



# **Parental Incarceration and the Family: Psychological and Social Effects of Imprisonment on Children, Parents, and Caregivers**

*Joyce A. Arditti*

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Over 2% of U.S. children under the age of 18—more than 1,700,000 children—have a parent in prison. These children experience very real disadvantages when compared to their peers: they tend to experience lower levels of educational success, social exclusion, and even a higher likelihood of their own future incarceration. Meanwhile, their new caregivers have to adjust to their new responsibilities as their lives change overnight, and the incarcerated parents are cut off from their children's development.

*Parental Incarceration and the Family* brings a family perspective to our understanding of what it means to have so many of our nation's parents in prison. Drawing from the field's most recent research and the author's own fieldwork, Joyce Arditti offers an in-depth look at how incarceration affects entire families: offender parents, children, and care-givers. Through the use of exemplars, anecdotes, and reflections, Joyce Arditti puts a human face on the mass of humanity behind bars, as well as those family members who are affected by a parent's imprisonment. In focusing on offenders as parents, a radically different social policy agenda emerges—one that calls for real reform and that responds to the collective vulnerabilities of the incarcerated and their kin.

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