Programs for Incarcerated Parents

Preliminary Findings from a Pilot Survey—Appendixes

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About These Appendixes

A significant number of incarcerated individuals in the United States are parents of minor children: Approximately 2.7 million children have at least one parent in prison. Research suggests that the incarceration of a parent can strain the parent-child relationship and increase the risk for child delinquency, poor academic achievement, and social and emotional problems, which disproportionately affect children of color because of racial and ethnic disparities in incarceration rates. Many U.S. prisons offer services and programs designed to support incarcerated parents and their children; however, little is known about exactly what programs exist, how they are implemented, and the extent to which incarcerated parents participate. In this pilot study, RAND researchers sought to explore and describe the current landscape of prison-based programs and services for incarcerated parents. They also aimed to determine the extent to which programs seek to mitigate the effects of policies and practices that disproportionately affect Black and Latinx families. Specifically, the authors distributed an online survey to administrators of state prison facilities in five states to gather information about key program components, such as how programs are implemented and what the program resources are; the extent to which programs are responsive to gender, culture, or both; and administrators' perceptions of the efficacy of the programs. This volume presents Appendixes A and B of the main report. Appendix A details the cognitive interview process and results. Appendix B contains the full Positive Outcomes for Incarcerated Parents Survey.

Information from this study will help the authors prepare for the national administration of the survey. Ultimately, the authors aim to create a publicly available compendium that documents prison-based programs for incarcerated parents. This resource will help guide administrators of correctional institutions and policymakers within the criminal justice system as they make decisions about how best to use resources to support incarcerated parents and their children.

Justice Policy Program

RAND Social and Economic Well-Being is a division of the RAND Corporation that seeks to actively improve the health and social and economic well-being of populations and communities throughout the world. This research was conducted in the Justice Policy Program within RAND Social and Economic Well-Being. The program focuses on such topics as access to justice, policing, corrections, drug policy, and court system reform, as well as other policy concerns pertaining to public safety and criminal and civil justice. For more information, email justicepolicy@rand.org.

Funding

Appendix A. Cognitive Interview Process and Results

Cognitive Interviews

Recruitment and Interview Process

At the beginning of each survey, participants were invited to take part in a cognitive interview. We aimed to conduct one to two interviews per state. During the cognitive interviews, the interviewer described the study, reviewed the consent form, and explained that the virtual interview would take 45 to 60 minutes. Program administrators were asked multiple questions that sought to increase the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. The interviews were designed to ensure survey questions and responses were clear, understandable, organized, relevant, and straightforward; to evaluate respondents' ability to recall information and answer survey questions; to assess the ease of following skip patterns within the survey; and to confirm projected time estimates to complete the survey for respondents.

Respondents who agreed to complete the cognitive interview were asked to complete the survey, track the amount of time it took to answer each section and the overall survey, and provide feedback on the difficulty of answering each question. This final sample included seven cognitive interviews across the five states—at least one interview per state. At the conclusion of the interview, respondents were offered up to three incentive choices: (1) an Amazon gift code in the amount of $30, (2) a donation of $20 to a charitable organization, or (3) no incentive. In states that prohibited remuneration to state employees, only options two and three were offered.

Sample and Analysis

Cognitive interviews were conducted using a semistructured interview protocol and simultaneous review of the survey instrument. Interview questions asked about the process and experience of completing the survey instrument. In addition, cognitive interviews sought feedback on the definition of parenting programs, interpretation of survey questions on gender and cultural responsiveness, appropriateness of the respondent to complete the survey, and the length of the survey. Most interviewees indicated that the definition of parenting programs was unclear. Interviewees also stated there was some difficulty differentiating between program-specific services and facility-wide resources. Some interviewees requested clarity on gender and cultural responsiveness. In addition, although they were able to complete the survey, three interviewees felt someone else might have been a more appropriate person to respond to the survey. On average, it took 45 minutes to complete the survey. Two interviewees indicated the survey was rather long. We will use this information to inform edits to the survey if and when it is fielded nationally.

Appendix B. Positive Outcomes for Incarcerated Parents Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete the Positive Outcomes for Incarcerated Parents Survey. This survey includes questions about the parenting programs at your facility. We define *parent* broadly to include any adult who is a biological or adoptive parent/caregiver, or who has other caregiving roles for a child or children in their family (e.g., grandparent, aunt, or uncle).

We define *parenting program* as a structured set of activities, services, supports, and/or resources intended to promote positive outcomes for incarcerated parents and their children and families.

Parenting programs might include structured activities, services, supports and/or resources in a range of areas, such as *parenting education* (e.g., courses designed to improve parenting skills); *literacy development and/ or book reading programs* (e.g., activities designed to connect incarcerated parents and their children through shared reading and literacy activities); *written communication programs* (e.g., letter/emailing writing programs designed to foster parent-child communication); and *visitation programs* (e.g., extended visitation opportunities and visitation supports).

Consider the following when deciding which programs to discuss in this survey:

- Some nationally known parenting programs include **Parenting Inside Out, InsideOut Dad, and the Messages Project**. For this survey, we would like to hear about structured programs like these or locally developed programs and/or other national programs.
- We are interested in programs that take place on site at your facility ([FACILITY NAME]), either virtually or in-person. These programs may be run by staff from your facility, staff from the [STATE DOC NAME], staff from other state or federal agencies, and/or staff from contracted agencies (e.g., not for profit organizations).
- We are also focused on programs that serve parents with children from birth through age 25.
- We are only interested in **programs specifically designed for, and exclusively available to, parents (as we define them above).**
- **Do not include** **residential programs** that allow incarcerated parents to live onsite at a correctional facility with their child for an extended period of time (i.e., one month or more). In addition, **do not include** **pregnancy and postpartum medical care** for birthing mothers.

Your facility may have no parenting programs (as we've defined them), one parenting program, or many parenting programs. This survey will only ask questions about **up to two parenting programs** at your facility. You may choose to tell us about one or two programs. If you have more than two parenting programs at your facility, please select the **one or two**

programs that you believe are successfully meeting the program objectives (based on staff perceptions, parent perceptions, conducted research, and/or other evidence).

We know the structure or delivery of your parenting program(s) may have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please respond to the survey questions thinking about the structure and operations of your program(s) **before the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., prior to March 2020).** At the end of the survey we will ask how the program(s) may have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

[Determine Programs]

1. Does your facility offer any parenting programs (i.e., a structured set of activities, services, supports, and/or resources intended to promote positive outcomes for incarcerated parents and their children and families)?
    - Yes
        - [if Yes] How many parenting programs does your facility offer (you can include more than 2 in your count if that is applicable)? (enter a number)
            1. Box that accepts integers
    - No

[If yes, move on to "**Program Name and Description**" section]

[If no, show text below]

Some facilities do not have parenting programs that meet our definition, but they may have other ways that they support incarcerated parents. For example, some facilities have separate visitation rooms for parents to use when their children visit. If your facility offers any services, supports, or resources for parents that do not meet our definition of a parenting program, please describe them below. In addition, if your facility has residential programs that allow incarcerated parents to live onsite at a correctional facility with their child for an extended period of time (i.e., one month or more), or pregnancy and postpartum medical care for birthing mothers, you may also describe those services here.

- Free response box

[Skip to Gift card Screen]

[Program Name and Description]

We'd like to learn about up to two parenting program(s) at your facility. Let's start with the program that is *most effective*, defined as a program that is successfully meeting the program objectives (based on staff perceptions, parent perceptions, conducted research, and/or other evidence).

2. What is the name of the most effective parenting program at your facility?
    - Free response

3. If **[PROGRAM NAME]** has its own website, or if there is information on an external website where we can learn more about its features please include the URL here:
    - Free response
    - The program does not have a website

4. Please provide a brief description of the primary goals and objectives of **[PROGRAM NAME]** (e.g., "This program is designed to promote parent self-confidence and parenting skills")
    - Free response

[Program features and activities]

5. What are the main outcomes that **[PROGRAM NAME]** aims to achieve? (select all that apply)
    - Improve parenting skills
    - Improve parents' communication skills
    - Improve parents' mental health
    - Improve parent-child relationship and/other family relationships
    - Improve child well-being
    - Increase parent self-esteem/self-efficacy
    - Other (please specify):

6. Does [**PROGRAM NAME**] include parenting education courses, classes, workshops, or other activities (such as classes focused on parenting skills)? (select one response)
    - Yes
    - No, this program does not include parenting education courses, classes, workshops, or other activities
    - Don't know

7. [If Yes to Q6; SKIP if no or don't know to Q6] Does **[PROGRAM NAME]** have a curriculum?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't know

8. [If Yes to Q7; SKIP if no or don't know to Q7]
    - What is the name of this curriculum?
        - Free response
            Or
            - The curriculum name is the same as the program name, [PROGRAM NAME]

9. [If Yes to Q6] What topics are covered during the **parent education** aspect of **[PROGAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
    - Child development
    - Parenting techniques
    - Communication with child
    - Anger management
    - Co-parenting
    - Parenting self-esteem or self-efficacy
    - Plans to re-enter child's life upon release
    - Other (specify):

10. Does [PROGRAM NAME] include any of the following literacy development, book reading, or written communication activities? (select all that apply)
    - Parents read directly to or with children in-person during visitation
    - Parents read directly to or with children via internet or satellite
    - Parents record themselves reading, and recording is sent to child
    - Literacy instruction for parents
    - Books provided to parents
    - Books provided to children
    - Parents write emails, letters, cards, or other written communication to children
    - Other literacy development, book reading, or written communication activities (specify):
        - No, this program does not include any literacy development, book reading, or written communication activities
        - Don't know

11. Does [**PROGRAM NAME**] include any of the following **visitation supports or services**? (select all that apply):
    - Enhanced visitation (e.g., more frequent visits or longer visits for parents than the general population)
    - Separate area in the facility for visitation with minor children
    - Transportation assistance to make child visitation possible (e.g., shuttles, or financial assistance)
    - Lodging near the facility to make child visitation possible (e.g., sponsored lodging, free or discounted hotel rooms)
    - Video/virtual visits
    - Other (specify):
        - No, this program does not include any visitation supports or services
        - Don't know

12. [If Enhanced visitation is selected in Q11] On the last screen you indicated that [PROGRAM NAME] includes enhanced visitation. Please describe the enhanced visitation opportunities (e.g., parents may visit with children twice per month, as compared to the once per month visitation options for other residents)
    - Free response

13. Does [**PROGRAM NAME**] include **sending gifts** (not including books) to children on behalf of their parents? (select one response)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't know

14. Does [**PROGRAM NAME**] include any **direct supports, resources, and/or activities for the children of parents** participating in the program (e.g., mentoring or support groups for children)? (select one response)
    - *Do not include* supports, resources, and/or activities mentioned in previous questions (i.e., visitation supports, books, and gifts).
    - *Do not include* supports, resources, and/or activities for children that are separate from or not connected to [PROGRAM NAME].
        - Yes
        - No, this program does not include any direct supports, resources, and/or activities for the children of parents participating in the program
        - Don't know

15. [If Yes to Q14] Please describe the direct supports, resources, or activities for children: (e.g., children participate in monthly support groups)
    1. Free response

16. Does **[PROGRAM NAME]** include any of the following **general education courses or job training <u>specifically for parents</u>** in the program? (select all that apply)
    Only include courses or training that are part of [PROGRAM NAME], do not include courses or trainings available to all facility residents

    - High school equivalent, GED, and/or adult basic education courses
    - Post-secondary education courses
    - Job training and/or employment counseling
    - Financial literacy courses
    - Other (specify):
    - No, this program does not include any general education courses or job training specifically for parents
    - Don't know

17. Does [**PROGRAM NAME]** include any **mental health supports or services <u>specifically for parents</u>** in the program, such as counseling or clinical sessions? (select one response)
    - Yes
        - [If Yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe what mental health supports or services are offered to parents in [PROGRAM NAME]
            - Free response
    - No, this program does not include mental health supports or services for parents
    - Don't know

18. Does [**PROGRAM NAME]** help to **connect parents to legal or government services** that may support their role as a parent (e.g., connection to child custody supports and services, or connection to child welfare, social service, or housing agencies)? (select one response)
    - Yes
    - No, this program does not connect parents to legal or government services
    - Don't know

19. [If Yes to Q18] Please specify to which legal or government services **[PROGRAM NAME]** connects parents.
    - Free response

20. Does **[PROGRAM NAME]** include any of the following **re-entry supports, services or activities**? (select all that apply)
    - Housing planning
    - Employment, training, or education planning
    - Other (specify):
    - No, this program does not include re-entry supports, services or activities for parents
    - Don't know

21. In what ways is **[PROGRAM NAME]** *culturally responsive*?
    (A program is <u>culturally responsive</u> when the <u>activities, topics and/or materials are designed to reflect the cultural background of the participants.</u> Examples include offering program materials in the participants' preferred languages, or reading texts by authors who's racial, ethnic, or cultural background is similar to the participants)

    - Free response
        OR
    - Program activities are not culturally responsive

22. In what ways is **[PROGRAM NAME]** gender-responsive?
    (A program is <u>gender-responsive</u> when the activities, topics and/or materials are designed to reflect the unique needs of the participants' gender or gender identity. An example includes a program that uses materials that differ for women and men.)

    - Free response
        OR
    - Program activities are not gender-responsive

[Parents Served and Participation Structure]

23. Does **[PROGRAM NAME]** have **eligibility requirements** (e.g., only biological or adoptive parents are eligible for the program, or only parents with children of a certain age are eligible for the program)? (select one response)
    - Yes

- [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe the eligibility requirements (e.g., only biological or adoptive parents are eligible for the program, or only parents with children of a certain age are eligible for the program)
  - Free response
- No
- Don't know

24. In fiscal year 2019, how many parents participated in **[PROGRAM NAME]?** (enter a number):
- response box for integers
- Don't know

25. [If a number was entered for Q24; SKIP if don't know or missing for Q24] In fiscal year 2019, about what percentage of parents participated in **[PROGRAM NAME]?** (i.e., the total number of program participants entered in the previous question divided by the total number of incarcerated parents at your facility) (select one response):
- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%
- Don't know

26. How often do parents participate in **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select one response)
- Less than once per month
- 1–4 times per month
- One or more times per week
- Program participation varies (e.g., The program meets once per week for one month, then once per month for three months; or participation varies by program activity)
  - [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe how program participation varies (e.g., The program meets once per week for one month, then once per month for three months; or participation varies by program activity)
    - Free response
- No regular meetings
- Don't know

[SKIP Q27-29 if response to previous was "No regular meetings" or "Don't Know"]

27. When parents participate in **[PROGRAM NAME],** how long are the sessions or meetings? (select one response)
- 30 minutes or less
- 31–60 minutes
- 60 minutes or more
- Session length varies (e.g., some sessions are 30 minutes, some sessions are one hour)
  - [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe how session length varies (e.g., For the first two months sessions are one hour; for the remainder of the program sessions are 30 minutes)
    - Free response
- Don't know

28. What format do the **[PROGRAM NAME]** sessions have? (select all that apply)
- Group sessions (i.e., two or more parents with program staff)
- Individual sessions (i.e., one parent and one or more program staff)
- Other (specify):
- Don't know

29. What is the length of **[PROGRAM NAME]** from start to end? (select one response)
- One month or less
- More than 1 month to 6 months
- More than 6 months to 1 year
- More than 1 year
- No start or end (e.g., the program is ongoing)
- Program length varies (e.g., the program, length varies depending on parents' needs, or different activities last for different lengths of time)
  - [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe how program length varies (e.g., Some parenting classes last for one month; some reading and literacy activities last for three months)
    - Free response
- Don't know

30. Does **[PROGRAM NAME]** include any supports or services for parents after they have left your facility and returned to the community? (select one response)
- Yes
  - [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe the supports parents in [PROGRAM NAME] receive after they have left your facility (e.g., Parents

receive weekly calls from program staff for one month following re-entry into the community)

- ▪ Free response
- No
- Don't know

[Program Resources]

31. Staff from which organizations are primarily responsible for implementing **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
- [FACILITY NAME]
- [STATE DOC name]
- Another state agency (not the DOC; specify):
- A federal agency (specify):
- A contracted agency (e.g., a community-based organization)
- Other (specify):
- Don't know

32. How is **[PROGRAM NAME]** financed/paid for? (select all that apply)
- [FACILITY NAME]'s discretionary funds
- [STATE DOC name] funds
- Private funds (e.g., foundations, charities, or other philanthropic sources)
- Funds from faith groups
- Other (specify):
- Don't know

33. What type of staff deliver **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
- Correctional officers from [FACILITY NAME] and/or [STATE DOC name]
- Social workers (employed by [FACILITY NAME] and/or [STATE DOC name], a contracted agency, or another organization)
- Mental health clinicians (employed by [FACILITY NAME] and/or [STATE DOC name], a contracted agency, or another organization)
- Unpaid volunteers
- Current or former residents at [FACILITY NAME]
- Other staff (specify):
- Don't know

34. Do the staff receive training to deliver **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select one response)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

35. [If Yes to Q34] What topics or skills are addressed in the trainings? (select all that apply)
    - Family-centered practices
    - Trauma-informed interventions
    - Child and adolescent development
    - Cultural sensitivity
    - Parenting techniques
    - Adult literacy instruction
    - Other (specify):

36. Other than staff, what resources are required to implement **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
    - Instructional or program materials (e.g., curriculum, books)
        - [If yes, *appears on next screen*] Please describe the **instructional or program materials (e.g., curriculum, books)** used for **[PROGRAM NAME]:**
            - Free response
    - Other materials (e.g., toys for children during visitation)
        - [If yes, appears on next screen] Please describe the ***other materials (e.g., toys for children during visitation)*** used for **[PROGRAM NAME]**:
            - Free response
    - Technology (e.g., computers, tablets, recording materials, Wi-Fi)
        - [If yes, appears on next screen] Please describe the ***technology (e.g., computers, tablets, recording materials, Wi-Fi)*** used for **[PROGRAM NAME]**:
            - Free response
    - Classroom space
    - Visitation space
    - Other resources (specify):

[Perceptions of Program]
37. To what extent do you agree that **[PROGRAM NAME]** is meeting its goals and objectives? (select one response)
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

38. What factors contribute to successful implementation of **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
    - Staff skills
    - Parent interest and/or motivation
    - Adequate funding
    - Effective program materials, space, equipment or other resources
    - Support/buy-in from the facility staff
    - Support/buy-in from [STATE DOC NAME]
    - Please use the space below to describe any other factors that contribute to successful program implementation
        - Free response box

39. What factors pose challenges to the implementation of **[PROGRAM NAME]**? (select all that apply)
    - Low participation from parents
    - Limited parent interest and/or motivation
    - Limited parent availability/time
    - Low participation from children or other family members
    - Too few staff to implement [PROGRAM NAME]
    - Limited staff capacity (e.g., limited time, availability, and/or skill)
    - Insufficient staff training
    - Lack of staff buy-in
    - Staff burnout (e.g., staff feeling overworked)
    - Limited funding
    - Limited space, materials, or resources
    - Please use the space below to describe any other factors that pose challenges to program implementation
        - Free response box

40. How, if at all, has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the delivery of **[PROGRAM NAME]**? If program delivery has not been affected by COVID-19, select next.
    - Free response box

41. Please use the space below to share any additional details about **[PROGRAM NAME]** that this survey did not capture. If you do not have additional details to share, select next.

- Free response box

[Program 2; Q42 and Q43 should appear after the first program only; SKIP 42 and 43 for respondents answering for the second program]

Thank you for telling us about **[PROGRAM NAME]**

42. Do you have a second effective parenting program at your facility that you would like to tell us about?
    - Yes
    - No

[If Yes to Q42]

43. What is the name of the *second most effective parenting program* at your facility?
    (An *effective* parenting program is defined as a program that is successfully meeting the program objectives based on staff perceptions, parent perceptions, conducted research, and/or other evidence.)
    - Free response

[Repeat Q3-41]

[If No to Q42, go to closing question below; the text below will also follow Q41 for the second program for respondents who answer for two programs]

[closing question]

Please use the space below to share any additional information not captured by this survey on the ways your facility supports incarcerated parents. You may provide information about other parenting programs or services, supports, or resources **for incarcerated parents that were not captured in the survey**. If you do not have additional information to share, select next.
    - Free response box