

LITTLE **children** BIG **challenges:incarceration**

The Need

The number of children with an incarcerated parent has increased nearly 80% in the past 20 years.¹ Nearly 2.7 million children have a parent in state or federal prison, yet few resources exist to support young children and families coping with this life-changing circumstance.² Children need tools to express emotions, while their caregivers need help maintaining routines and establishing age-appropriate communication around incarceration. Providing adults and children with coping strategies and additional emotional resources can help them feel comforted and secure throughout this difficult time.



The Initiative

***Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration* is designed to:**

- support, comfort, and reduce anxiety, sadness, and confusion that young children (ages 3-8) may experience during the incarceration of a parent.
- provide at-home caregivers with strategies, tips, and age-appropriate language they can use to help communicate with their children about incarceration.
- inform incarcerated parents that they can parent from anywhere, and provide them with simple parenting tips highlighting the importance of communication.

1 Glaze, L., & Maruschak, L. (2008). Parents in prison and their minor children. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report* (NCJ 22984), pp. 1-25. Retrieved from: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=823>
2 Glaze, L., & Maruschak, L. (2008).

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Initiative Components

- **Multimedia resource kits**
 - **Sesame Street DVD** featuring a Muppet story, live-action films showcasing real children and families, and an animated segment
 - **Guide for parents and caregivers**
 - **Children's storybook**
- **Sesame Street: Incarceration app** for adults to use on tablets and phones, available on Google Play™, the App StoreSM, and the Amazon Appstore for Android on Kindle Fire
- **Sesamestreet.org/incarceration**
 - **Online toolkit** with downloadable versions of all materials and links to training webinars
 - **Tip sheet for incarcerated parents**
 - **Training webinars** to educate service providers on how to use the resources with children and families
- **Youtube.com/SesameStreetInCommunities** featuring playlists of videos related to the initiative
- **Facebook.com/SesameStreetInCommunities** for sharing Sesame Street's free educational resources with adults
- **Sesameworkshop.org/incarceration/partners** for press and partners



Formative and Impact Evaluation

Resources are based on formative evaluation conducted with parents and caregivers, service providers, and incarcerated parents. An assessment of the initiative will be conducted with caregivers to evaluate changes in young children's abilities to cope with the incarceration of a parent.

Distribution Plan

Sesame Workshop worked closely with advisors and partners to integrate *Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration* resources into correctional facilities and organizations that specialize in early childhood education, mental health and counseling, parenting programs, foster care, and that have missions specific to helping families cope with the incarceration of a loved one. Sesame Workshop will also pilot, in several key states, a deeper implementation of these resources.

Initiative Supporters

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