

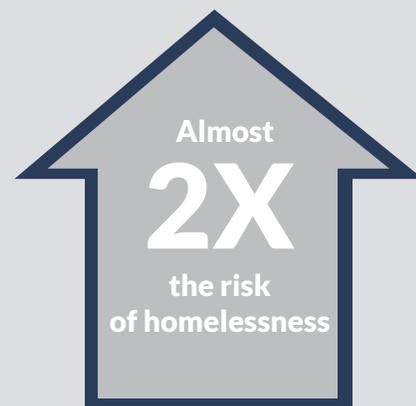


Recent Incarceration of Father Linked to Nearly Double the Risk of Childhood Homelessness

Children with recently incarcerated fathers faced almost double the risk of homelessness compared to their peers, according to a study published in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Utilizing data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study,¹ which tracks nearly 5,000 children born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000, the author examined recent parental incarceration and its relationship to child homelessness.² Recent incarceration of the father was associated with a 95-97% increased odds of childhood homelessness—almost doubling the risk—compared to that among children whose fathers had not been incarcerated recently.³ However, recent incarceration of the mother was found not to be associated with an increased risk, possibly because it often leads to the diversion of children into the child welfare system and foster care placements. Additionally, results of the analysis indicated that the elevated risk for homelessness was concentrated among African-American children. The author suggests that these findings, combined with increases and disparities in the risk of parental incarceration, imply that skyrocketing incarceration accounted for a 65% increase in black-white inequality in child homelessness, a disparity that may contribute to future inequalities in civic preparedness and participation.

INCREASED RISK

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Source:

Wildeman, C. (2014). Parental Incarceration, Child Homelessness, and the Invisible Consequences of Mass Imprisonment. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 651(1), 74-96. doi: 10.1177/0002716213502921

Notes:

¹ The ongoing study involves interviews conducted with participants to address a variety of research questions about parents and their children. Approximately three-quarters of the children in the study were born to unmarried parents.

² Children were considered to have experienced recent parental incarceration if a parent reported incarceration at the 60-month interview, or since the last interview but not at the 30-month interview. Children were considered to have been homeless if, at the 60-month interview, a parent reported currently living in temporary housing, a shelter, or on the street, or having stayed somewhere not intended for regular housing (e.g., a car) at least one night in the past year, and if the same parent reported living with the child all or most of the time.

³ The analysis controlled for a variety of factors, including history of parental incarceration and housing instability.

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