



**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

www.fatherhood.org

National Fatherhood Initiative™

Improving the well-being of children
by increasing the proportion of children with involved,
responsible, and committed fathers in their lives.

Defining the Issue

> There are record levels of father absence in America

- 24 million children live in homes absent their biological father*
- 1 of 3 children nationally - triple the rate of 1960 - live in father-absent homes*
- 2 of 3 in the African American community live in father-absent homes*
- 2 of 5 children in father-absent homes have contact with their fathers less than once per month**
- 9 in 10 moms and dads believe there is a father absence crisis in America today***

* From the U.S. Census Bureau, "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2010"

** From Aquilino, W.S. (2006). The noncustodial father-child relationship from adolescence into young adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 929-946

***From National Fatherhood Initiative's "Mama Says" and "Pop's Culture" surveys (2009 and 2006)

Why Fathers Matter

> The Consequences of Father Absence

Children in father-absent homes are two to five times more likely to:

- live in poverty
- fail in school
- develop emotional or behavioral problems
- abuse drugs
- be abused and neglected
- **become involved in crime**
- commit suicide



Why Fathers Matter

> The Benefits of Father Involvement

Children with involved fathers are more likely to have:

- better cognitive outcomes, even as infants
- higher self-esteem and less depression as teenagers
- higher grades, test scores, and overall academic achievement
- lower levels of drug and alcohol use
- higher levels of empathy and other pro-social behavior



Why Reentry Efforts Should Target Fathers

- 92% of incarcerated parents are fathers.
- Most inmates grew up in father absent homes or with poor fathering role models.
- Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system
 - We need to break the cycle of incarceration by helping fathers establish a new legacy for their family



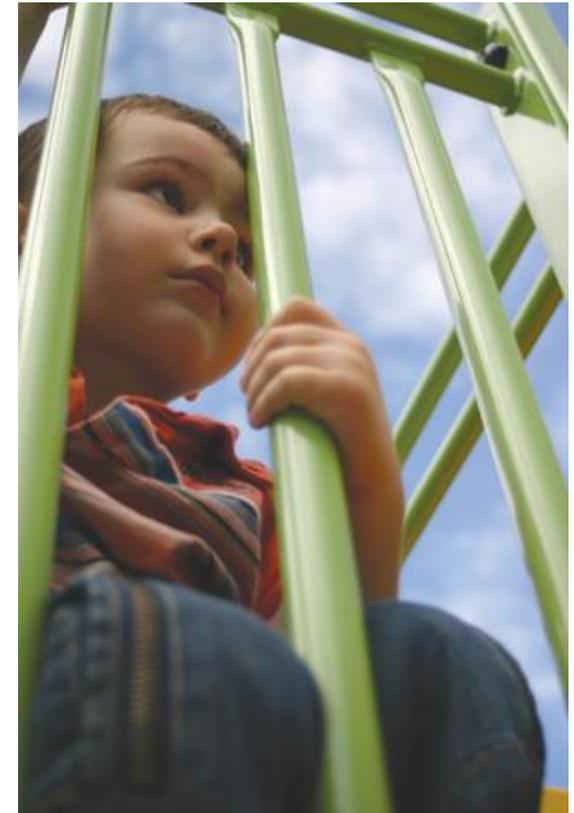
Targeting Fathers (Cont.)

- Family and community connections are the keys to reducing recidivism.
- Fatherhood Programming provides the offender/ex-offender purpose and motivation for other educational and rehabilitative initiatives.



What About the Children?

- Nearly 10 million children have a parent who is or has been under some form of criminal justice supervision.
- In 2007 more than 1.7 million children under the age of 18 had a parent in prison or jail. (1/15 black, 1/42 Latino, 1/111 white)
 - Approx. half are less than 10 yrs old.
- The number of children with a father in prison has grown by 77 percent since 1991.



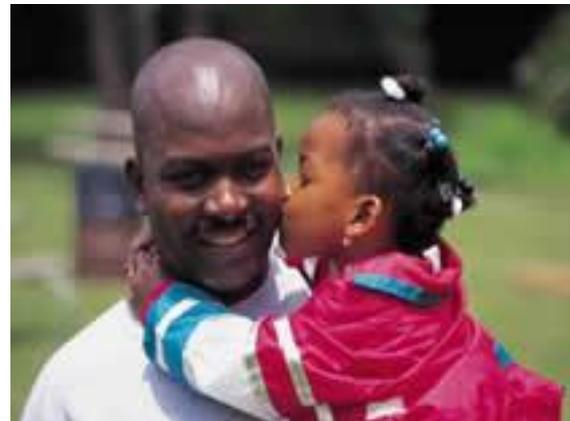
Children Are Adversely Impacted

- Many children of incarcerated parents display symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- The ever growing problem of the “intergenerational cycle of crime.”
- Other consequences for children include:
 - Mourning the loss of parent / Disconnection
 - Feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, and anger
 - Social stigma
 - Poor school performance
 - Impaired ability to cope with future stress and trauma
 - Potential addiction
 - Negative perception of police and other authority figures



- The D.C. based Center for Law and Social Policy recently noted:

“The desire of parents to reunite with their children is often the key motivation for helping them turn their lives around.”



A Powerful Motivational Engine

- "She's brought a lot of meaning and purpose to my life... she keeps me on the right track. You have so much stress when you come out, stress of finding a job and stress of following the rules of parole, you feel everything is against you. When I came out, instead of my daughter running from me saying, 'Who is this guy?' she gave me a kiss. She was really happy to see me. She keeps me right on track."

-Jose Sanchez reflecting on his release & his relationship with his 5 year old daughter



The Connections Project



18 month initiative funded by BJA. The goal of the Connections Project was to expand and highlight services aimed at helping fathers successfully re-enter society by strengthening the relationships they have with their children and the mother of their children.

The Connections Project



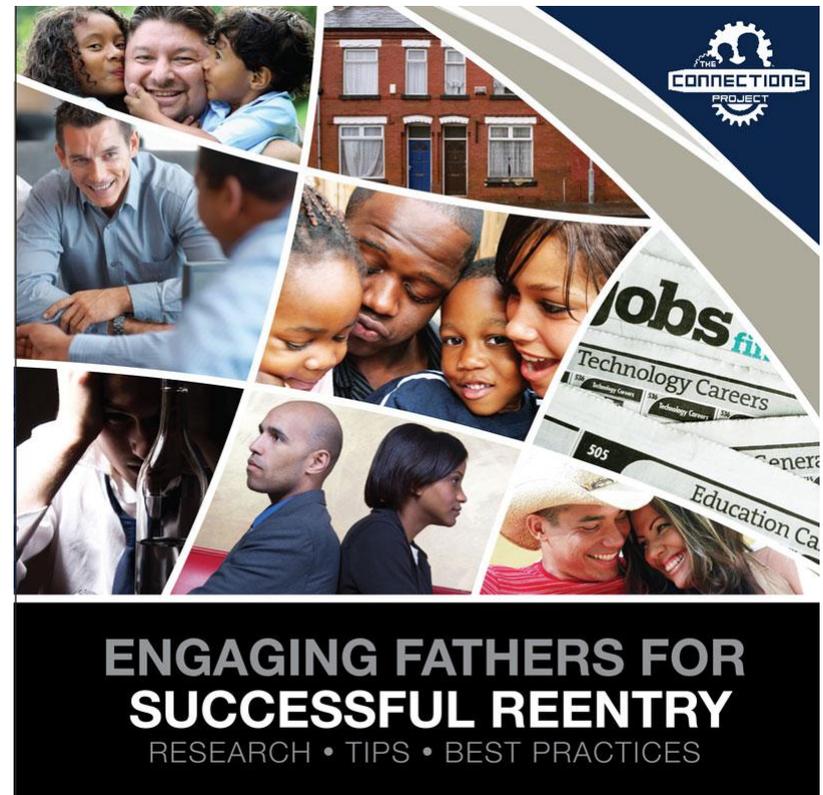
The following quote comes from one of the inmates at MCI-H (Hagerstown, MD) that went through the InsideOut Dad™ program as part of the Connections Project.

“Once you lose outside contact, you lose hope. Hope is the only thing that keeps you going in here. InsideOut Dad woke me up. This program has helped me get back in touch with my kids.”

The Connections Project

“I just wanted to let you know that since we started sending people to [this] program, my case load is at 0% re-incarcerated! I realize that it’s not the ‘magic pill’ but [that] number is amazing!”

— Steve Walker, probation and parole officer commenting on the Dedicated Dads program, sponsored by Early Education Services (Brattleboro, VT)



The Connections Project



Visit www.connectionsproject.org to access free resources:

- ✓ *How To Connect With Your Children and Family After Release*
- ✓ *Igniting Father-Child Relationships: Sharing Favorites Fosters Connections*
- ✓ DVD featuring former inmates Troy Gaines and Tim Adkins
- ✓ Best Practices Guide for reentry programs– father-focused
- ✓ 10 webinars designed to train your staff on helping fathers achieve successful reentry

Engaging Fathers for Successful Reentry

Programming Designed to Strengthen Family Relationships Pre- and Post-Release



- The **only evidence-based curriculum** for working with incarcerated fathers
- Independent evaluation conducted by Rutgers University in Newark, NJ-area prisons found curriculum has positive impact on dads knowledge and attitudes compared to control group

- Ideal for dads in the community setting.
- Several third-party evaluations found positive impact on dads' knowledge and attitudes.
- Used by more federally-funded fatherhood programs than any other curriculum.