

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly – April 2014

1 in 43

One in 43 children in the United States has a parent behind bars. That's essentially one child in every other American classroom. The more stomach churning fact is that this number changes to 1 in 15 African American children with a parent who is incarcerated.

Let that sink in for a moment.

Despite the prevalence, children with incarcerated parents are a largely invisible population. The issue has received very little attention from researchers, policymakers or practitioners. And yet, the issues surrounding parental incarceration pose unique challenges to young children and their families — separation of parents and children, changes in living situation, increased economic hardship, visitation challenges, stigma — issues that call to action many of us who work with these children each day.



Children of incarcerated parents are at increased risk for both internalizing (e.g., depression, anxiety, withdrawal) and externalizing (e.g., delinquency, substance use) behavior problems, cognitive delays, and difficulties in school (e.g., school failure). Children with incarcerated parents are also at increased risk for insecure attachment — experiencing relationships with primary caregivers who are inconsistent, insensitive, or unresponsive to children's social and emotional needs (Eddy & Poehlmann, 2010)

(Shlafer et al., 2013)

These needs are significant. How can we expect children to engage with friends, learn well in school, and manage their emotions if they are occupied with these and other struggles? How are the mental health challenges we see related to a child's experience with incarceration? What can we learn about how children experience having an incarcerated parent? Children and their families are all different, and so too are their experiences with incarceration. In the June, 2013 issue of the Children's Mental Health eReview, "[Children with Incarcerated Parents — Considering Children's Outcomes in the Context of Family Experiences](#)", Dr. Rebecca Shlafer asks several questions of significance:

- What did the child experience?
- How old is the child?
- Which parent is incarcerated?
- What is the child's living situation?
- Who is providing care for the child?
- How does incarceration affect family income and household stability?

- What is the quality of the caregiver-child relationship?
- Does the child have contact with the parent?

The answers to these questions help us better understand and provide services to children and families. Do you know how many families you serve may be affected by incarceration? Have you ever asked? Do you know what you can do to support children and families affected by this issue?

Join us at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center **Tuesday, April 29th** at a day-long [Research to Practice series](#) titled “**Strengthening Families in the Context of Incarceration**” sponsored by the Minnesota Association for Children’s Mental Health (MACMH) and the University of Minnesota Extension’s Children, Youth & Family Consortium (CYFC). Keynote speaker Dr. Rebecca Schlafer will discuss her research on the effects and challenges of parental incarceration. Participants will have the rare opportunity to view the highly-acclaimed [Mothers of Bedford](#), a film documenting the triumphs and challenges of parenting behind bars. They will meet Barbara (Bobby) Blanchard, featured prominently in the film as the director of the Children’s Center at New York’s Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, including the Parenting Center, Nursery and Visiting Room Family area. And Jason Sole, former inmate turned Assistant Professor and author will share his journey from prison to a successful life and the resources and relationships that helped him succeed.

At the day’s end, all three presenters will participate in an interactive conversation with participants about their own experiences, the needs of children, and practical ideas about how to understand and help families affected by incarceration. This growing conversation is important — we hope you will join us!

Visit our [website](#) to learn more and register.

Cari Michaels
Children’s Mental Health Coordinator

Sara Langworthy
Policy Coordinator

Schlafer, R., Gerrity, E., Ruhland, E. & Wheeler, M. (2013). Children with Incarcerated Parents — Considering Children’s Outcomes in the Context of Family Experiences. Children’s Mental Health eReview. Retrieved from: [/family/cyfc/our-programs/ereview/docs/June2013ereview.pdf](#)

Consortium News

Understanding the Growing Brain

The research of Amanda Hodel, CYFC research assistant and doctoral student, was featured by the [College of Education and Human Development](#). Hodel has been working with professor Katie Thomas to measure the cognitive development of children born moderate to late pre-term. Read more about her research and the journey that brought her to the [College of Education and Human Development](#).

Rethinking Peer Review: Expanding the Boundaries for Community Engaged Scholarship

CYFC Director and CES4Health.info editor Cathy Jordan co-authored [Rethinking Peer Review: Expanding the Boundaries for Community Engaged Scholarship](#) with Sheryl Gelmon and Sarena Seifer in the inaugural issue of the International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement. "...the authors hope to begin seeing changes in the peer review process that embrace community expertise and enhance the quality and impact of [community engaged scholarship]."

Strengthening Families in the Context of Incarceration - 2014 Research to Practice Series

Date: April 29, 2014

Location: DECC in Duluth, MN

Children, Youth & Family Consortium is partnering with MACMH to present the 2014 [Research to Practice Series](#) as part of the Annual Mental Health Conference. What do our own stories and the research tell us about how children and families experience incarceration? How can we make decisions based on their best interests? Learn one man's journey from prison to a successful life and the community resources and relationships that supported him. Explore the state of the research and programs with demonstrated effectiveness and based on developmentally-informed best practices. View "Mothers of Bedford", an award-winning film that follows five women incarcerated at New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, and the former Director of the Children's Center at Bedford Hills featured in the film. Rebecca Schlafer, Ph.D., Jason Marque Sole, ABD and Barbara "Bobby" Blanchard-Lewis, J.D. will present. [Check out our videos](#) to learn more!

MN Children & Nature Connection Brown Bag Series: How To of Nature Play: Practical tips for Engaging Kids in Nature

Date: May 9, 2014

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Location: REI Bloomington

750 American Blvd W

Bloomington, MN 55420

Cost: Free

Join MN Children & Nature Connection for How To of Nature Play: Practical tips for Engaging Kids in Nature. GO Cards, a parent's guide to nature play, Minnesota Weather Guide calendar, and magnifier will be provided for each attendee. The target audiences for this event are parents, day care providers and others serving young children. Please contact [Cathy Jordan](#) for further information.

Summer Public Health Institute: Community Based Participatory Research

School of Public Health

Dates: May 27- 30, 2014

Location: University of Minnesota (exact location of the course will be emailed to you)

CYFC Director Cathy Jordan along with her community partner Susan Gust will be teaching Community-Based Participatory Research at the Summer Public Health Institute. This is an introductory course about community-based participatory research (CBPR) intended for graduate students and community practitioners interested in adding CBPR to their repertoire of effective approaches to understanding and addressing social and health disparities. We will explore topics such as the purpose and applications of CBPR; partnership formation and maintenance; issues of power, trust, race, class, and social justice; conflict resolution; ethical issues; and CBPR's relationship to cultural knowledge systems. Registration closes May 20, 2014.

University and Community Announcements

Helping separated and divorced parents determine what's in the child's best interest

University of Minnesota Extension Parents Forever™, featured in [Spring 2014 Source](#)

Read how Parents Forever™ is helping families move forward and reduce the risks a family break-up can have on children. Participants in Parents Forever™ create a parenting plan, learn how to avoid putting children in the middle of conflict and learn to communicate about parenting decisions. Read more in the [Spring 2014 Source](#).

Beyond the Classroom: How Travel Can Inspire and Enhance Children's Learning [MomEnough Podcast](#)

Hosts Marti and Erin Erickson are joined by Gary Oster from the U.S. Travel Association to discuss a new study that shows how travel experiences when young can be associated with longterm educational outcomes, career choices and even income. [Listen](#) now to learn how travel to a place nearby or far can help us see life with a new perspective.

Social and Emotional Learning: Assess it to Address it

University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development

Date: May 6, 2014

Time: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Location: TCF Bank Stadium - DQ Club Room and online via live webinar

Cost: Free but registration is required

This event is part of the symposium series dedicated to understanding social and emotional learning and its contribution to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps. Learn what communities have done to measure youth holistically and how that data is used at the neighborhood, school and program level to enhance social and emotional learning and the opportunities that arise when doing so. The symposium will feature Gil Noam of Harvard University and Kimberly Schonert-Reichl from the University of British Columbia.

What Went Wrong? Reflecting and Learning from Community-Engaged Research

Date: July 11-12, 2014

Location: Minneapolis, MN

Cost: \$25-\$75

[Register](#) to attend this conference featuring keynote address by María Torre, Ph.D. and Brett Stoudt, Ph.D. from The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Join others working for social justice in an active dialogue about what it means for communities and universities to practice deeply engaged research that is reflective, questions power dynamics and works toward shifts in practice.

Poverty, Learning and Connection in Youth Work and Recognizing Warning Signs of Mental Illness in Youth

Youth Intervention Programs Association

Date: April 23, 2014

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Location: 4321 Allendale Avenue Duluth, MN or streamed online

Cost: Free for YIPA members or \$30 and \$45 per session

Poverty, Learning and Connection in Youth Work will be presented by Cheryl Meld. Course objectives include: develop understanding of poverty related effects on educational performance, learn strategies useful in overcoming motivational barriers among youth and gain skills for identifying and using youth resilience in interventions. Recognizing the Warning Signs of Mental Illness in Youth will be presented by Cynthia Fashawis. Course objectives include: Typical youth development, early warning signs in children

and youth, overview of mental illnesses, executive function and how to talk to parents about mental health concerns.

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