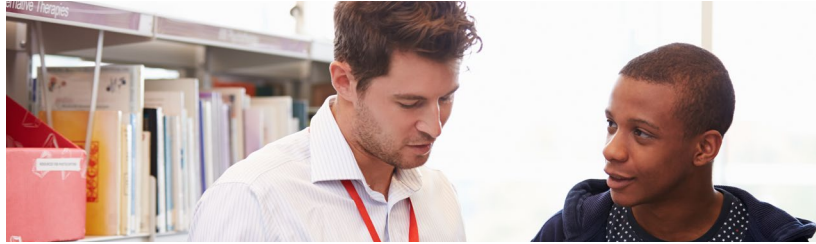


DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Video: *Supporting Youth with Incarcerated Parents*

[HTTP://www.YOUTH.gov/COIP](http://www.YOUTH.gov/COIP)



WHO CAN USE THIS GUIDE?

This discussion guide is designed for school staff who provide direct supports and services to students: teachers, administrators, and support staff (e.g., school social worker, psychologist, guidance counselor, librarian, art teacher, PE teacher, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver).

This guide was developed to accompany the video, [**Supporting Youth with Incarcerated Parents: For School Staff**](#), created by American Institutes for Research (AIR) for the Federal Interagency Council on Crime Prevention and Improving Reentry and youth.gov to highlight issues affecting youth who have or have had an incarcerated parent. Content for the video builds on learning from previous work, including a [**youth listening session**](#) about the needs of youth with an incarcerated parent and their families and the effects of incarceration on everyday life, including a child's education.

Content for the video was informed by focus group phone calls with youth, educators, and experts who work with youth with incarcerated parents. AIR partnered with Echoes of Incarceration and Osborne Association of New York to record the featured youth, educators, and experts.

In an effort to extend this learning opportunity, we have developed a list of discussion questions to foster positive conversations at the school level. These conversations are intended to expand school staff's awareness and understanding of the needs of children and youth with incarcerated parents, expand classroom and school-wide practices to better address their needs, and explore ways to promote improved educational outcomes for these students.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Option One: The discussion questions can be reviewed and deliberated as a large group, or the school staff could be divided into smaller groups. In smaller groups, each group or table could take a different question to discuss then share their conversation with the larger group promoting peer-to-peer learning.

Option Two: This learning opportunity could be extended throughout the quarter of a school year, where each question is presented in a "faculty-study" format that allows one question to be studied each month with a report out at monthly professional development activities. Utilizing the additional resources found on page 2 may be an excellent start to extend learning through individual and group reading.



PLANNING TIPS

- Decide who will facilitate the conversation.
- Ideally, the chosen facilitator should review the discussion prompts and additional resources (included below) ahead of time and consider adjusting them to meet their setting and audience needs.
- Plan for participants to watch the full video (approximately 25 minutes long).
- Allow about 30 minutes to discuss the prompts. If the group is larger than 10 people, consider breaking into small groups.
- The facilitator may need to answer general questions about the video content prior to discussion prompts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Increase school personnel's awareness and understanding of the experiences and issues faced by students with incarcerated parents.
2. Identify classroom and school-wide practices and strategies that educators and experts can use to address the needs of students with incarcerated parents (e.g., trust, abandonment, guilt, stigma, secrecy, relational struggles, understanding the justice system, as well as strengths such as resiliency and ability to forgive).
3. Highlight the role of trauma and trauma-informed practices and strategies for addressing the needs of students with incarcerated parents.
4. Identify ideas for potential policy change that may impact the experience of school as a safe and inclusive environment for students with incarcerated parents.
5. Identify ways to promote positive educational outcomes for students with incarcerated parents.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO EXTEND THE LEARNING

Dallaire, D. H. (2010). Teachers' experiences with and expectations of children with incarcerated parents. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 31*(4), 281-290.

Federal Youth Topic on Children of Incarcerated Parents: <https://youth.gov/coip>

- Video Vignettes (Four youth share their experiences with having an incarcerated parent): <https://youth.gov/coip/video>
- Teacher Tip Sheet (Recommendations for how teachers can contribute to positive outcomes): <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/federal-tools-resources/tip-sheet-teachers>
- Teacher Webinar (90-minute archived presentation, featuring two experts in the field, an educator, and a youth with lived experience of having an incarcerated parent): <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/presentations>
- Infographic (Facts and statistics showing the impact of incarceration): https://youth.gov/sites/default/files/COIPInfographic_508.pdf

Felitti et al. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 14*(4), 245-258.

National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated: <https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>

Osborne Association: Programs and Services for Families Affected by the Justice System: <http://www.osborneny.org/>

Poehlmann, J., & Eddy, J. M. (2013). *Relationship processes and resilience in children with incarcerated parents*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership: Bill of Rights: <http://www.sfcipp.org/download-the-bill-of-rights-1>



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Identify two or more facts or data points that you learned through viewing this video. Did any of these surprise you? Were any particularly meaningful to you? Did any change your outlook about your role in the school?

Remember: 2.7 million young people have an incarcerated parent. That is the equivalent of 1 in 28 youth.

2. How might schools make the student body aware that 1 in 28 youth has an incarcerated parent? Name 3 to 5 specific activities (school-wide and/or in the classroom) that may help increase awareness among students and staff that there are students in the school with an incarcerated parent.

Remember: Students with incarcerated parents often feel alone or that they are the only one with an incarcerated parent. Balance support without “outing” students who do not want it to be known.

3. Regardless of your role in the school, you have the capacity to be influential in altering policy and practices to better address the needs of children and youth with incarcerated parents. Identify 3 or 4 policies and practices in your classroom or school that might be reconsidered or added in order to be more inclusive of these students. Share examples of language choices that are effective and inclusive of students with an incarcerated parent.

Remember: *YOU* can be a powerful and trusted adult for students with an incarcerated parent.

4. Knowing a student may have visited a parent at a facility over the weekend, how can you help manage his or her feelings and behaviors as he or she adjusts and transitions back into the school day?

Remember: The student may be dealing with the many feelings that come after a visit, including the pain of leaving a parent behind. Try to empathize and provide extra support of the parent-child relationship in the days that follow a visit as well as throughout the year.

5. In your role on the school staff, if you learn that there is a student whose parent is absent from the home due to incarceration, what are some **trauma-informed*** approaches, supports, or strategies you might use to promote positive interactions and outcomes with the 1) student, and 2) student's caregiver?

Remember: Approaches may differ depending on each staff person's role in the school.

* A program, organization, or system that is **trauma-informed** realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization. (Source: [SAMHSA](#))

Trauma Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Author.

DeCandia, C. J., & Guarino, K. (2015). Trauma-informed care: An ecological response. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*.

Refer to page two for additional resources focusing on supporting youth with an incarcerated parent.