



CHILDHOOD TRAUMA:

THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION
ON CHILDREN and Their
Education

Incarceration: Jail vs. Prison

- Jail: Definitions may vary by state, but jails usually fall under local jurisdiction. Jails confines individuals who are waiting trial or sentencing, or who have sentences shorter than one year, usually for misdemeanors.
- Prison: Usually state or federal facilities for individuals who have committed felonies or who's sentences are for longer than a year.
- Traumatic event and parental incarceration:
 - Children with incarcerated parents face a wide range of childhood trauma that can impact their education.
 - Trauma can be related to their parent's arrest or the experiences that led to the arrest (i.e. exposure to violence in their communities or inside their home).

Incarceration: How does it impact children's education?

- Today, being arrested, imprisoned, or on probation has serious impacts on not only that individual, but also their families.
- A 2015 study showed that 1 in 9 black children had a parent in jail or prison, which was about twice as high as their white counterparts.
- Children are the most vulnerable when a parent is incarcerated.
- Some children may begin to have negative views of authority, especially police as a result of a parents' incarceration
- One study has shown that 67% of arrested parents were handcuffed in front of their children.

Incarceration: How does it impact children's education?:

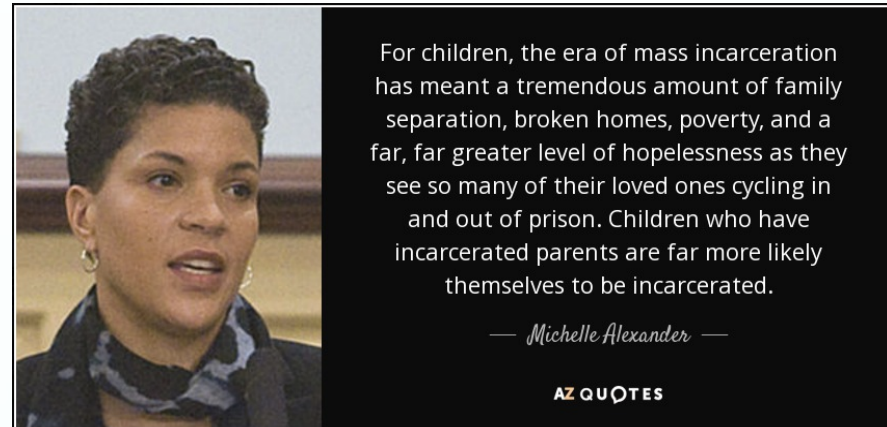
- In a 2016 report done by the Economic Policy Institute, researchers found that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to:
 - Drop out of school
 - Develop learning disabilities, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
 - Misbehave in school
 - Suffer from migraines, asthma, high cholesterol, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homelessness

◆ Each of these conditions challenges a student's academic performance.

- Elementary school children with incarcerated *fathers* were more likely to experience grade retention than their peers who did not have an incarcerated parent.
- 49% of children aged 9-14 with an incarcerated mother experienced behavioral issues that led to suspension. 45% expressed little to no interest in school when the parent that was incarcerated mother.
- In examining school performance among 13 to 20 year olds, when the mother is incarcerated these kids were more disinterested in school, likely to be suspended, or fail a class.

Common identifiers

- Things to look for when a child's parent is incarcerated:
 - Acting out
 - Sleeping in class
 - Dropping grades
 - Resistance to authority
 - Low self esteem
 - Depression
 - Suspected drug use
 - Suicidal tendencies



For children, the era of mass incarceration has meant a tremendous amount of family separation, broken homes, poverty, and a far, far greater level of hopelessness as they see so many of their loved ones cycling in and out of prison. Children who have incarcerated parents are far more likely themselves to be incarcerated.

— Michelle Alexander —

AZ QUOTES

How can I help?

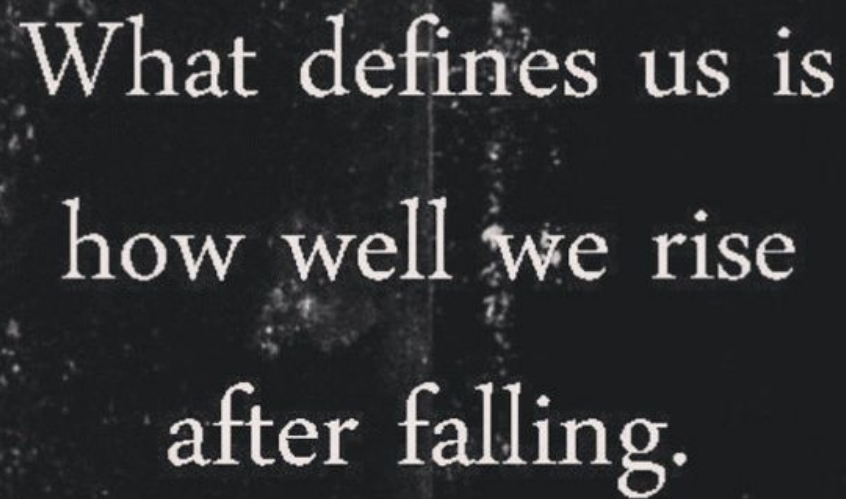
- Teachers
 - Be aware of stereotypes and your own subconscious assumptions. Subconscious assumptions can affect the child's ability to learn.
 - Be sensitive to emotional triggers
 - Understand whether your student knows why their parent is incarcerated before speaking with them.
 - Collaborate with other parent or caregiver regarding the child's emotional wellbeing
 - Assist child with achieving educational outcomes by identifying areas of vulnerability
 - Advocate and educate colleagues regarding stigmas of children of incarcerated parents

How can I help?

- Counselors
 - Conflict resolution
 - Connection to community resources
 - Coping skills
 - Managing feelings
 - Problem solving skills

How can I help?

- School Administrators
 - Changing personal attitudes
 - Collaborating with community resources
 - Collecting data
 - Commit to quality (i.e. consistency in stated goals)



What defines us is
how well we rise
after falling.

Contact Information

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