

Improving outcomes for children with a parent in prison

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What we know

- New Zealand has a high rate of imprisonment and most prisoners are parents.
- Children with a parent in prison tend to come from families with multiple existing risk factors. These risk factors are consistent across multiple generations and in different countries.
- Children with a parent in prison experience a wide range of negative impacts, including long-term poor health, educational and social outcomes and are at high risk of future imprisonment themselves.
- In some instances, parental imprisonment can have positive impacts on children, such as alleviating exposure to family violence and substance abuse.
- Māori children are much more likely to have a parent in prison compared to non-Māori.

About *What Works*

Superu's *What Works* series synthesises what we do and don't know about a specific social sector topic. We draw on international and New Zealand research to identify what does and doesn't work to address the topic at hand. Our aim is to inform decisions and investment in the social sector.

What Works or is promising

- There is strong evidence that nurse-home visiting programmes, parenting skills programmes and Multisystemic Therapy are effective for children generally at risk, and are likely to benefit children with a parent in prison.
- Maintaining stable living arrangements is important for child wellbeing and outcomes. When this is not possible, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care should be provided.
- Practices such as following child-friendly arrest procedures and providing child-friendly prison visiting facilities can help alleviate specific stressors for the child.
- Early interventions for children with a parent in prison are likely to have long-term benefits for the children and be cost effective for society.

What we don't know

- It is difficult to determine the additional and compounding effects of parental incarceration for children who already have many risk factors for poor outcomes.
- We need more evidence to determine the most effective interventions for these children.

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8th

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Introduction

There is growing interest internationally, among policymakers and researchers, in the children of prisoners and the impacts of parental imprisonment on families. This interest is in part due to the increasing number of such children in many countries with policies that have resulted in high levels of incarceration. Increasingly, children with an imprisoned parent have been identified as a group at risk of poor social outcomes. The recent government focus on vulnerable children (eg, the *Green Paper for Vulnerable Children*, *White Paper for Vulnerable Children* and the *Children's Action Plan*) has highlighted an absence of a policy focus on the children of prisoners in New Zealand. For example, a joint submission on the *Vulnerable Children Green Paper* by Rethinking Crime and Punishment, noted that:

Our criminal justice, and particularly penal, system needs to consider the impact of the separation of whānau, stigmatisation and socio-economic pressure that results from incarceration⁽¹⁾.

Similarly, the 2012 report by the Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on solutions to child poverty⁽²⁾ recommended that the government significantly increase support for children of imprisoned parents. More recently, The Treasury has identified children with prison connections as a priority in their work to improve government support for those most troubled and at-risk children and families⁽³⁾. The recently launched *Whole-of-Government Action Plan to Reduce the Harms Caused by New Zealand Adult Gangs* also highlights the importance of improving outcomes for children of gang members who are in prison⁽⁴⁾.

There has been little New Zealand research in this area despite growing international evidence that children of prisoners may experience many negative social and emotional impacts. Families with an imprisoned parent typically experience a range of complex issues, and it is difficult to separate out the causal factors that lead to poor outcomes for these children. These outcomes typically have far-reaching consequences for the children and for society. This 'What Works' paper seeks to answer these questions: What are the impacts on children with a parent in prison, and what do we know about how to mitigate those impacts? This paper considers the negative, and potentially positive, effects of parental incarceration on children, before discussing current and promising approaches to improve outcomes for these children.

New Zealand has a high rate of imprisonment

New Zealand's prison population is increasing. As at 31 December 2014, New Zealand had a prison population of 190 per 100,000 of the population, or 8,641⁽⁵⁾ people out of a population of 4.55 million⁽⁶⁾. In 2011, New Zealand had the eighth-highest rate of imprisonment (at 199 per 100,000 of the population) in the 34 countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁽⁷⁾. In many countries there are little data available on the actual number of children who have parents in prison and our understanding of the scope of the problem is based on estimates. For example, in Australia national data are not collected but population modelling estimates that approximately five percent of all Australian children are affected by parental incarceration on an annual basis⁽⁸⁾.

Most prisoners are parents

An estimated 20,000 New Zealand children are affected by parental imprisonment⁽⁹⁾. This figure is supported by a survey of prisoners in which a similar estimate was extrapolated using data from 368 prisoners. In a small sample of 137 prisoners, 87 percent of women and 65 percent of men were parents⁽¹⁰⁾. The number of children affected by maternal incarceration is considerably smaller than those impacted by paternal incarceration. Although a higher percentage of female prisoners are parents compared to male prisoners, males make up the majority of the prison population. As at 31 December 2014, 94 percent of prisoners were male and six percent female⁽⁵⁾.

Men who spend time in prison are likely to father a disproportionately high number of children. Data from the longitudinal Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health & Development Study show that men who engage in highly antisocial behaviour only make up 10 percent of the birth cohort, yet account for 27 percent of the babies fathered by the time the men are aged 26 years⁽¹¹⁾.

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High rates of recidivism make parental incarceration a chronic and recurring problem, rather than an isolated event. In New Zealand, 60 percent of prisoners re-offend and nearly 40 percent return to prison within two years of being released⁽¹²⁾.

Māori children are more likely to have a parent in prison

Māori are over-represented in the prison population. As at 31 December 2014, Māori made up 50 percent of the prison population⁽⁵⁾; by comparison, Māori comprise about 14 percent of the general New Zealand population⁽⁶⁾. At any given time point between 1997 and 2007, three percent of all Māori males between the ages of 20 and 29 were in prison. The corresponding figure for non-Māori was 0.5 percent⁽¹³⁾.

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Children with a parent in prison experience many negative impacts

Many health, educational and social outcomes for children with a parent in prison can be determined from robust, prospective longitudinal studies.

These data are supplemented by findings from smaller qualitative studies, which report a number of negative experiences associated with having a parent in prison.

Children face social stigma

Children experience stigma and discrimination due to having a parent in prison. In some cases stigma can lead to social isolation, hostility from peers and social rejection. Children also mention bullying by peers, teachers and neighbours, and feelings of shame⁽¹⁴⁾.

Teachers also report that children with imprisoned parents experience stigmatisation at school. In one study, teachers themselves rated children with a parent in prison as being less competent than their peers⁽¹⁵⁾.

Children are often unsure about telling people that their parent is in prison. Caregivers, wanting to protect the child, sometimes instruct children to keep the incarceration confidential⁽¹⁶⁾.

Children lack information about their parent's situation

Children are often not told the truth by their carers about their imprisoned parent's situation, and are instead given alternative explanations for the parent's absence. Some evidence suggests that when children are confused or deceived about why their parent is missing, the absence can be more difficult to cope with, with children imagining far worse scenarios and having feelings of abandonment⁽¹⁷⁾.

It is difficult for children to maintain contact with their imprisoned parent

Some children feel strongly about maintaining contact with their imprisoned parent, and see their parent as a source of social and emotional support even when contact is limited or unpredictable. Maintaining a meaningful relationship with a parent in prison can be difficult. Communication by phone is often limited due to cost and other challenges, and visits can be restricted by distance and cost of travel. Caregivers can act as 'gatekeepers' in the child-imprisoned parent relationship. Depending on their relationship with the imprisoned parent, the caregiver can either facilitate or inhibit the relationship between the child and the parent in prison. Prison visits can be discouraging and distressing to children and families – prisons are generally not child-friendly places to visit. Problems associated with prison visits include long waiting periods, crowded and noisy visiting areas, frightening security procedures, insensitive prison officers, and restrictions on physical contact between family members and the prisoner⁽¹⁸⁾.

Children face instability

The incarceration of a parent can lead to changes in the lives of children. Instability can be caused by changes to living arrangements, caregiving arrangements and housing. Some children have to relocate to a different town or city, requiring adaptation and the need to build new social networks. Foster care can create instability through multiple placements and moves and the subsequent loss of important support networks (eg, friends, siblings and extended family)⁽¹⁹⁾. Instability can also occur when partners of prisoners are stressed and depressed, inhibiting their ability to care for their children while simultaneously supporting their partner in prison⁽²⁰⁾.

Following the imprisonment of a parent, children living in stable households with nurturing caregivers will do better than those who experience family instability⁽²¹⁾.

Children with an imprisoned mother face particular challenges

The impacts of parental incarceration can differ depending on the gender of the imprisoned parent. Children of male prisoners are more likely to stay in the care of their other parent than children of female prisoners. Disruptions to the child's living and caregiving arrangements are more likely to occur when their mother (who is often the sole custodian) is imprisoned. Most mothers in prison lived with their children before incarceration, often in a single-parent household⁽²²⁾. It is estimated that two-thirds of imprisoned mothers are the sole custodial parent before incarceration⁽²³⁾.

Changes in the family's financial circumstances affect the children

Imprisonment of a parent can lead to, or exacerbate family financial hardship. Many families have low incomes prior to the incarceration, and the incarceration of the parent adds financial strain by reducing family income or inhibiting the child's caregiver's capacity to work (eg, the caregiver may need to quit their job or reduce hours to care for the child). There can also be additional costs with supporting the family member in prison⁽²²⁾.

A small New Zealand study⁽¹⁰⁾ reported a range of financial impacts resulting from parental imprisonment. Around 80 percent of the families received social welfare payments and a number of the families had debts to pay as a result of the imprisonment. Many families received economic support such as food parcels from the community.

Children experience emotional distress

A deep sense of loss and grief is a common emotional consequence for families and children following the incarceration of a parent. Australian children and young people with a parent in prison said they felt stressed about their lives and the issues that they were experiencing. The older children described having anxiety and depression and experiencing a range of negative emotions and behaviours. Many of these feelings were associated with the incarceration of their parent and interrelated issues such as homelessness, loss, instability and insecurity⁽¹⁴⁾. Children of prisoners are at increased risk of mental health problems⁽²⁴⁾.

Children experience long-term negative health and education outcomes

Large datasets from longitudinal studies in the United States and United Kingdom have been used to explore the impact of childhood experiences of parental imprisonment on various outcomes in later life. Exposure to parental incarceration during childhood is associated with poor physical and mental

health outcomes in young adults including depression, anxiety, migraines, asthma and high cholesterol⁽²⁵⁾.

In New Zealand, a small survey of children with a parent in prison⁽¹⁰⁾ found that the respondents had a range of physical issues such as asthma, eczema and other allergic and nervous disorders; and emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, shame and attachment problems. A number of the children had mental health or conduct disorders.

Youth with a parent in prison are more likely to report extended absence from school and are less likely to graduate from high school than other young people⁽²⁶⁾. In the New Zealand study, a number of children had changed schools, some had low attendance, some were bullied or were bullies, and nearly all of the children were at risk of failing school⁽¹⁰⁾. Although limited, these findings imply that New Zealand children with a parent in prison are subject to the same poor outcomes that are well documented in international contexts.

There is a high risk of intergenerational offending

The longitudinal Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development⁽³⁵⁾ has followed two subsequent generations from the original cohort, and shows that family criminality is an important predictor of criminal and anti-social behaviour.



CHILDREN WITH A PARENT IN PRISON ARE APPROXIMATELY

6 times

more likely to be imprisoned than children of never-imprisoned parents⁽²⁴⁾.

As well as parental imprisonment, other significant risk factors for offending which remain consistent across generations are harsh discipline, poor parental supervision, a disrupted family, low family income, large family size, poor housing, poor educational achievement, daring/risk taking and antisocial behaviour. These risk factors are also consistent in different places. For example, the childhood risk factors which predicted future antisocial behaviour in London in the 1960s were found to be similar to those in Pittsburgh in the 1990s⁽²⁷⁾.

These outcomes are not explained by parental separation alone

Parental imprisonment appears to affect children over and above separation experiences and associated risks⁽²⁸⁾. The negative effects of parental imprisonment are stronger for children who lived with their fathers before incarceration, but are also significant for children of non-resident fathers. This suggests that incarceration of fathers puts children at greater risk of poor family outcomes, over and above parent-child separation⁽²⁹⁾.

Some children may experience positive impacts of their parent's imprisonment

Policies promoting maintenance of relationships with imprisoned fathers may not always be in the child's best interests⁽³⁰⁾. Evidence in support of unequivocal maintenance of father-child relationships may be inherently biased, as studies which require father participation automatically screen out the most antisocial families (for which the fathers may not be able to be found nor want to participate)⁽³¹⁾. It is important to consider the *quality* of father-child relationships when assessing the impact of non-resident fathers on their children⁽³²⁾.

The longer fathers have spent time in prison, the more likely they are to have low education levels, have multiple children to different mothers and engage in restrictive parenting practices (eg, disciplining children by yelling or hitting them)⁽³⁴⁾. The worst 'career criminals' who have committed multiple offences tend to be violent with their cohabitantes, unemployed and substance abusers. Children of these parents are likely to be exposed to family violence, poverty and substance abuse⁽³⁵⁾. In these circumstances, the child's life can be improved when the parent is imprisoned and there are opportunities to provide intervention services to the family⁽³⁶⁾.

Living with a **highly antisocial father** has negative rather than positive effects on child behaviour – the more the father is present in the child's life, the **stronger the effects** are on the child's behaviour⁽³³⁾.

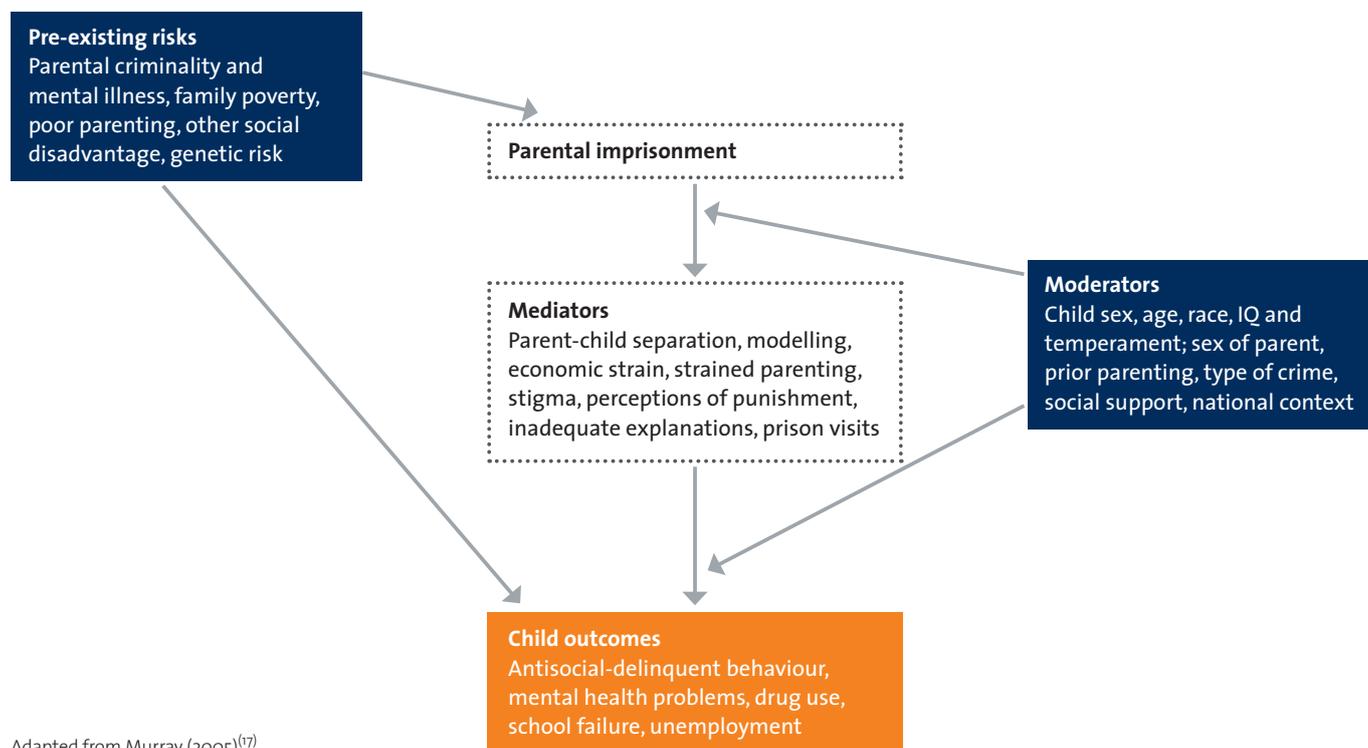
Children with a parent in prison are exposed to many risk factors

Children with a parent in prison tend to come from families with multiple risk factors. In comparison to the general population, prisoners are much more likely to have experienced abuse and neglect, been taken into care during childhood, have multiple mental health problems, unstable romantic relationships, no formal educational qualifications, criminal convictions, low socio-economic status, be unemployed and receiving a benefit prior to incarceration⁽³⁷⁾. These parental experiences are risk factors for poor outcomes for the children of prisoners⁽³⁸⁾.

Drawing upon the conceptual model of Murray (2005), parental imprisonment tends to occur in situations where children are already at risk of poor outcomes. There is an independent link between parental imprisonment and poor child outcomes which is mediated by several factors associated with children having a parent in prison. The child's personal characteristics and family and community environments moderate the risk of poor child outcomes associated with parental imprisonment⁽¹⁷⁾.

Regardless of the potential positive impacts of parental incarceration for some children, children of prisoners are an 'at-risk group'. Prior to parental incarceration there are pre-existing risks such as poor parenting and family poverty that affect many of these children (see Figure 1). This is a particularly vulnerable group of children.

Figure 1: The relationship between existing family, parent and child risk factors; parental imprisonment, mediating and moderating factors, and child outcomes.



Adapted from Murray (2005)⁽¹⁷⁾

Interventions that are likely to help these children

Potentially, interventions which target the factors associated with the link between parental imprisonment and poor child outcomes could help improve outcomes for children with a parent in prison. A number of interventions and approaches have been developed and trialled on this basis. Factors which mediate negative outcomes for children with a parent in prison can be summarised as follows⁽³⁹⁾:

- **Modelling** – when antisocial behaviour and imprisonment become ‘normalised’ in the child’s environment.
- **Trauma of parent-child separation** – separation due to parental imprisonment may be particularly traumatic for children because it is often unexpected, often unexplained, sometimes violent at the time of arrest, and on-going contact with the parent is restricted.

- **Strained parenting** – parental imprisonment is associated with poor or abusive parenting practices. Children’s caregivers outside of prison often experience significant distress during parental imprisonment, which in turn may decrease the quality of care and supervision that children receive.
- **Economic strain** – children with a parent in prison often come from households under economic strain, both directly and indirectly related to their parent’s imprisonment.

Some intervention approaches show promising results, but generally there is limited evidence demonstrating long-term benefits. This lack of evidence is due to interventions not being evaluated, evaluations that measure only short-term effects or because interventions have not specifically been trialled with children with a parent in prison. Intervention approaches and any available evidence regarding their effectiveness are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Evidence for potential interventions to mediate the effects of parental imprisonment on children

Mediating factor	Intervention	Aims of Approaches	Evidence for these approaches
Modelling	Mentoring programmes	Provide stability and support for children with a parent in prison in the form of positive role models.	Some evidence Successful mentoring programmes result in improved psychosocial wellbeing and educational engagement for at-risk children. Short term or infrequent mentoring is unlikely to have any long-term benefit and can be harmful to the child's wellbeing, as it becomes another source of inconsistency in the child's life. Programmes lasting at least a year are best practice in youth mentoring ⁽⁴⁰⁾ .
Trauma of parent-child separation	Child-friendly arrest procedures	Minimise child trauma associated with witnessing the parent's arrest.	Some evidence Witnessing an arrest can cause on-going psychological trauma for the child ⁽⁴¹⁾ , and promote negative feelings towards police and authority figures ⁽⁴²⁾ . Protocols for child-friendly arrest procedures have been developed in a number of jurisdictions, including New Zealand ⁽⁴³⁾ . We were unable to find evidence that these protocols have been formally adopted ⁱ .
	Clear communication	Give children's caregivers professional advice about how to provide honest and clear explanations about parental absence to children.	Some evidence In a study of attachment in children with mothers in prison, children related better to their caregivers when they were told about their mother's imprisonment in simple, honest ways that were appropriate to the child's developmental stage ⁽⁴⁴⁾ .
	Stable living arrangements	Provide children with stable care arrangements during parental imprisonment, ideally with families or friends.	Strong evidence Stable living arrangements are important for positive child outcomes ⁽⁴⁵⁾ . Stable and affectionate caregiving is associated with fewer mental health problems and more secure attachment towards caregivers in children with imprisoned mothers ⁽⁴⁴⁾ .
	Maintain contact	Facilitate good quality contact with their imprisoned parent (where beneficial), including more child-friendly visiting arrangements in prisons.	Mixed evidence The benefits of maintaining child contact with their imprisoned parent are context-dependent. In general, good quality parent-child contact is beneficial for children following parental separation ⁽⁴⁶⁾ . However visiting prisons can be a very negative experience for children, especially if they are not 'child-friendly' ⁽⁴⁷⁾ . Many prisons have developed more child-friendly visiting facilities in response to these findings. Prison Mothers and Babies Units can reduce recidivism in mothers, and also improve outcomes for children compared to those who are separated due to maternal incarceration ⁽⁴⁸⁾ .
	Psychological therapy	Offer counselling and therapeutic services for children with a parent in prison to help them cope psychologically.	Little evidence We were unable to find evidence of outcomes for this type of intervention.

ⁱ While it does not specifically pertain to arrest procedures, the New Zealand Police Manual contains operational policy to minimise impacts on vulnerable people (including children) during searches.

Table 1. Evidence for potential interventions to mediate the effects of parental imprisonment on children (continued)

Mediating factor	Intervention	Aims of Approaches	Evidence for these approaches
Strained parenting	Nurse-home visiting programmes	Provide support for mothers in high-risk circumstances and improve prenatal care and maternal health.	Strong evidence Nurse-home visiting programmes can improve maternal and infant health in at-risk families ⁽⁴⁹⁾ and result in improved long-term outcomes for at-risk children ⁽⁵⁰⁾ .
	Parenting skills programmes	Enhance parenting skills and promote positive approaches to managing behaviour.	Strong evidence There is strong evidence from randomised controlled trials and large scale evaluations that these programmes improve outcomes for at-risk children ⁽⁵¹⁾ .
	Multisystemic therapy	Targeting parent-child interactions as well as wider social problems of youth.	Strong evidence There is strong evidence from randomised controlled trials that multi-systemic therapy is an effective intervention for children with behavioural problems, and significantly reduces the risk of future incarceration for these children ⁽⁵²⁾ .
	Multidimensional treatment for foster care	Provide therapeutic care for young people removed from their homes and work toward reintegration and support for children with their families.	Strong evidence There is strong evidence from randomised controlled trials that Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care significantly improves outcomes for at-risk children and youth who are placed in out-of-home care ⁽¹⁹⁾ .
Economic strain evaluated ⁱⁱ	Financial assistance	Ensure that prisoners' families receive necessary support and provide emergency funds to help overcome the immediate financial difficulties caused by loss of income.	Strong evidence There is reported evidence that some families of prisoners (especially Māori in the New Zealand context) experience financial strain but do not access benefits they may be entitled to due to mistrust in government agencies - for example fear that their children will be removed by Child Youth and Family ⁽⁵³⁾ . In the United States, relieving financial strain (via income supplements) reduced adult criminal behaviour, subsequent criminal behaviour in their children and improved the children's educational outcomes in a Native American community ⁽⁵⁴⁾ .
	Reduce costs of maintaining contact with the imprisoned parent	Provide free transport or financial assistance for prison visits. Reduce the costs of telephone calls between prison and home.	Some evidence Qualitative evidence shows that financial cost is a significant barrier to families in maintaining contact with an imprisoned parent. While we were unable to find direct evidence that this type of assistance (provided in many jurisdictions) improves outcomes for children, alleviating this barrier could support the maintenance of these relationships.
Stigma and labelling ⁱⁱⁱ	Support groups	Reduce feelings of stigma and isolation for children with a parent in prison	Little evidence While support groups for children with a parent in prison have been established in a number of areas, there is very little documented evidence of their impacts for children with a parent in prison. There is some evidence that support group interventions are effective for other children in at-risk groups ⁽⁵⁵⁾ .

ⁱⁱ The provision of parental employment opportunities during and after incarceration to reduce financial strain and therefore improve child outcomes were omitted from this analysis, as it is difficult to evaluate indirect impacts of such initiatives on children.

ⁱⁱⁱ Maintaining anonymity of offenders, diverting offenders to restorative justice programmes and strengths-based sentencing were omitted from this analysis, as it is difficult to evaluate indirect impacts of such initiatives on children.

Attention should be turned to effective intervention strategies

The pre-existing risk factors for these children and the compounding effects of parental imprisonment are well documented, and are consistent across multiple generations and in different countries. Attention should be turned to effective intervention strategies to prevent the poor outcomes typically experienced by these children.

Children with a parent in prison are already at risk. We should shift our focus to effective interventions.

Interventions need to be informed by evidence and evaluated in a robust manner, with a view to determining intervention outcomes over both short and long term periods. Intensive, wrap-around services appear to offer the greatest long-term benefits for children generally at risk, and are likely to be effective for children with a parent in prison. Maintaining stable living arrangements is important, and when this cannot be achieved, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care should be provided. There is also strong evidence supporting nurse-home visiting programmes, parenting skills programmes and Multisystemic Therapy.

At the same time, there is good qualitative evidence that practices such as the provision of child-friendly visiting facilities and arrest procedures alleviate some of the direct trauma of parental imprisonment. These practices are likely to be ‘easy wins’ in terms of addressing specific stressors to the child.

Some researchers have started to explore protective factors in children with a parent in prison and their families⁽⁵⁶⁾. An upcoming Superu ‘In Focus’ paper on family resilience will look at ways in which protective factors can foster resilience in vulnerable families. It suggests that family functioning, such as having strong healthy relationships and clear family roles and routines, are an important part of this process. Further exploration of child, family and community level protective factors for those affected by parental incarceration would help inform effective intervention strategies.

Programmes need to be effective in the New Zealand context, especially for Māori

In New Zealand, there is currently a gap in policy and practice for children with a parent in prison. The routine collection of data about the number of children prisoners have, and their association with these children (whether they reside with, have custody of or have some form of contact with) when they enter custody, would provide valuable insight and inform targeting of resources.

In particular, the disproportionate rate of Māori imprisonment must be a key consideration for programme development. This rate of imprisonment means that many whānau and communities are affected⁽⁵⁷⁾. The current rates of imprisonment of Māori have the potential to have negative

long-term and intergenerational effects – not only on whānau wellbeing, but Māoridom collectively. It is important that the mass experience of incarceration does not become so pervasive that it begins to define a collective experience and influence the life chances of whānau and communities⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Any programmes based on overseas evidence need to be adapted for the New Zealand context. In particular, effectiveness for Māori would be an important consideration in the adaptation and implementation of such initiatives.

A broader service delivery focus is required

The children and families of prisoners face a complex range of issues (prior to, and as a consequence of, parental incarceration) that cross the boundaries of multiple agencies. Agencies do not always recognise the consequences of incarceration for the wider family, including children⁽⁵⁹⁾, which span health, social, education, housing and justice related impacts. Due to the multiple impacts of parental incarceration on children, coordination between agencies is critical⁽⁶⁰⁾.

A report published by the National Conference of State Legislatures in the United States, provides a useful framework for considering policy across the process of parental imprisonment, noting that it is not an isolated event but rather a process that unfolds over time. This report suggests that:

To protect children from the harmful effects of parental incarceration, the interests of children should be considered at each stage of the process, including arrest, sentencing, intake, incarceration and re-entry⁽⁶⁰⁾.

In New Zealand, best practice guidelines for supporting children and families at each stage of incarceration have been developed based on international recommendations and local experiences⁽⁴³⁾.

We need to intervene earlier

The event of parental imprisonment can provide an opportunity to identify children at risk of poor life outcomes, and provide effective intervention services. Early interventions for children with a parent in prison are likely to have long-term benefits and be more cost-effective than addressing emotional, behavioural, health, education and financial impacts as they age.

In the end, while it is difficult to ascertain what the additive effect of imprisonment is on what may already be a strained family situation, it is evident that the children are in need of support⁽⁴⁷⁾.

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