

# 1 in 28 children in the United States has an incarcerated parent.

*As communities across the state recognize the importance of second chances and re-entry work both during April as Second Chance/Re-Entry Month and throughout the year, we encourage individuals and organizations to consider what re-entry means for children and families.*

## Returning Parent

- **Start the re-entry conversation now!** Put together a plan for the next six months to a year (or a timeframe that make sense). If your children are old enough, include them in the plan and encourage them to have a voice. Share that plan with your children and their caregiver.
- **Children and families often develop their own routines.** Be respectful of that.
- **Avoid drama,** including questions about possible new partners in the caregiver's life.

## Caregiver/Family

- **Just because the incarceration is over doesn't necessarily mean the impacts are over too.** Children and families feel the effects when parents can't find a job, secure safe and affordable housing, access community resources, and more due to their criminal record.
- **Recognize that the caregiver will have their own feelings** in addition to supporting the children and their feelings.
- **Consider whether counseling might be an appropriate option.** Ask if a potential counselor has experience working with children of incarcerated or returning parents or at least has some experience with the issue and feels comfortable supporting children.

## Child

- **Who in the children's lives knows about the parental incarceration and re-entry?**
- **Create an atmosphere where children are supported and encouraged to ask questions and share their feelings** (which may or not match up with what other family members are feeling). Children may be: excited or not excited, worried that their parent will go back or that they'll have to move again, and more.

## Resources

- [From Arrest to Homecoming: Address the Needs of Children of Incarcerated Parents – National Reentry Resource Center](#)
- [Different Children/Behaviors – National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated](#)
- [Preparing for Release – Pillars](#)
- [Life After Prison – Pillars](#)
- [CASEL Framework](#)
- [Parents in Prison – The Sentencing Project, 2021](#)
- [How Parental Incarceration Harms Children and What to Do About It – National Council on Family Relations, 2018](#)
- [Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children, 2017](#)
- [Children of Incarcerated Parents, A Shared Sentence – Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016](#)



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