



## Hurry, Florida's Children of Incarcerated Parents Can't Wait

According to a new report just released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, *A Shared Sentence: The Devastating Toll of Parental Incarceration on Kids, Families and Communities*, 312,000 of Florida's children have experienced the separation of a parent due to incarceration. The report recommends policies and practices that put the needs of children of incarcerated parents first. It calls on correctional systems, communities and state and local public agencies to help stabilize families and to help preserve family ties during incarceration — and to assist families in successfully moving forward once parents come home.

Florida has the third largest number of children who have experienced parental incarceration. As of 12/31/2015, 34.4% of Florida's 99,485 inmates reported having 64,848 minor children. Male inmates constituted 88.0% of the inmates who reported having minor children. Only 15.8% of inmates reported that their children lived in the same county or an adjacent county, limiting the opportunities for in-person visits.

### Effects:

#### Children

- Increased likelihood of mental health problems
- Increased trouble in school
- Trauma from separation

#### Families

- Finding and maintaining stable housing
- Finding and maintaining stable employment
- Distance to prison locations make it difficult for families to visit and maintain relationships

#### Communities

- Funds for imprisonment pulls funds from education, health care and other social programs
- Fewer available employees weakens local economy
- Have weaker social support networks for their residents
- Have increased recidivism

### Choose to Help!

Support for the policies and programs identified below will help prioritize the needs of children when systems make decisions about sentencing parents to minimize the impact of incarceration on their lives and give them a fair chance for a bright future.

- Provide opportunities for children to visit their parents in person or virtually; promote and support their relationship once the parent returns home.
- Reduce barriers to employment, child care and stable housing; provide better access to help meet these needs.
- Develop community programs that connect education, child welfare, faith-based organizations and others to support families while a parent is incarcerated and parents returning from prison.

### Adult Reflections of Childhood Experiences

*"I had to grow up fast and be very responsible for my two younger siblings. I also had to be responsible when she was in prison, I visited her in prison every weekend, I was writing her often sending pictures and I always made sure she had some money in her canteen that I provided from my part-time job."*

*"Looking back our lives could have been less traumatic if there would have been free rehabilitation programs for repeat drug offenders support for single mothers in domestic abuse situations mental health facilities that were free and targeted at long lasting behavioral changes not just temporary solutions and adjusting sentencing guidelines for nonviolent offenders with an apparent trend related to alcohol and drugs"*

*"I believe people in positions of power, such as judges, should give a little bit more thought to sentencing, the cause-and-effect relationships that lead people to these points, and the long-term effects of incarcerating nonviolent offenders for long stretches of time with juvenile children."*

*"Community organizations, schools and judges should reach out to children that have parents who have been incarcerated and create some sort of group that offers activities and group counseling for the children. I remember being embarrassed about my mother's situation and would have liked to know if there were other kids going through the same thing."*

Incarcerated Parents in Florida Counties

|                | Inmates with One or More Minor Child(ren)* | Children of Inmates (resident county)* | Parent is housed in same or adjacent county as children |      |
|----------------|--|--|---|------|
|                |  |  | #   | %    |
| <b>Florida</b> | 34,253                                     | 64,848                                 | 10,230  | 15.8 |
| Alachua        | 194  | 1,178                                  | 461   | 39.1 |
| Baker          | 905  | 129                                    | 38  | 29.5 |
| Bay            | 331  | 708                                    | 229   | 32.3 |
| Bradford       | 1,281                                      | 190                                    | 65  | 34.2 |
| Brevard        | 30   | 1,815                                  | 289   | 15.9 |
| Broward        | 185  | 1,767                                  | 512   | 29.0 |
| Calhoun        | 569  | 76                                     | 26  | 34.2 |
| Charlotte      | 323  | 354                                    | 35  | 9.9  |
| Citrus         | **   | 500                                    | 115   | 23.0 |
| Clay           | **   | 524                                    | 99  | 18.9 |
| Collier        | **   | 230                                    | 45  | 19.6 |
| Columbia       | 1,131                                      | 520                                    | 169   | 32.5 |
| Miami-Dade     | 1,367                                      | 2,396                                  | 548   | 22.9 |
| DeSoto         | 468  | 175                                    | 16  | 9.1  |
| Dixie          | 590  | 88                                     | ***   | ***  |
| Duval          | 194  | 5,460                                  | 1,094   | 20.0 |
| Escambia       | 605  | 1,218                                  | 347   | 28.5 |
| Flagler        | **   | 287                                    | 18  | 6.3  |
| Franklin       | 623  | 47                                     | ***   | ***  |
| Gadsden        | 1,201                                      | 240                                    | 63  | 26.3 |
| Gilchrist      | 89   | 71                                     | 20  | 28.2 |
| Glades         | 231  | 37                                     | ***   | ***  |
| Gulf           | 1,248                                      | 63                                     | ***   | ***  |
| Hamilton       | 839  | 62                                     | 17  | 27.4 |
| Hardee         | 433  | 174                                    | 24  | 13.8 |
| Hendry         | **   | 78                                     | 10  | 12.8 |
| Hernando       | 206  | 531                                    | 33  | 6.2  |
| Highlands      | **   | 465                                    | 71  | 15.3 |
| Hillsborough   | **   | 4,631                                  | 823   | 17.8 |
| Holmes         | 435  | 69                                     | 10  | 14.5 |
| Indian River   | **   | 437                                    | 41  | 9.4  |
| Jackson        | 1,967                                      | 235                                    | 110   | 46.8 |
| Jefferson      | 311  | 53                                     | 11  | 20.8 |
| Lafayette      | 557  | 18                                     | ***   | ***  |

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|--------------|--|--|---|------|
|              |  |  | #   | %    |
| Lake         | 277  | 938                                    | 266   | 28.4 |
| Lee          | 41   | 915                                    | 85  | 9.3  |
| Leon         | 54   | 973                                    | 270   | 27.7 |
| Levy         | **   | 144                                    | 36  | 25.0 |
| Liberty      | 604  | 39                                     | 12  | 30.8 |
| Madison      | 519  | 91                                     | 15  | 16.5 |
| Manatee      | 76   | 1,019                                  | 135   | 13.2 |
| Marion       | 2,517                                      | 1,734                                  | 345   | 19.9 |
| Martin       | 441  | 341                                    | 64  | 18.8 |
| Monroe       | 19   | 47                                     | 16  | 34.0 |
| Nassau       | **   | 178                                    | 48  | 27.0 |
| Okaloosa     | 361  | 404                                    | 126   | 31.2 |
| Okeechobee   | 516  | 267                                    | 41  | 15.4 |
| Orange       | 1,297                                      | 3,893                                  | 566   | 14.5 |
| Osceola      | 87   | 702                                    | 107   | 15.2 |
| Palm Beach   | 545  | 1,225                                  | 237   | 19.3 |
| Pasco        | 130  | 939                                    | 153   | 16.3 |
| Pinellas     | 268  | 3,006                                  | 128   | 4.3  |
| Polk         | 1,195                                      | 2,864                                  | 840   | 29.3 |
| Putnam       | 222  | 612                                    | 150   | 24.5 |
| Saint Johns  | **   | 431                                    | 27  | 6.3  |
| Saint Lucie  | 34   | 1,104                                  | 147   | 13.3 |
| Santa Rosa   | 1,726                                      | 303                                    | 88  | 29.0 |
| Sarasota     | **   | 753                                    | 25  | 3.3  |
| Seminole     | **   | 900                                    | 145   | 16.1 |
| Sumter       | 433  | 225                                    | 66  | 29.3 |
| Suwannee     | 1,030                                      | 230                                    | 41  | 17.8 |
| Taylor       | 1,188                                      | 129                                    | ***   | ***  |
| Union        | 1,275                                      | 77                                     | 21  | 27.3 |
| Volusia      | 602  | 1,860                                  | 544   | 29.2 |
| Wakulla      | 1,135                                      | 69                                     | ***   | ***  |
| Walton       | 541  | 163                                    | 76  | 46.6 |
| Washington   | 807  | 80                                     | 25  | 31.3 |
| Out of State |  | 1,691                                  |   |      |
| Unknown      |  | 11,676                                 |   |      |

\*Inmate self report.

\*\*County has no state prison facilities.

\*\*\*Data for groups less than 10 are suppressed due to confidentiality