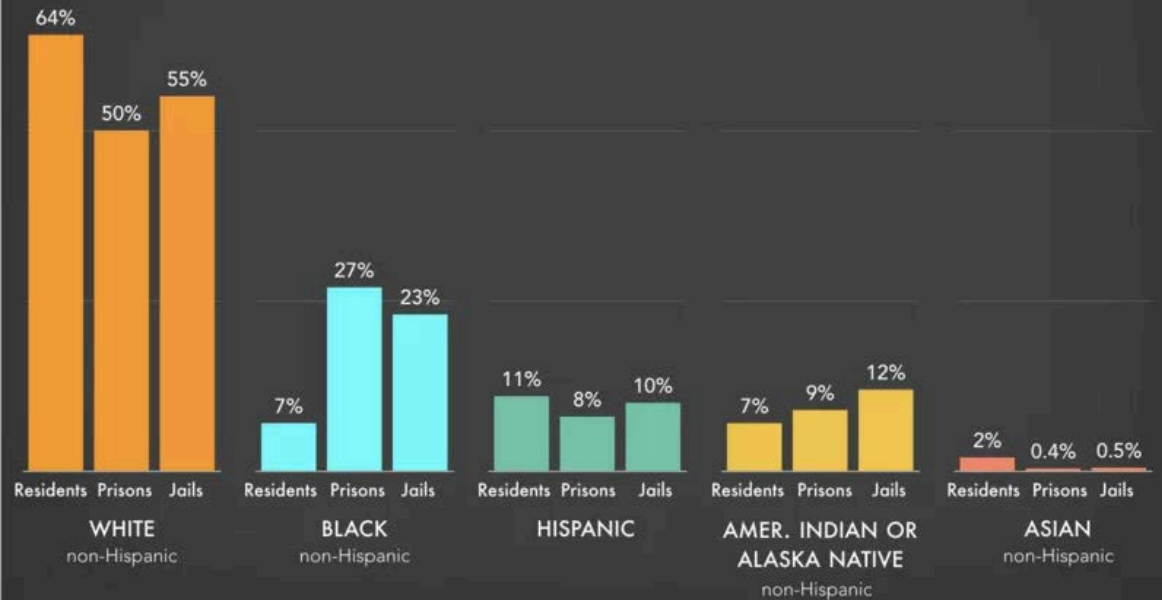


POPULATION: OKLAHOMA RESIDENT & INCARCERATED POPULATIONS



Comparing Oklahoma's resident and incarcerated populations

Percentage of state residents, by race or ethnicity, compared to the percentage of people in the state's prisons in 2021 and in local jails in 2019, by race or ethnicity. Compared to the total state population, Black and Native people are overrepresented in the incarcerated population, while white and Asian people are underrepresented.



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau data. For sourcing details and dataset, including race definitions and categories not displayed above, see: www.prisonpolicy.org/data/race_bystate_2021.xlsx.

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

INCARCERATION RATES

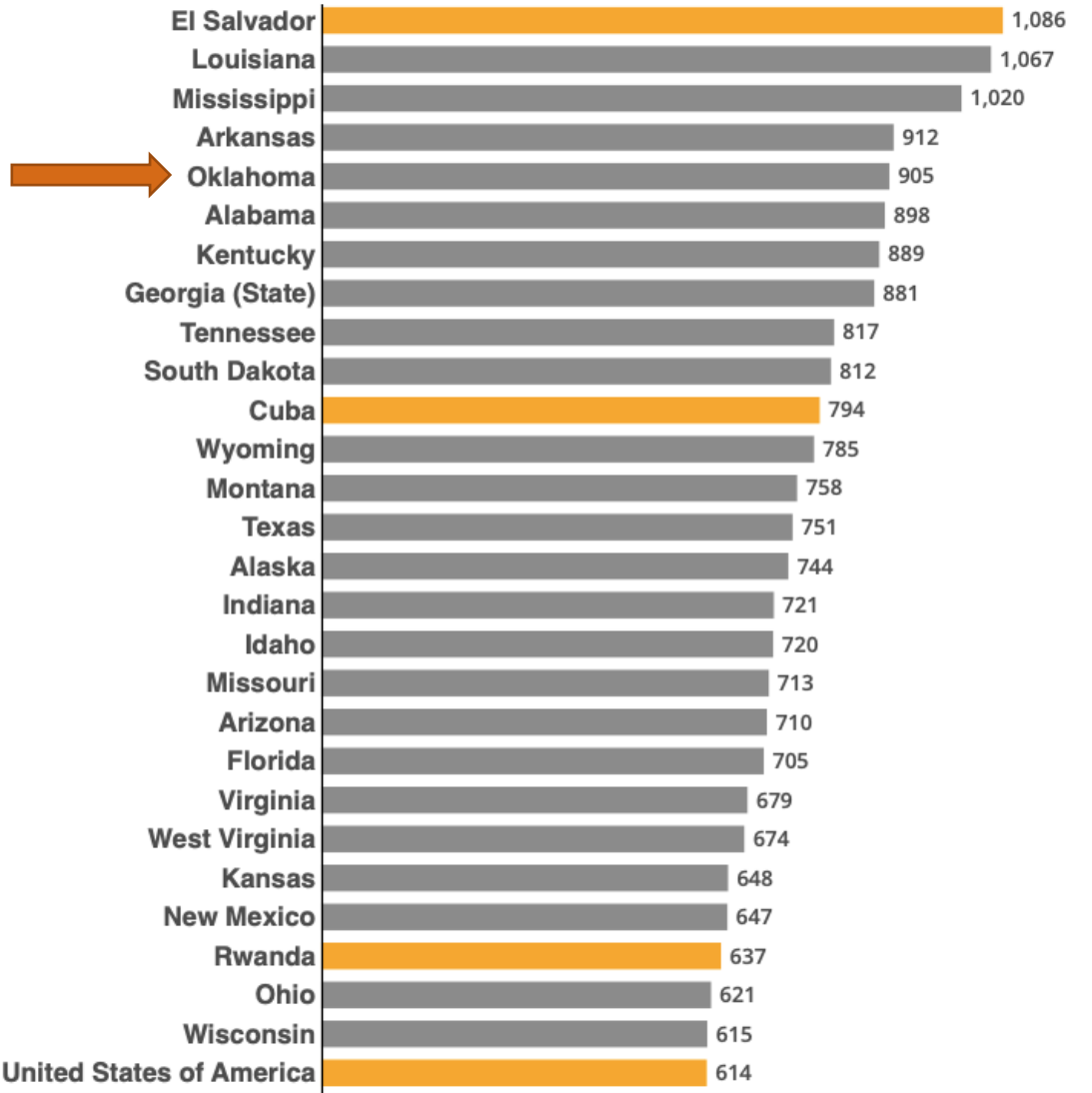
COMPARING OKLAHOMA
AND FOUNDING NATO COUNTRIES



Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

POPULATION:
OKLAHOMA & GLOBAL INCARCERATION RATES

POPULATION RATES



CHECK-IN



Did any of the statistics surprise you?

What are your thoughts and/or feelings about the statistics?

Please type your responses in the chat!

Points of Discussion



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POP QUIZ!

How many US children
currently have a parent
incarcerated in a jail or prison?

Please type your responses in the chat!



POPULATION: CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS



Over 5 million children have experienced parental incarceration *at some point in their life*



2.7 million children have an incarcerated parent. That's 1 in 28 US children!



Half of the children are under the age of 10 years old



How does this impact differ per race/ethnicity?

1 in 9 black children

1 in 28 Hispanic children

1 in 57 white children



Ethical Considerations

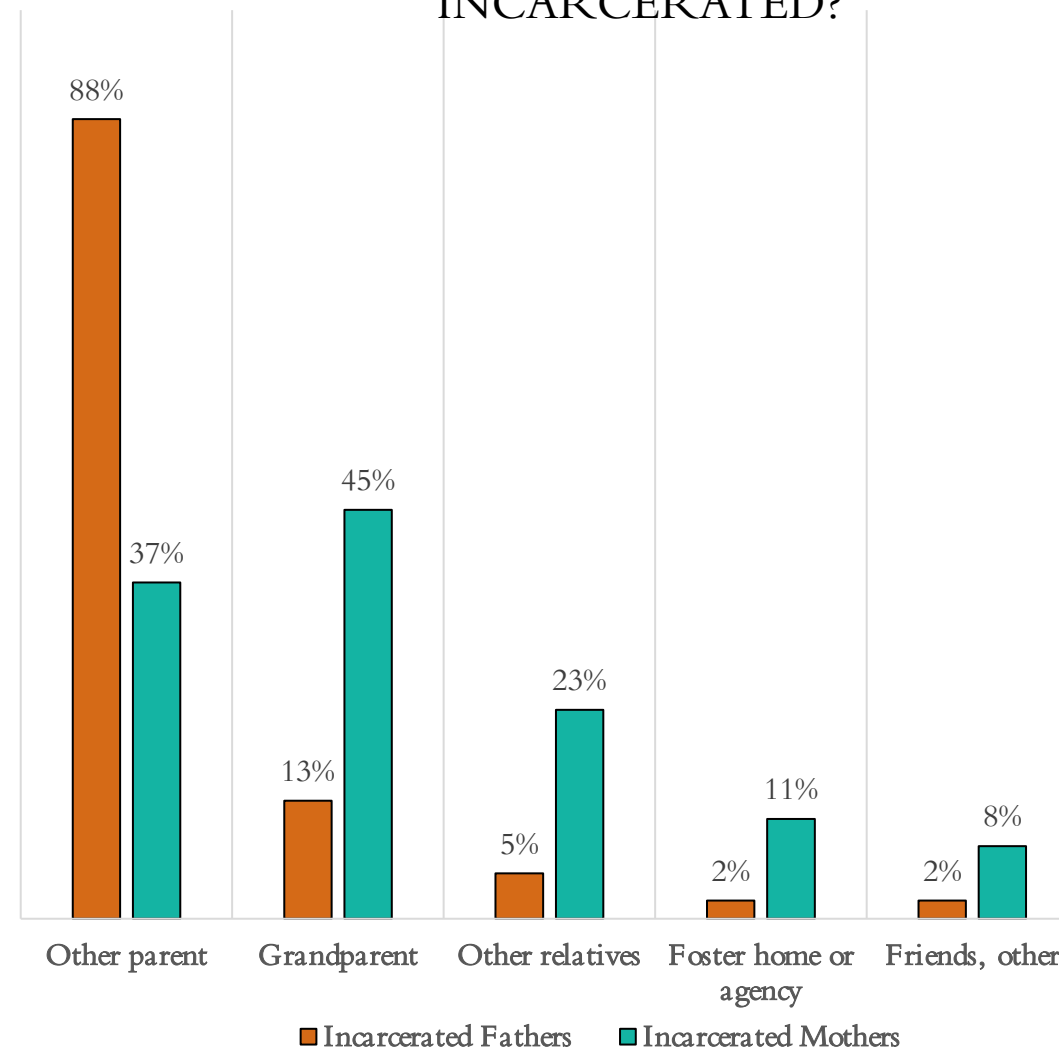


But wait! We do not know how many children are affected by parental incarceration. The figures we have are only estimates!

CAREGIVING DURING PARENTAL INCARCERATION



WHO CARES FOR CHILDREN WHEN THEIR PARENT IS INCARCERATED?



Caregiving During Parental Incarceration



Caregiving children during a time of parental incarceration can be a very difficult role

Life course shift
★especially for grandparents

Economic hardship

Mental health issues

Housing instability
(transitions/doubling up/homelessness)

Informal kinship vs.
formal kinship

Uncertainty regarding incarceration
(charges/location/release)

Planning for parent's release



PARENTAL INCARCERATION: DISCLOSURE



Ethical Consideration: how and when should a parent or caregiver disclose to a child their parent is incarcerated?

PARENTAL INCARCERATION: CODE OF SILENCE



How might a parent or caregiver
explain incarceration a young child?



Children can have many feelings about their parent's release stemming from...



Witnessing their parent's arrest

Having negative visitation experiences

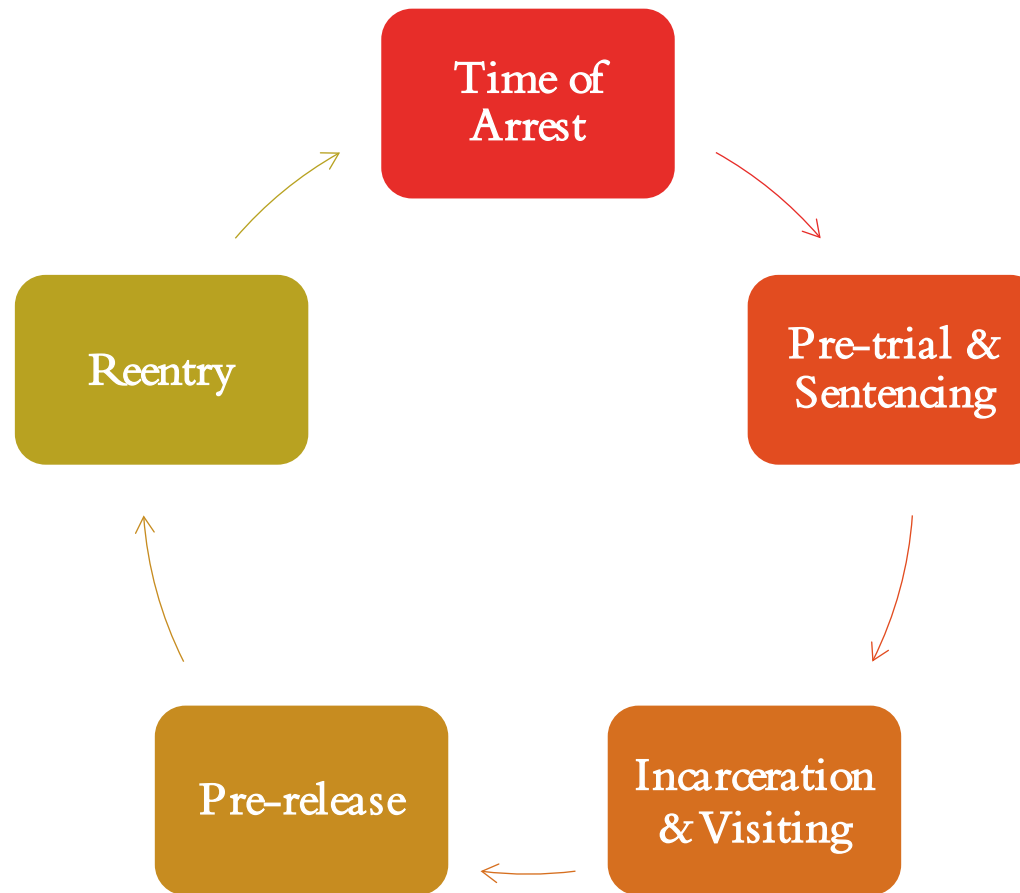
Feeling ashamed and/or embarrassment

Feeling at fault for their parent's arrest

Receiving little information about the arrest/incarceration

Experiencing their parent's re-incarceration

PARENTAL INCARCERATION: A CHILD'S JOURNEY



PARENTAL INCARCERATION: COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES

Trauma: Violence, parental arrest, visits (Arditti, 2012)

Stress & Anxiety: Unstable attachment, fear, stigma, ambiguity (Poehlmann-Tynan, et al., 2017)

Major Life Disruptions: Caregivers, homes, schools (Kramer & Burton, 2016)

Family Financial Burden: Court & legal fees, phone bills, visits (Braman, 2004)

PARENTAL INCARCERATION: COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES



Loss of Parent

- 40% of children **lose a resident parent** when parent is incarcerated
- 20% **lose their primary caregiver**

Risks

- Heightened **risk for foster care placement** and **permanent separation** from family members
- More likely to live in a household facing **economic strain**, to experience **financial hardship**, and to be at **risk of homelessness**

PARENTAL INCARCERATION & COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES: SEPARATION & DISTANCE



An estimated 62% of parents in state prisons and 84% of parents in federal prisons are **held over 100 miles away from home.**

An estimated 43% of parents in federal prisons are **held over 500 miles away from home.**



Ethical consideration: should judges and/or correctional facilities consider the placement of a parent in relation to where their child resides?

PARENTAL INCARCERATION & COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES: FINANCIAL BURDEN



Families **lose primary income earners** and face expenses directly related to the criminal legal system involvement such as legal fees, court fees, and bail or bond fees.

Families **face extra financial burdens maintaining family ties** including phone bills, sending care, and the cost of visiting.

Parental incarceration **increases the risk of children living in poverty or experience household instability** independent of other family risk factors such as parental substance use, mental health issues or poor educational experiences.

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: WHAT WE KNOW

When compared to their peers...

(...) minority children and children from low SES backgrounds are more like likely to experience parental incarceration.

(...) children living in poverty are more than three times as likely to experience parental incarceration. (Murphey & Cooper, 2015)

(...) children of incarcerated parents are more likely to live with non-parental guardians, receive public assistance, and experience residential instability. (Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, and Mincy (2009)

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS: HOW WE KNOW IT

Developmental outcomes of children with incarcerated parents is an emerging area of research.

Conducting research with children and analyzing their developmental outcomes can be difficult, andthis data can be messy

Large data sets designed for other research areas

- *Indicators of prison vs. jail*
- *Residential/non-residential parent information*

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“WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME? HOW YOUNG CHILDREN COPE WHEN PARENTS GO TO JAIL”



*A National Tragedy: Introduction to Children with
Incarcerated Parents*

Parental Arrest and Family Separation

Family Relationships during Parental Incarceration

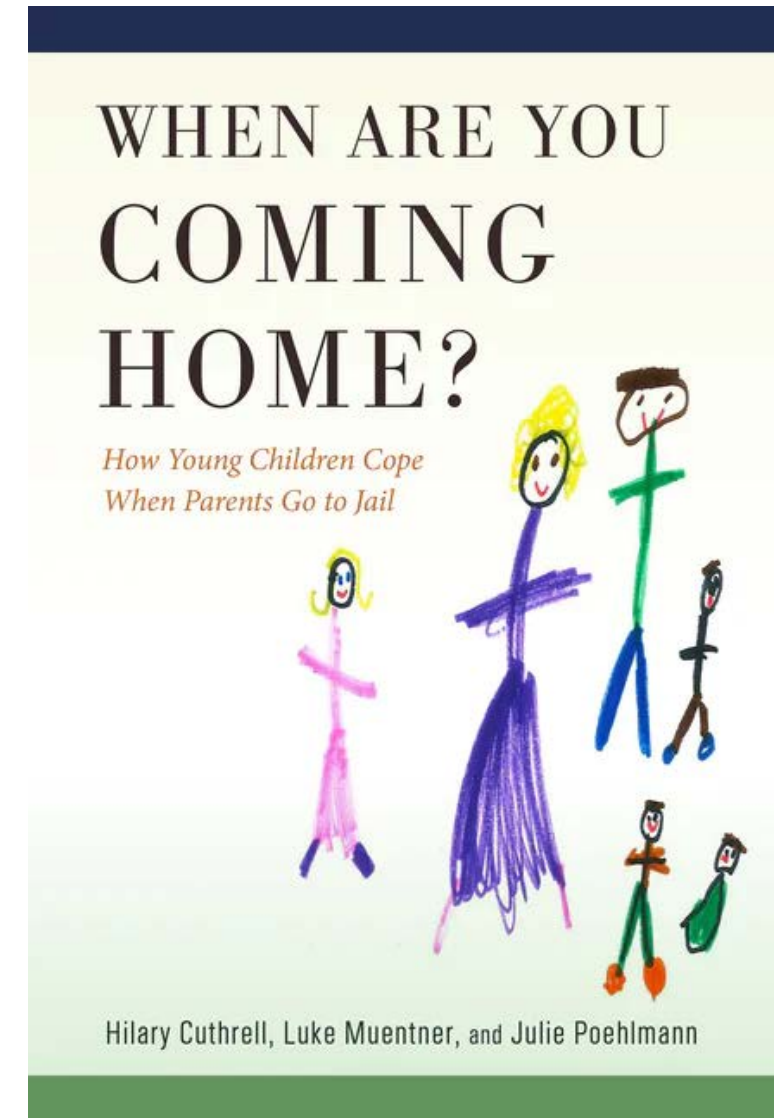
Children's Health and Development

Caregiving and Children's Home Environments

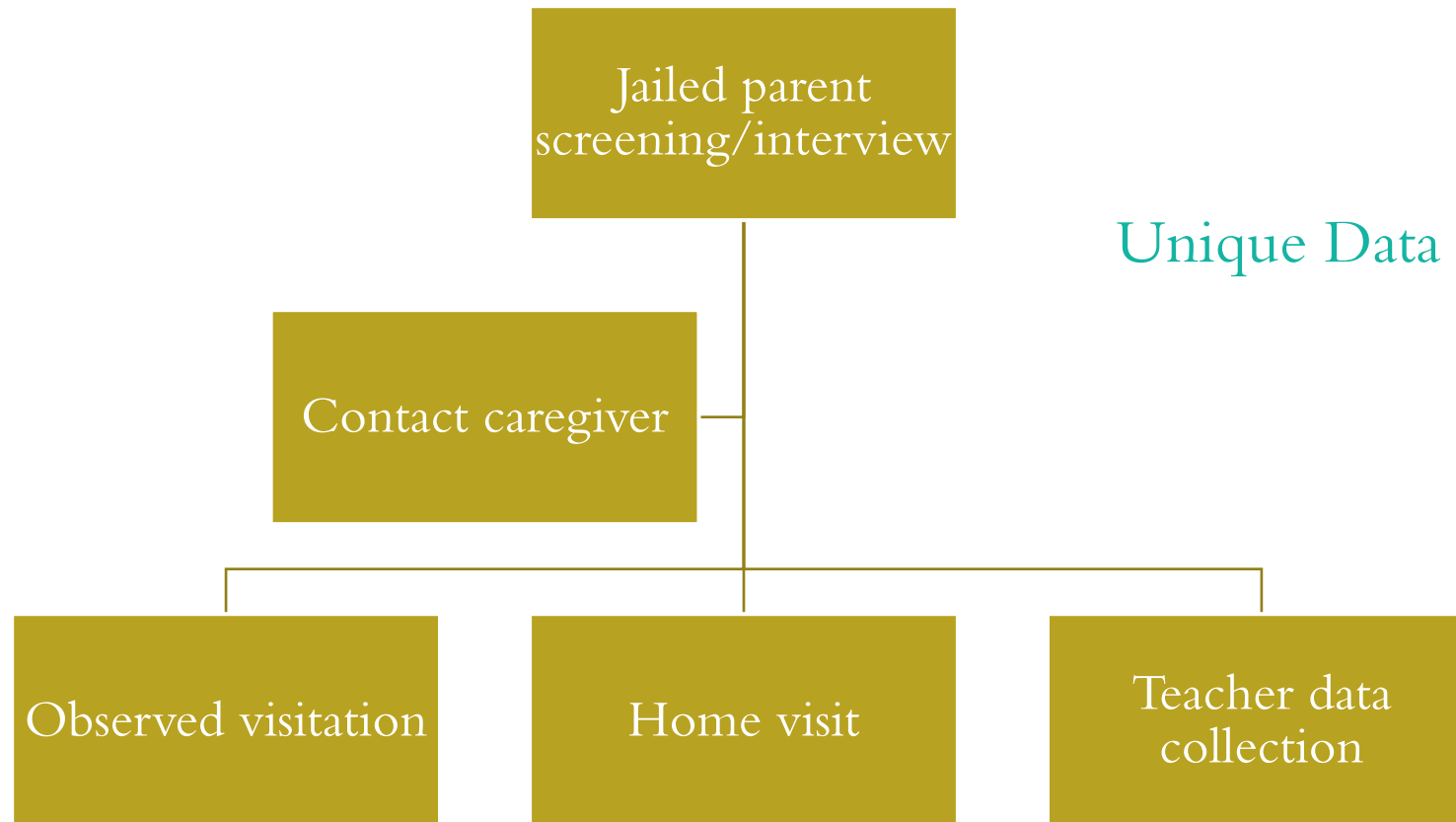
Visiting and Other Forms of Parent-Child Contact

Reintegration for Incarcerated Parents

Resilience and Its Implications for Intervention and Policy



WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME?



Unique Data Collection!

WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME?: UNIQUE MEASURES



Caregiver and child free play

Cortisol and cortisone collection

Attachment Story-Stem Completion Task

Family drawings

Jail observations

Teacher data



PARENTAL INCARCERATION: KEY RESILIENCE FACTORS



Relationship with
parent prior to
incarceration

Involvement in extra-
curricular activities

Opportunity to to
maintain contact with
parent

Social support system
*(That includes
incarcerated parent if
in best interest of
child)*

Ability to set or
consider life goals
*(That debunk stigma
and stereotypes)*

PARENTAL INCARCERATION: RESILIENCE



“Research on resiliency and achievements among children of incarcerated parents provides a balance to the current databank of ‘risk-based’ scholarly works and helps children affected by parental incarceration to see themselves in a different light.”



Source: Muhammad (2018). Against all odds: Resilient children of incarcerated parents. In L. Gordon (Ed.), *Contemporary research and analysis on the children of prisoners: Invisible children*. London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Protect

Protect children when a parent is arrested.

Support

Support caregivers of children during a spell of parental incarceration, especially in the areas of poverty prevention, parenting, and mental health.

Support

Support children's ability to have positive family relationships during parental incarceration.

Facilitate

Facilitate pathways to successful reentry and family reunification for incarcerated parents.

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CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES & FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACHES



In-person, barrier, remote and enhanced visitation options

observation/coaching/debriefing with incarcerated parents

Other people in the visitation space

Staff training

Security considerations

Concerns of making the visiting rooms “too fun” for kids

MODEL PRACTICES FOR PARENTS IN PRISONS & JAILS



Partnership Building

Training & Core Competencies

Intake & Assessment

Family Notification & Information Provision

Classes and Groups

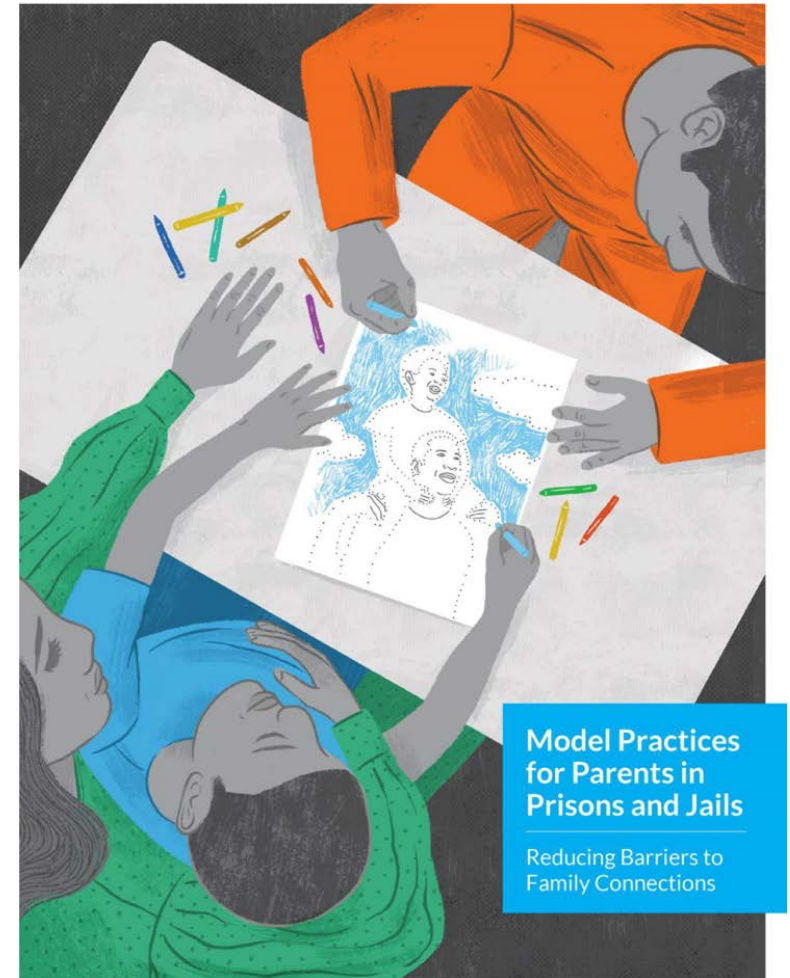
Visitor Lobbies

Visiting

Parent-Child Communication

Caregiver Support

Family-Focused Reentry



Final Thoughts



Share one thing you've learned from the training today!

How can you take what you've learned today and implement it into your work moving forward?

Do you have any questions from the presentation today?

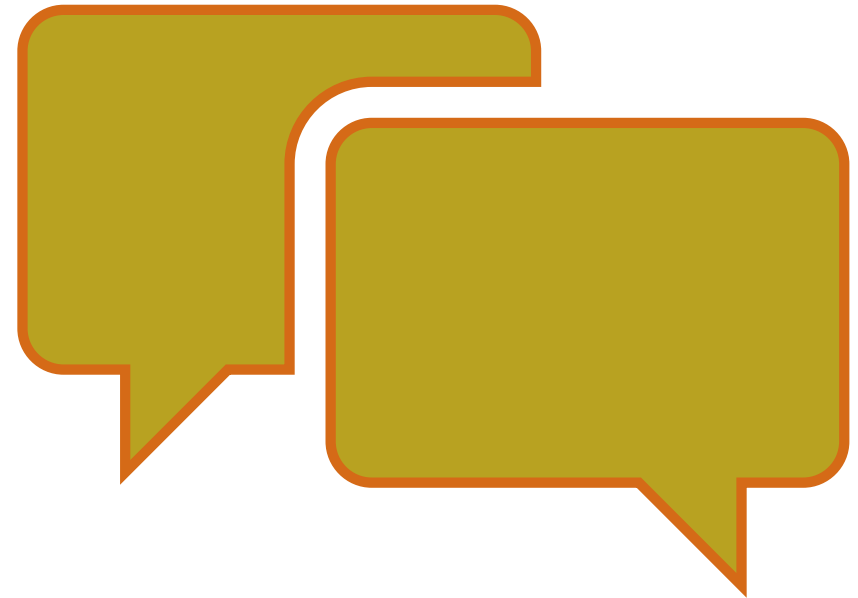
How can we support your facility to ensure the project implementation is successful?

Please type your responses in the chat!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



DR. HILARY CUTHRELL
HILARYCUTHRELL@GMAIL.COM



Please type your responses in the chat!