



## Incarcerated Mothers and their Children: Highlights from the new Federal Report

In August 2008, the Bureau of Justice Statistics released *Parents in Prison and their Minor Children*, a compendium of the latest data on incarcerated parents and their children. Below are some highlights of the data as they relate to incarcerated mothers and their families.

### More mothers in prison than ever before:

- At midyear 2007, approximately 65,600 women in federal and state custody reported being the mothers of 147,400 minor children.<sup>i</sup>
- As the rate of female incarceration has increased the number of children impacted by maternal incarceration has also increased. The number of mothers in prison increased by 122 percent since 1991 while the number of incarcerated fathers increased by 77 percent during the same time period.<sup>ii</sup>

### Who cared for the children before the mother's incarceration?

- Prior to incarceration, women were more likely than men to live with their children, be the primary caregiver and to be the head of a single-parent household. In the month prior to arrest or immediately before incarceration, 64.2 percent of mothers lived with their child(ren) compared to 46.5 percent of fathers.<sup>iii</sup>
- Nearly 42 percent of incarcerated mothers reported living in a single-parent household.<sup>iv</sup> Seventy-seven percent of mothers, nearly three times the number of fathers, reported providing most of the daily care for their child(ren).<sup>v</sup>
- Mothers and fathers equally reported being the main source of financial support for their children.<sup>vi</sup>

### Who is caring for the children during the mother's incarceration?

- Where a child resides during their parent's incarceration also differs between mothers and fathers. Mothers often identified (42 percent) the child's grandmother as the current caregiver while 88 percent of fathers reported their children living with the child's mother.<sup>vii</sup>
- Eleven percent of mothers reported their children being placed in foster care, compared to only two percent of fathers.<sup>viii</sup>

For more on this topic, see the full report: *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children* at:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>

<sup>i</sup> Glaze, Lauren. and Laura M. Maruschak. *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report; August 2008 – Page 2.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Glaze, Lauren. and Laura M. Maruschak. *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report; August 2008 – Page 4-5.

<sup>iv</sup> Glaze, Lauren. and Laura M. Maruschak. *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report; August 2008 – Page 4.

<sup>v</sup> Glaze, Lauren. and Laura M. Maruschak. *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report; August 2008 – Page 5.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid.