

# Children of Incarcerated Parents:

*An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers*

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with nonviolent crimes, offer mothers the opportunity to remain united with their children and to continue as their caregiver on release from prison.<sup>70</sup>

*Family Systems Investment Consortium and Project BOND*

The Family Systems Investment Consortium (FSIC) is composed of local government agencies, community-based organizations, and educators that are working together to improve supports and services for children and families in Marion County, Oregon. The FSIC's Project BOND allows eligible women who are pregnant or have young children to enter a diversion program rather than serve time in jail.<sup>71</sup>

*Lovelady Center*

Based in Birmingham, the Lovelady Center provides an alternative to incarceration for women in Alabama. Women participate in a 9- to 12-month faith-based program that provides substance abuse treatment, job training, and parenting classes. Children who live in the facility with their parents may attend summer camps, bible study, and daycare.<sup>72</sup>

- **Support groups for children.** To help children cope with difficult situations, some organizations offer counseling services, peer-to-peer support groups that encourage children to share their experiences, and group social activities.

*Foreverfamily*

Based in Atlanta, Foreverfamily is a national organization that offers two programs for children of incarcerated parents that foster personal development and teambuilding.

The Teen Leadership program provides an open forum for adolescents to share their experiences, gain leadership skills, and serve as mentors to younger children. The Foreverfamily Summer Camp brings children of all ages from the Atlanta and Louisville, Kentucky, programs together for a week of personal development and fun cultural enrichment activities.<sup>73</sup>

- **Parenting education programs.** Some correctional facilities have developed educational programming to help parents build healthy relationships with their children and serve as positive role models. While there has been limited research on the effectiveness of these types of programs, it is known that good parenting and strong parent-child relationships improve outcomes for children.<sup>74</sup>

*Living Interactive Family Education Program*

University of Missouri Extension's 4-H Living Interactive Family Education (LIFE) program provides enhanced visitation and parenting skills training for qualified incarcerated parents at three of the state's correctional centers. All incarcerated parents who participate in the 4-H LIFE program attend weekly parenting skills classes where they learn how they can be a positive influence in their children's lives. Parenting classes focus on topics such as communication, anger management, teamwork, and positive discipline. Participants and the caregivers raising the children report that the program helps them develop stronger relationships and communicate more effectively with one another.<sup>75</sup>