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Mentorship as a Protective Factor for Children with a History of Paternal Incarceration

by

Lorietta Hardin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of degree requirements,

Ph. D Education and Social Change

Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education

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March 28, 2018

# MENTORSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED FATHERS

## **Abstract**

With a univocal number of parents in correctional confinement, children of incarcerated fathers are at risk for negative outcomes ranging from increased family strain to increased behavior problems and unfavorable school outcomes. Prior research suggested these obstacles occurred due to parental incarceration that creates a vulnerable group of children. However, few researchers have analyzed the impact of mentorship for children of incarcerated fathers. Elucidating the effects of mentorship for these children is crucial to changing the life trajectory for children with a history of paternal incarceration.

The current study examined behavioral and school outcomes of children who have and have not experienced paternal incarceration. The goal of the study was to determine whether mentorship is a protective factor for children of incarcerated fathers and if there are gender differences in mentorship outcomes.

The current findings suggest children of incarcerated fathers experience more risks than their counterparts. Nevertheless, when controlling for maternal or peer attachment, adolescents who were previously enrolled in mentorship reported significantly fewer behaviors including: anxious/depressed, aggressive, rule-breaking, and externalizing behaviors. Data also suggests females reported significantly higher internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and less favorable school psychological engagement. Being so, the current study underscores the powerful impact of mentorship and the importance of a supportive adult in the lives of children experiencing paternal incarceration.

# MENTORSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED FATHERS

## **Dedication**

To the children and families affected by parental incarceration. To the mentoring programs and mentors who sacrifice their time to support children with a history of parental incarceration.

## MENTORSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED FATHERS

### **Acknowledgements**

First, I thank God for directing my every foot step and leading me to this achievement.

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I also want to thank the Y-NOW Mentoring Program for allowing me to participate in the activities and for giving me access to the mentored children of incarcerated fathers. A special thanks to the children and families who participated in this study.

I want to thank the love of my life who has helped me grow, and keeps me smiling in love and amazement. I am thankful to my mother who made me feel I could accomplish anything. To my family who has helped me become a better person.

Lastly, I want to thank my good friends for all our wonderful moments and memories.

# MENTORSHIP FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED FATHERS

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In the wake of increasing rates of parental incarceration, more children are experiencing separation from parents. In 2007 more than 1.7 million children had an imprisoned parent compared to 936,500 in 1991 (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Mumola, 2000). However, this number increases -to 2.7 million- if parents in jail are included, and more than triples -to upwards of 10 million- when parents released from correctional confinement are added (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Wakefield, 2015; Western & Wildeman, 2009). With paternal incarceration (89%) far exceeding maternal incarceration (11%), majority (75%) of these children have father in correctional confinement (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Accordingly, in 2007 more than 2.3 million children were separated from their father due to incarceration, and thus warranting further attention (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010).

Children of incarcerated fathers are at a disadvantage prior to, during, and after paternal incarceration. Prior to incarceration, incarcerated fathers reported low levels of education and low incomes (Borja, Nurius, & Eddy, 2015; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Stanton, 1980). During paternal incarceration, their children experienced various levels of instability including economic, residential, and family (Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, & Mincy, 2009; Gellar, Garkfinel, & Western, 2011; Geller & Franklin, 2014; Murphey & Cooper, 2015). Once reunited with previously incarcerated fathers, these children continued to suffer the long-lasting effects of paternal incarceration. Data suggested children with a history of paternal incarceration were more likely to report poor physical and mental health outcomes (Lee, Fang, & Lou, 2013). Children of incarcerated fathers had higher rates of internalizing behaviors such as anxiety and depression (Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Johnston, 1995b; Lowenstein, 1986; Murphey & Cooper, 2015) and externalizing behaviors such as aggression and delinquency when compared to



children with similar demographics without a history of paternal incarceration (Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Geller et al., 2009; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Wilbur et al., 2007). Several researchers (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Shlafer, Reddy, & Davis, 2017) posited children of incarcerated fathers also had less academic success. Moreover, daughters of incarcerated fathers reported less favorable outcomes than sons of incarcerated fathers with longer length of incarcerations and higher frequencies of incarceration (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). These gender differences in behavioral outcomes suggested mechanisms in which paternal incarceration had differential effects on their sons and daughters (Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher, & Mincy, 2012; Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). Collectively, these risk factors contributed to intergenerational risks for children of incarcerated fathers (Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Roettger & Swisher, 2011).

Nevertheless, the effects of paternal incarceration, findings indicated some children of incarcerated fathers did not have supportive adults in their lives (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Mentorship is a protective factor that can ameliorate negative outcomes (Christian, 2009; Johnston, 2012; Jucovy, 2003; Shlafer, Poehlmann, Coffino, & Hanneman, 2009). Although supportive evidence suggested mentoring could mitigate the effects of paternal incarceration, few studies provided empirical findings of such benefits (Shlafer, et al., 2009; ICF International, 2011). Thus, rigorous empirical research that elucidates the impact of mentoring for children of incarcerated parents is critical given the current size, and the increasing number, of the parent penal population (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Kaeble & Glaze, 2016).

Three theories were foundational to the theoretical framework in this study. The attachment theory, the socialization theory, and the risk and resilience theory helped explicate mechanisms by which child behaviors are learned and perpetuated (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010;

Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Poehlmann, Schlafer, Maes, & Hanneman, 2008; Tuerk & Loper, 2006; Woodard & Coop, 2016). Furthermore, the combination of these theories provided an explanation of how effective mentorship influenced youth outcomes (Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Rhodes, 2005; Schlafer et al., 2009).

## **Background**

The United States has the highest incarceration rates in the world (Glaze & Kaeble, 2014; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2012). With one in every 100 adults in prison or jail (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011), there are nearly 2.2 million individuals behind bars (Kaeble & Glaze, 2016). Since 1980, mass incarceration has contributed to a nearly 500% increase in the number of incarcerated individuals (Garland, D., 2001; Glaze & Kaeble, 2014). The dubious distinction is a result of strict judicial policies and practices implemented in the 1970's (Arditti et al., 2003; Graham & Harris, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2014).

Although, incarceration impacts all races, communities of color are disproportionately affected (Carson & Anderson, 2016; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Kaeble & Glaze, 2016; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Research suggested a disparate number of arrests are concentrated in minority communities, further exacerbating racial disparities in social, economic and educational domains (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011); research suggested systematic structures contributed to the disparity in incarceration (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). Consequently, the continuous growth in the U.S. correctional confinement population results in more children being separated from their parents, again with a disproportionate impact to children, families, and communities of color (Glaze & Maruschak,

2010; Kaeble & Glaze, 2016; Mumola, 2000).

**Incarcerated parents, 1991-2007.** Data regarding incarcerated parents and their children was primarily drawn from the most recent national survey of prisoners through the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2004 (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Glaze and Maruschak (2010) analyses of the national survey was first published in 2008, and revised in 2010. The Bureau of Justice Statistics surveyed prisoners in 2016, however results have not been published.

Between 1991 and 2007, parents comprised more than half of the prison population (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Mumola, 2000). In 1991, there were approximately 452,500 parents in state and federal prisons; six years later prisons confined more than 721,500 parents. The majority of these incarcerated parents –state prisons 55% and federal prisons 63%- reported having children under 18 years of age (Mumola, 2000). By 2007 there were approximately 809,800 parents serving a prison sentence, a 79% increase (357,300) since 1991, see Table 1 (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010).

Table 1

*Incarcerated Prisoners and Parents, 1991 -2007*

	1991	1997	2007
Prison Population	789,610	1,244,554	1,570,115
Incarcerated Parent Population	452,500	721,500	809,800

As presented in Table 2, by 2007 paternal incarceration had increased 76% (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). However, researchers suggested the actual number of incarcerated parents is higher due to the data exclusion of the thousands of parents in jail (Arditti et al., 2003; Western

& Wildeman, 2010; Lee, Porter, & Comfort, 2014) as well as the fact that the most recent estimates are from over a decade ago (Christian, 2009; Johnston, 1995a,c; Vigne, Davies, Brazzell., 2008).

Table 2

*Incarcerated Mothers and Fathers, 1991-2007*

	1991	1997	2007
Mothers	29,500	53,600	65,600
Fathers	423,000	667,900	744,200
Total	452,500	721, 500	809,800

**Incarcerated Fathers**

**Common characteristics.** Incarcerated fathers were typically young minority adults with limited education (Dalliare & Wilson, 2010; Geller et al., 2011; Stanton, 1980; Wildeman, 2009). Characteristics reported by Glaze and Maruschak (2010) suggested approximately 45% of male prisoners younger than 24 years of age had minor children; 68.7% of male prisoners between ages 25-34 had minor children. In regards to race, 43% of incarcerated fathers were Black and 22% were Hispanic. Further, data suggested that approximately half (49.5%) of state inmates and more than half (65.6%) of federal inmates had an eighth grade or less education (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Moreover, of the fathers who provided primary financial support for their children, 30% reported incomes less than \$24,000/year, and additional 27% reported incomes less than \$12,000/year. Prior to incarceration, 54% of fathers and 52% of mothers were likely to provide primary financial support for their children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010).

**Parenting.** Incarcerated parents were likely to have a history of trauma and limited coping skills (Adalist-Estrin 1995; Arditt & Few, 2006; Carlson & Shafer, 2010; Eddy, Martinez,

Burraston, 2013; Murray & Murray, 2010). Self-reported data suggested incarcerated parents were raised in homes with high levels of stress and neither observed nor learned positive parenting behaviors (Chipman, Olsen, Klein, Hart, & Robinson, 2000; Swan, 1981). Incarcerated parents reported inadequate parenting skills that limited their success in parenting prior to incarceration (Eddy et al., 2013; Kennon, Mackintosh, & Myers, 2009). Likewise, a history of parental incarceration was associated with behaviors such as substance abuse and mental illness that hindered effective parenting practices (Dannerback, 2005; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Murray & Farrington, 2010). Findings suggested parents with a history of parental incarceration displayed fewer effective parenting behaviors than parents who had not been incarcerated (Dannerback, 2005).

In light of incarcerated fathers' limited education and low incomes, their children are considered an at-risk population prior to incarceration (Wakefield, 2015). Nevertheless, research suggests paternal incarceration exacerbated family and child dispositions such as increased stress, anxiety, depression (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Arditti et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2014; Murray & Farrington, 2005, 2008).

### **Children of Incarcerated Parents**

Understandably, as the number of incarcerated parents increase, so too does the number of children with incarcerated mothers and fathers. In 1991, approximately 936,500 children had a parent in prison. In 1999, nearly 1.5 million children had a parent in state or federal prison (Mumola, 2000). Comparably, in 2007 there were more than 1.7 million children with an imprisoned parent (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). However, data suggest hundreds of thousands additional children have a parent in jail, totaling more than 2.7 million with an incarcerated

parent (1 in every 28; The Osbourne Association, 2011; Wakefield, 2015; Western & Petit, 2010) and thousands more have experienced parental incarceration during their childhood. Moreover, after including children of previously incarcerated parents, Murphey and Cooper (2015) postulated one in 14 children in the U.S. has been effected by parental incarceration. Researchers theorized upwards of 7 to 10 million children have a history of parental incarceration, either current or past (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Schrimmer, Nellis, & Mauer, 2009; Reed & Reed, 1997), totaling more than 7% of all U.S. children (Murphey & Cooper, 2015).

**Age.** According to the data available (2007), more than half of the children of incarcerated parents were under ten years old; twenty percent were between ages one and four and 30% between ages five and nine. An additional 32% were between ages 10 to 14 and 16% are 15 to 17 years of age. Based on the number of children reported by inmates, more than a third of children, 715,600, will reach 18 years of age during their parents' incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010).

**Race.** Data suggested Black and Hispanic children are most affected by parental incarceration, with more than 70% of children being of those ethnic minorities (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). In 2007, there were approximately 767,400 Black children, 362,800 Hispanic children, and 484,100 White children with an incarcerated parent (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Hence, Black children (6.7%) were seven and a half times more likely than White children (.09%) and two and a half times more likely than Hispanic children (2.4%) to have an incarcerated parent (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Thus, 1 in 15 Black children had an incarcerated parent while the odds for Hispanic children (1 in 42) and White children (1 in 111) were markedly lower (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Schirmer et al., 2009). However, recent data

suggested these odds have become steeper in that Black children (1 in 9) compared to White children (1 in 17; Murphey & Copper, 2015). In short, Black children are disproportionately far more likely to have an incarcerated parent than their White or Hispanic peers (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Arditti et al., 2003; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Lee et al., 2013; Murphey & Cooper, 2015).

### **Kentucky Children with a History of Parental Incarceration**

According to the National Survey of Children's Health (2016), Kentucky has the second highest percent (15%) of children with a history of parental incarceration (Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2016). With approximately 33,800 individuals incarcerated in Kentucky, an estimated 33,000 children have a currently incarcerated parent (Kaeble & Glaze, 2016). In the years, 2011 and 2012, more than 135,000 Kentucky children had a history of current or past parental incarceration (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016; Kaeble & Glaze, 2016; U.S. Census, 2016).

It is important to note that while this study focused on paternal incarceration, maternal incarceration also have detrimental effects. Findings suggest maternal incarceration has far reaching effects considerably different than children affected by paternal incarceration (Brown, 2017; Dallaire, 2007b; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Tasca et al., 2011; Trice & Brewster, 2004; Turney & Lanuza, 2017). Nevertheless, examples below may include maternal incarceration in the data set considered due to the paucity of research surrounding incarcerated fathers and their children as a discrete research topic (Browning, Miller & Spruance, 2001).

### **Paternal Incarceration as a Risk Factor**

Although fathers were less likely to reside with their children, fathers had higher earning

potentials and provided financial support prior to incarceration (Geller et al., 2011; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Upon incarceration, families lose monetary contributions from incarcerated fathers (Geller et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2014; Tasca, Rodriguez, & Zatz, 2011). Thus, paternal incarceration directly impacts family resources and has profound effects on child's economic well-being (Borja et al., 2015; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Gellar et al., 2011; Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, Garfinkel, 2011). Arditti et al. (2003) suggested 66% of families reported being economically worse off or somewhat worse off since paternal incarceration. Phillips and colleagues (Phillips, Erkanli, Costello & Angold, 2006) examined data from a longitudinal study of 1,073 children and families. Findings suggested children of parents with a history of incarceration were 80% more likely to experience economic strain (Phillips et al., 2006). Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011b) examined the effects of parental incarceration using a sample of 10 year old children with ( $n = 67$ ) and without ( $n = 588$ ) incarcerated parents. Findings suggested families with incarcerated parents had significantly lower incomes, as 75% reported incomes less than \$30,000.

Family economic instability contributed to a greater risk of material hardship and residential instability (Borja et al., 2015; Geller et al., 2009, 2012). Geller and Franklin (2014) assessed secondary data of 4,125 mothers of children with fathers with a history of incarceration. Data suggested families of recently incarcerated fathers were 49% more likely to experience residential instability (Geller & Franklin, 2014). Examining family instability and juvenile involvement in the criminal justice system, Tasca and associates (Tasca, et al., 2011) surveyed a sample of 322 adolescents, 55 of which experienced paternal incarceration. Findings suggested youth with a history of parental incarceration experienced 4.3 residential moves (Tasca et al., 2011). Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, and Garfinkel (2011) analyzed data from the longitudinal



Fragile Families Child Well-being Survey (Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, 2009) in which data suggested families that experienced paternal incarceration were 18% more likely to experience material hardship. Mothers reported difficulty paying for food and household bills due to paternal incarceration (Geller et al., 2009). Other researchers (Phillips et al., 2006) suggested families of incarcerated parents were 130% more likely to experience family instability. In light of the effects of paternal incarceration, Woodard & Coop (2016) posited children of incarcerated parents who experience material hardship and live in poverty, are more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviors. These multiple consequences of paternal incarceration are cascading disadvantages for children. In this vein, children are the unseen victims of paternal incarceration (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016; Arditti, Lambert-Shute, & Joest, 2003; Lee et al., 2014; Sack, 1977).

**Stigma.** Researchers suggested paternal incarceration is stigmatizing for children and families (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Geller et al., 2011; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Schrimmer et al., 2009; Travis & Waul, 2003). Researchers theorized that the stigma of having an incarcerated parent may be more severe for family members than it is for the incarcerated parent (Braman, 2004; Thombre, Montague, Maher, & Zohra, 2009). Affected families experienced isolation from neighbors and community supports (Bockneck, Sanderson, & Britner, 2009; Eddy & Reid, 2002; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Sack, Seidler, & Thomas, 1976; Sack, 1977) as well as from family members and teachers (Arditti et al., 2003; Bockneck, et al., 2009; Braman, 2004; Eddy & Reid, 2002; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Sack et al., 1976; Travis & Waul, 2003).

**Mentorship.** Mentors support youth through quality time as well as helping youth cope with experiences associated with paternal incarceration (ICF International, 2011; Jucovy, 2003; Merestein, Tyson, Tiles, Keays, & Ruffolo, 2011; Reagan-Porras, 2013; Schlafer et al., 2009).

Mentorship provides youth with opportunities for growth in areas ranging from personal identity to cognitive development (Dewit et al., 2016; ICF International, 2011). As a result, several studies (Deutsch et al., 2016; Dewit et al., 2016; Herrera et al., 2013; Tolan, et al., 2014) suggested improvement in youth internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Therefore, children of incarcerated parents who were enrolled in mentorship will have lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors compared to children of incarcerated parents who were never enrolled in formal mentorship (Dewit, et al., 2016; ICF, 2011; Jackson, 2002; Jarjourja et al., 2013; Johnston, 2012; Jucovy, 2003).

Data suggested mentorship improved school outcomes including school attendance, school value, and grades (ICF International, 2011; Jucovy, 2003). Moreover, researchers (Laasko & Nygaard, 2012) suggested youth improved relationships with others, which may have improved their interactions with peers and teachers contributing to academic success.

Girls may benefit the most from having a mentor. Liang and colleagues (Liang, Bogat, & Duffy, 2013) suggest girls have a higher tendency to rely on a mentor for emotional support, thus facilitating a bond with their mentor (Bayer et al., 2015). Other research findings are also in accordance with this view as girls in mentoring programs report more favorable outcomes (Dewit et al., 2016; ICF International, 2011; Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield & Walsh-Swamp, 2008).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Incarceration of fathers affect millions of children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). More specifically, vulnerable groups of children who are at-risk prior to incarceration are further at-risk for additional negative outcomes (Geller et al., 2009, 2012; Swisher & Shaw Smith, 2015). Upon paternal incarceration these families report family instability and material hardship (Geller

et al., 2009; Geller et al., 2012; Phillips et al., 2006) and often reside in impoverished areas (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011; Murphey & Cooper, 2015). Consequently, paternal incarceration is associated with increased levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Arditti et al., 2003; Friedman & Essesllyn, 1965; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Geller et al., 2009; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Sack, 1977; Zeman, Dallaire, & Borowski, 2016). Taken together, paternal incarceration poses a threat to a child's economic, socioemotional, and behavioral well-being.

Despite of the deleterious effects of paternal incarceration, few researchers have analyzed the effects of mentoring for children of incarcerated parents (ICF International, 2011; Jucovy, 2003; Shlafer et al., 2009; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). Of the available research, findings suggested children of incarcerated parents showed improvements in emotional, social, and behavioral well-being (Shlafer et al., 2009). However, studies specific to mentoring this population of children are scarce and methodologically flawed (Bruster & Foreman, 2012; Jucovy, 2003). There has been lack of standardized assessments, adequate sample sizes, and adequate comparison groups (Bruster & Foreman, 2012; Jucovy, 2003; Shlafer et al, 2009; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). Of the scant empirical studies, researchers garnered reports from parents or caregivers and have not incorporated input from the children (Shlafer et al., 2009).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to fill the gap of empirical research that provides evidentiary support for mentoring as a protective factor for children with a history of paternal incarceration. This study will extend the examination of the effects of mentoring programs in two ways (a) Using rigorous research methods including reliable and valid instruments and comparison groups

data will suggest whether mentorship is a protective factor (b) Using series of statistical tests to provide empirical evidence of the effects of mentoring programs for adolescent children between ages 11 and 18.

Additionally, studies underscoring the effects of parental incarceration or the impact of mentoring for at-risk youth suggested different outcomes for boys and girls, studies on mentoring this population failed to identify the impact based on gender (Bruster & Foreman 2012; Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Shlafer et al., 2009; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). Thus, this study will provide findings of the effect of mentorship based on gender.

This study furthers research by controlling for variables that confound outcomes of children with incarcerated fathers. Collectively, data will explain the impact of incarceration on children as well as consider mentorship as a protective factor contributing to children's resiliency.

### **Research Question**

There were two research questions guiding this study:

- 1) What are the differences in behavioral and school engagement outcomes between adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration previously enrolled in formal mentorship and adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration never enrolled in formal mentorship?
- 2) What are the gender differences in behavioral and school engagement outcomes for adolescents previously enrolled in formal mentorship?

## **Hypothesis**

Based on the review of the literature, the following assumptions were developed:

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration previously enrolled in mentorship will exhibit fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors and more favorable school outcomes as compared to children with a history of paternal incarceration never enrolled in formal mentorship.

Hypothesis 2: Mentoring will be more effective for girls than for boys as evident in lower internalizing and externalizing behaviors and more favorable school outcomes.

## **Research Design**

This study consisted of adolescent participants between ages 11 to 18. The participants were divided into three groups: the treatment group, the control group, and the comparison group. The treatment group was recruited from the Youth- New Outlook Within (Y-NOW) mentoring program. Y-NOW was chosen as the intervention program because they have mentored youth experiencing parental incarceration for more than 13 years. The program exhibits a high level of understanding of the population of youth; adapting practices to meet the needs of children of incarcerated parents. Y-NOW also communicates clear expectations of mentors, of whom Y-NOW provides training prior to and during the mentorship.

Four surveys were used to measure the differences between the three groups. The Achenbach Youth Self Report (YSR) survey measured both internalizing and externalizing behavior. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment measured attachment and was a

covariate. The Student Engagement Instrument compared adolescent school outcomes and the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire explained the additional risk posed by paternal incarceration. Rigorous statistical analyses was implemented to clarify the effects of mentorship and to fill the gap of research that explains the effects of mentoring this population of youth.

### **Assumptions**

Several assumptions were made concerning this study. It was assumed that each mentor of an adolescent from the treatment group was consistent and met with their youth weekly, as required by Y-NOW. In addition, it was assumed that each mentor valued their relationship with their youth and used their mentor training to facilitate close relationships with their youth. As for the participants, it was assumed that they were a representative sample, understood the questions on the measures, and answered the questions honestly. Lastly, it was assumed that the measures were accurate in measuring the data.

### **Limitations**

There were several study limitations. Self-reporting data, having a small group of adolescents that chose to participate in this study who were previously enrolled in Y-NOW, as well as well as distractions that may have occurred in the locations where participants completed the measures were limitations. Further, youth in the treatment group were significantly younger than youth in the other two groups and minimum data regarding family risks and factors associated with the father's incarceration were gathered. Data were not readily available and thus were not collected, regarding the attendance or consistency of the mentor-youth meetings. Additionally, although there is research regarding the negative impacts of lengthy or repeated

paternal incarceration on children, no data were collected in this study specific to the nature or length of paternal incarceration.

### **Key Terms**

*Achenbach Youth Self-Report*: designed by T.M. Achenbach in 1991 and revised in 2001. Measures internalizing and externalizing behaviors of adolescents between ages 11 to 18 (Achenbach, 2001).

*Adverse Childhood Experience*: designed by Felitti et al., 1997. Measures childhood risks. The version used was adapted for use in the National Survey of Children's Health (Murphey & Cooper, 2015).

*Children of incarcerated parents*: children ages 0-18 whose parent(s) have a history of parental incarceration, past or current. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Mumola, 2000).

*Community-based mentoring*: mentorship through a community program in which mentor and youth meets at various locations in the community for interactive activities and lasts beyond the school year (Karcher, 2008).

*Externalizing behaviors*: negative behaviors that are displayed outwardly and typically directed toward another person such as aggression or delinquency (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Geller et al., 2009; Murray & Farrington, 2009).

*Incarceration*: the correctional confinement, including prison or jail, within a federal, state, or local facility (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.)

*Internalizing behavior*: negative behaviors that are directed inwardly such as anxiety or

depression (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Murray & Farrington, 2005)

*Mentorship*: frequent one-on-one contact between an unrelated adult and a child, with a relationship characterized by mutual commitment, respect, and loyalty with a goal of development of social skills and character (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

*Protective factors*: variables associated with a decreased risk for a negative outcome in high-risk populations such as fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Dallaire, 2007a).

*Risk factors*: variables that are associated with negative outcomes such as increased internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Dallaire, 2007a).

*School Engagement Instrument*: designed by Appleton and Christenson in 2004. Measures school psychological and cognitive engagement.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Paternal Incarceration

Children of incarcerated fathers were more likely to exhibit internalizing behaviors such as depression, anxiety, or withdrawal (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Lowenstein, 1986) and externalizing behaviors such as aggression, delinquency, and other antisocial behaviors (Bilchik et al., 2001; Dallaire & Zeman, 2013; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Geller et al., 2009, 2012; Lowenstein, 1986; Murray & Farrington, 2005, 2008; Sack, 1977). Swisher & Shaw-Smith (2015) indicated parental incarceration is associated with adolescent delinquency and depression. In their assessment of children between ages 6 to 14 experiencing paternal incarceration, Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) suggest, after controlling for socioeconomic status and other pre-existing disadvantage, children of incarcerated fathers were negatively impacted by the separation; children reportedly had increased levels of anxiety, depression, aggression, and delinquency. Data suggested children of incarcerated fathers were 4% to 33% more likely to exhibit such behaviors when compared to children without a history of paternal incarceration (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011).

Woodard and Coop (2016) conducted a secondary analysis of the longitudinal Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study which was based on data from 1998 to 2000, determining the effects of parental incarceration on juvenile delinquency. Findings suggested youth who experienced paternal incarceration reported higher levels delinquent behavior (Woodard & Copp, 2016). In fact, Swisher and Shaw-Smith (2015) analysis indicated that children of incarcerated fathers reported 48% higher delinquency rates compared to children without history of paternal incarceration.

Geller and colleagues (Geller, 2010; Geller et al., 2012) examined the same data set from the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study to determine the effects of paternal incarceration on child development. Their findings suggested children with history of paternal incarceration were more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors compared to their counterparts (Geller et al., 2012). When controlling for family disadvantage and other covariates, children of incarcerated fathers between ages 6 to 18 were 24% more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviors and 21% more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors, as reported by parents and teachers (Geller, 2010). Other researchers (Wilbur et al., 2007) corroborated these findings.

In their study of 874 children between the ages of 10 to 14, Aaron & Dallaire (2009) examined family risks to determine whether parental incarceration attributed fully or in part to family poverty and instability. There were four noteworthy findings. First, ethnic minority children were more likely to have an incarcerated parent, in particular a father. Secondly, children with a history of parental incarceration were less likely to have parents that completed high school. Third, parental incarceration also influenced higher rates of family conflict and victimization. Lastly and perhaps most saliently, after controlling for risks children with a history of parental incarceration ( $n = 150$ ) exhibited more delinquent behaviors than children without a history of parental incarceration ( $n = 724$ ) (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010).

Further, Murray and Farrington (2005) compared outcomes of 411 European boys with several types of paternal separation. After controlling for paternal criminality and family characteristics, findings suggested boys with a history of paternal incarceration were more likely to exhibit an antisocial personality at ages 14, 18, and 32, as well as have poor life outcomes compared to boys who either experienced no separation from parents or separation due to divorce, hospitalization, death, or other reasons (Murray & Farrington, 2005). Other researchers

(Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012) conducted a meta-analysis of studies of children with a history of paternal incarceration. Their analysis suggested paternal incarceration is associated with antisocial behaviors and unfavorable educational outcomes; however, poor mental health and child drug abuse was not associated with paternal incarceration (Murray, et al., 2012).

Similarly, Davis and Shlafer (2017) surveyed 112,919 ninth- and eleventh-grade students from the Minnesota School District. Compared to children with no history of parental incarceration, data suggested children with a history of parental incarceration were more than five times as likely to use tobacco, more than twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, and nearly four times as likely to receive treatment for alcohol or drug abuse (Davis & Shlafer, 2017).

#### **Influential factors in child outcomes.**

*Residence.* Because fathers were less likely to reside with their children it is important to underscore differences in child outcomes based on residency prior to incarceration (Foster & Hagan, 2009; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Children who resided with their father prior to paternal incarceration exhibited more aggressive behaviors than children of non-resident father (Geller et al., 2012; Graham & Harris, 2013; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002). Although, findings from Swisher and Shaw-Smith (2015) suggested children of resident and non-resident fathers report similar levels of delinquency, there were gender differences. Girls of previously resident fathers displayed six times the delinquent behaviors compared to girls who had never lived with their incarcerated father. Boys who never resided with their fathers were reportedly six times more likely to report delinquent behaviors than boys who resided with their fathers prior to incarceration (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015).

Prior research suggested children who resided with their father were likely to have

increased behavior problems for several reasons (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). Children who lived in the same residence as their father were more likely to witness, or experience, abuse (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). Conversely, researchers suggested separation from fathers contributed to increased negative behaviors, as incarceration of a father is a distressing event (Bowlby, 1969; Foster & Hagan, 2013; Geller et al., 2012; Murray & Farrington, 2008).

***Child gender.*** Research contrasting males and females suggested boys were more likely to display higher levels of externalizing behaviors and girls were more likely to display higher levels of internalizing behaviors (Geller et al., 2009; Sack, 1977; Wilbur, 2007; Wildeman, 2010). Geller and colleagues (Geller et al., 2009) substantiate earlier findings (Sack, 1977) in that boys were more likely to exhibit aggressive and delinquent behaviors. In their secondary analysis of children with incarcerated parents, Geller and colleagues (Geller et al., 2009) suggest boys were nearly twice as likely as girls to exhibit aggression. Wilbur et al. (2007) used secondary data of children between ages 6 and 11 to determine differences in behaviors between children with and without paternal incarceration. After controlling for individual and family risk factors, findings suggested girls with incarcerated fathers have significantly higher levels of depression, compared to boys with incarcerated fathers (Wilbur et al., 2007).

***Recent vs. past paternal incarceration.*** Child behaviors differed when assessing the timing of paternal incarceration (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Geller 2010; Geller et al., 2012). Children of recently incarcerated fathers were most likely to participate in antisocial activities such as binge drinking, as well as substance and prescription drug abuse (Davis & Shlafer, 2017). Findings suggested that after accounting for parent and child characteristics, boys of recently incarcerated fathers were more likely to display physical aggression (Wildeman, 2010). Geller (2010) reported that children whose father have been incarcerated within the last five

years were significantly more likely to participate in delinquent acts, although delinquency is also, but to a lesser degree, significantly associated with distal paternal incarceration. Other researchers (Aaron & Dalliare, 2010) suggested children with recent parental incarceration were more likely to be exposed to parental substance abuse, to live in family experiencing financial strain, and to report higher levels of delinquent behaviors.

***Multiple incarcerations and length of incarceration.*** Children of incarcerated fathers were affected differently based on the number of times they have been separated from their father (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). Children of fathers with higher incidences of incarceration were more likely to display delinquent behaviors, and to a lesser extent, depressive symptoms (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). More specifically, Swisher and Shaw-Smith (2015) examined the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) which includes data from middle and high students from the 1994-1995 school year. Findings suggested children of fathers that have been incarcerated four or more times were nearly four times more likely to display delinquent behaviors when compared to children of fathers that have been incarcerated once.

The length of paternal incarcerations affected child outcomes. For example, girls were 1.5 times more likely than boys to display increased levels of delinquent behavior when fathers are incarcerated between five to nine years (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). Similarly, girls were twice as likely as boys to display more delinquent behaviors when fathers are incarcerated four or more times, although there was an increase in boys delinquent behavior (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). As for internalizing behaviors, boys were more likely to have higher levels of depression when fathers serve shorter sentences and experience fewer incarcerations; girls were more likely to have higher levels of depression when fathers serve longer sentences and

experience more incarcerations (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015). More specifically, one time incarceration was associated with depression in boys and multiple incarcerations were more strongly associated with depression in girls, although still significant for boys (Swisher and Shaw-Smith, 2015).

**Caregiver.** During paternal incarceration, the child's mother (88.4%) was the most likely caregiver (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Grinstead, Faigeles, & Bancroft, & Zack, 2001).

Caregivers in families of parents with a history of incarceration were more likely to experience higher rates of depression and poorer physical health (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b).

For cases in which the mother is not the caregiver (21.8%), children in kinship placement, grandparents or other relatives, had better outcomes than children placed in foster care (Hairston, 1999; Poehlmann et al., 2008). However, relative caregiver socioeconomic circumstances typically resemble that of pre-incarceration circumstances for children (Hairston, 2009; Poehlmann, 2003). Relative caregivers were likely to have low incomes and lack social supports or resources (Arditti et al., 2003; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Dressel & Barnhill, 1994). Moreover, kinship caregivers were typically older, live in poverty, have less education (Mackintosh, Myers, & Kennon, 2006), and were more likely to be single women (Heywood, 1999). Yet, despite caregiver sociodemographic characteristics, a safe family environment is a protective factor for children with incarcerated parents (Poehlmann, 2005a).

**Contact with incarcerated parent.** Research suggested parent-child contact mediated adjustment during parental incarceration and contributed to positive child well-being outcomes (Block & Potthast, 1998; Landreth & Lobaugh, 1998; Merenstein, Tyson, Tiles, Keays & Ruffolo, 2011; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Travis & Waul, 2003). Children that visited their

incarcerated parent felt more connected and at ease about their parent's welfare (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Sack, 1977). Children who had contact with their incarcerated parents reported fewer feelings of alienation and anger toward them (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010).

Although parent-child contact moderated child emotional and behavioral well-being, only 30% of incarcerated fathers reported receiving a personal visit, 27% report receiving mail, and 16% reported talking to children at least once a month (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Factors that influenced parent-child contact includes cost, distance, correctional facility policies and environment, the caregiver, and caregiver-parent relationship (Arditti, Smock, & Parkman, 2005; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Grinstead et al., 2001; Mumola, 2000; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Poehlmann et al., 2008; Poehlmann, Dallaire, Loper, & Shear, 2010; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Tuerk & Loper, 2006). Consequently, there were barriers that impeded parent-child contact and the lack of contact influenced child internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). Additionally, Loper & Clarke (2013) posited that children with caregivers who had discord with the incarcerated parent exhibited higher levels of aggression, anxiety, withdrawal, and poor social competence.

### **Additional Risks Associated with Children of Incarcerated Fathers**

**Stigma.** Incarceration has a negative connotation and thus individuals who are associated with the incarcerated parent are often treated differently (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Western & McLanahan, 2000). Ethnographic findings of children of incarcerated parents suggested these children are teased by peers (Eddy & Reid, 2002; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Sack, 1977). This teasing by peers may lead to shame and anger (Braman, 2004; McGowan & Brumethal, 1978; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008) and possibly self-esteem issues (Bockneck et al., 2009;

Merestein, Tyson, Tiles, Keays, & Ruffalo, 2011). Consequently, children were often instructed by caregivers not to disclose the incarceration of their parent to others (Browning Miller, & Spruance, 2001; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Vigne et al. (2008) theorize that stigma and shame is one reason schools have difficulties identifying students impacted by parental incarceration.

Although few researchers have empirically examined the effects of stigma on children and families, researchers contended stigma leads to increased behavior problems in children of incarcerated parents (Braman, 2004; Swan, 1981). As a result of economic and residential instability, unstable family life as well as experiences of stigma, children are affected by the traumatic event of paternal incarceration (Dannerback, 2005; Geller et. al., 2009, 2011, 2012; Geller & Franklin, 2014; Lee, et al., 2013; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015; Wakefield, 2015; Woodard & Coop, 2016).

**Caregiver strain, stress, and parenting.** Findings of caregiver strains due to paternal incarceration are well-documented (Arditti et al., 2003; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Geller & Franklin, 2014; Mackintosh et al., 2006; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Poehlmann et al., 2010; Wakefield, 2015). Findings suggested remaining caregivers had higher stress levels primarily due to loss of financial and spousal supports (Arditti et al., 2003; Braman, 2004; Geller & Franklin, 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Of particular note, Geller and Franklin (2014) suggested maternal stress is most pronounced with recent paternal incarceration. Wildeman, Schnittker, and Turney (2012) examined secondary data of 3,826 mothers, in which 59% experienced the incarceration of their child's father. Data suggested mothers of children with incarcerated fathers had significantly higher levels of stress (Wildeman, Schnittker, & Turney, 2012).



Caregiver stress was associated with negative parenting behaviors including decrease in parental supervision and increase in parental antisocial behaviors (Braman, 2004; Aaron & Dallaire, 2010). Low levels of parenting supervision were associated with increased levels of externalizing behaviors, specifically delinquency (Lansford, Criss, Petit, Dodge, & Bates, 2003; Roettger & Swisher, 2011). Caregiver stress was also associated with child feelings of acceptance and rejection from caregiver and in turn affected child behavior (Mackintosh et al., 2006). Although a high quality positive relationship between caregiver and child buffered child negative behaviors and served as a protective factor (Graham & Harris, 2013), Aaron & Dallaire (2010) suggested parental incarceration predicted higher levels of parent-child conflict. The association of caregiver stress and child behavioral outcomes has not been studied in samples of children experiencing paternal incarceration.

Children of parents with a history of parental incarceration were more likely exposed to ineffective parenting behaviors (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Wakefield, 2015). Dannerback (2005) surveyed 1,112 juvenile offenders to examine parenting characteristics of children with and without a history of parental incarceration. Findings suggested children of parents with a history of incarceration ( $n = 346$ ) experienced higher levels of ineffective parenting. Data also suggested parents with a history of parental incarceration were more likely to have a history of substance abuse and mental illness and their children were more likely to experience abuse as well as display delinquent behaviors (Dannerback, 2005).

In their comparative analysis, Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011b) utilized primary and secondary data to examine how parent health and parenting behaviors influence outcomes of 655 children in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade in which 67 (10.2%) had a history of parental incarceration. Findings suggested families of children with a history of parental incarceration used

inappropriate and inconsistent discipline practices more frequently than did families without a history of parental incarceration (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b). Their findings also indicated behavior problems for children of incarcerated parents increased between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade with serious delinquency in grade 10.

In a recent study of 3,570 caregivers of children with incarcerated fathers in which 87% is the biological mother, Wakefield (2015) examined the caregiver-child relationship in relation to caregiver parenting behaviors, the quality of parenting, and the home environment. Those findings suggested a decline in parental quality and increased exposure to violence following paternal incarceration. More specifically, parents' negative physical behaviors such as hitting behaviors and negative non-physical behaviors such as yelling were exacerbated with paternal incarceration (Wakefield, 2015). Overall, parents' physical conflict (48%) was more pronounced than non-physical conflict (22%) (Wakefield, 2015).

Similar to Wakefield (2015), Swisher and Shaw-Smith (2015) suggest children with an incarcerated father reported higher levels of abuse than children with no history of paternal incarceration. Data indicated children of incarcerated fathers (29.6%) reported more than twice the amount of physical abuse than children with no incarcerated fathers (13.6%). Similarly, children of incarcerated fathers (9.2%) also reported more than twice the sexual abuse when compared to children without a history of paternal incarceration (4.3%; Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015).

**Child stress and trauma.** Aligning with research on Adverse Childhood Experiences, the trauma associated with experiencing the incarceration of a parent and abuse in the home likely resulted in increased stress levels (Anda et al., 2006). Although some children reported

withholding emotions, other children reported not having family or social supports to help them cope during stressful times (Bockneck et al, 2009; Nesmith, Ruhland & Krueger, 2006; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Shonkoff et al., (2012) contended stress becomes toxic in lack of protective factors that normalize the effects of stress. Garner and colleagues (Garner et al., 2012) postulated toxic stress disrupts brain functions, which effects behavioral, educational, and health outcomes. Children with a history of parental incarceration were more likely to reside with a parent with a mental health concern (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010), more likely lived in communities with high rates of violence (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Mackintosh et al., 2006; Murphey & Cooper, 2015), and more likely experienced material hardship (Woodard & Coop, 2016; Geller et al., 2009, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011; Phillips et al., 2006). Children in homes with material hardships, maternal depression, domestic abuse, or in communities with violence and few social supports likely experience higher levels of toxic stress (Garner et al., 2012).

Children of incarcerated parents likely experienced increased stress associated with separation from the incarcerated parent or from witnessing caregiver stress. In the Bockneck, Sanderson, and Britner (2009) qualitative study of 35 school-age children, 66% of the children had incarcerated fathers. That data suggested that children encountered difficulties in processing the absence of their incarcerated parent. Children in other studies reported feeling pressure to internalize concerns for their incarcerated parent as well as pressure to help their caregiver in order to relieve caregiver stress (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). In a sample of 45 children, Arditti and Savla (2015) examined the child trauma when a parent is incarcerated. Those findings indicated that children of incarcerated parents more likely reported significantly higher levels of trauma. Additionally, caregiver-reports regarding children of incarcerated parents indicated considerably higher levels of child trauma, within clinical diagnostic range, than caregiver-

reports from the non-parental incarcerated group (Arditti & Savla, 2015). This trauma has long-term impacts; Travis and Waul (2003) theorized that children who experience traumatic events were less likely to devote energy into mastering age-specific tasks which contributed to developmental delays and the lack of appropriate coping skills.

**Health risks.** Several researchers (Arditti et al., 2003; Miller & Barnes, 2015) suggested a difference in health outcomes of children with a history of paternal incarceration. In a recent study of 14,800 adolescents, Lee et al., (2013) posited when compared to children who either had no history of parental incarceration or experience maternal incarceration, children with a history of paternal incarceration had a higher incidence of negative physical and mental health outcomes. More specifically, findings suggested children with a history of paternal incarceration were more likely to have high cholesterol, asthma, migraines, depression, anxiety, and PTSD (Lee et al., 2013). Arditti and colleagues (Arditti et al., 2003) suggested nearly 30% (26.9) families with incarcerated fathers reported children had worsening health since the incarceration of their father. Moreover, data suggested nearly half (48%) of the 56 participants reported a decline in their health (Arditt et al., 2003).

Miller and Barnes (2015) analyzed secondary data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) which includes data from middle and high students from the 1994-1995 school year. Their analyses indicated that children who reported paternal incarceration were more likely to report negative health outcomes. Findings suggested children of incarcerated fathers were 30% more likely to have asthma, 52% more likely to have migraines, 57% more likely to have depression, and 48% more likely to have anxiety/panic disorder (Miller & Barnes, 2015). Further, children who had an incarcerated father were more like to have sustained an injury on the last year and to report higher levels of overall health

problems (Miller & Barnes, 2015).

**Negative Socialization.** Early studies suggested family characteristics, in particular parents, were predictors of antisocial behaviors such as delinquency (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). In a sample of 357 Black children in which one-third had incarcerated parents, Hanlon and colleagues (Hanlon, Bateman, Simon, O'Grade, & Carswell, 2004) suggested family deviance predicted multiple forms of child deviancy such as delinquent and sexual activity as well as substance abuse. It is possibly that older siblings influence child behaviors, as suggested by Aaron & Dallaire (2009). Children of incarcerated parents were more likely to have delinquent older siblings –a significant predictor of children's delinquent behavior (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009). Moreover, Patterson et al., (1989) theorized that such behaviors later influence academics and rejection from pro-social peers, leading to increased interactions with deviant peers. Hanlon et al., (2004) suggested peer deviance predicted the number, severity, and frequency of deviant activities, as well as the age of first deviance.

**Educational risks and outcomes.** Children with a history of paternal had developmental and cognitive challenges which negatively effected their educational outcomes (Dallarie & Aaron, 2010). Shlafer, Reedy, and Davis (2017) assessed school-based outcomes for children with and without parental incarceration, in which 17% (19,641) experienced parental incarceration. Those findings indicated that when compared to children in public schools without a history of parental incarceration, children who experienced parental incarceration had lower grades and more disciplinary actions (Shlafer et al., 2017). Findings of Shlafer et al. (2017) suggested children with a history of currently incarcerated parents were significantly less engaged in school than were children with past parental incarceration and no parental incarceration. Murphey and Cooper (2015) also posited 6 to 12-year old children of incarcerated

parents were less engaged than their counter parts and were more likely to have more problems at school. After controlling for paternal education, family characteristics, and school-level variables, Hagan and Foster (2012) concluded children who experienced paternal incarceration were more likely to attend schools with high rates of paternal incarceration. Of this population, findings suggested children who do not personally experience paternal incarceration but attended schools with high rates of paternal incarceration experienced lower educational achievement (Hagan & Foster, 2012).

Research suggested teacher bias may influenced school-related outcomes for children of incarcerated parents (Dallaire, Ciccone, & Wilson, 2010; Turney & Haskins, 2014). Dallaire and colleagues (Dallaire et al., 2010) conducted a mixed methods study to determine whether teachers have different expectations of students who experience parental incarceration. Findings suggested children of incarcerated parents experience teacher stigma and teachers report lowered expectations of their academic abilities (Dallaire et al., 2010). Moreover, Turney and Haskins (2014) evaluated grade retention of children experiencing paternal incarceration using data from the Fragile Family and Child Well-being Study. Of the 947 9-year old children included in the survey, data suggested children of incarcerated fathers were more likely to experience retention between kindergarten and third grade. However, the researchers suggested neither test scores nor school behavioral problems explained the relationship; but data suggested teachers' perception of children's academic proficiency may have. Teachers reported significant differences in internalizing and externalizing behaviors of children with and without a history of paternal incarceration (Casey, Shlafer, & Mastern, 2015).

Children of incarcerated fathers were removed from their comprehensive schools for behavioral reasons at higher rates. In one study, more than two-fifths (43.3%) of children in

alternative school settings and more than a half (52.6%) of students in juvenile correctional facilities reported having a history of parental incarceration, either current or past (Shalfer, et al., 2017).

### **Lifetime Effects of Paternal Incarceration**

**Behaviors and health.** The influence of paternal incarceration on outcomes of offspring continues throughout adulthood (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Miller & Barnes; Murray & Farrington, 2008). Adults with a history of childhood paternal incarceration are more likely to have internalizing behaviors such as depression and anxiety disorder, as well as health problems including asthma, and respiratory illnesses (Miller & Barnes, 2015). Murray & Farrington (2008) suggest, after controlling for the variables associated with the fathers incarceration and childhood risks, paternal incarceration between ages 0 to 10 predicted internalizing and antisocial behaviors in adulthood, up to age 48.

**Post-secondary education.** Paternal incarceration is associated with unfavorable outcomes in post-secondary education (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Miller & Barnes, 2015; Turney & Lanuza, 2017). Turney and Lanuza (2017) analyzed secondary data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) survey during the school year 1994-1995 to determine differences in young adults' transitions into adulthood, including college. Findings suggested, after controlling for individual behavior characteristics, adults who experienced childhood paternal incarceration were more likely to not be enrolled in college (Turney & Lanuza, 2017). Similarly, Hagan and Foster's (2012) findings indicated that adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration who self-reported delinquency were less likely to attend or graduate from college (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Miller & Barnes, 2015).

**Intergenerational incarceration.** Research posited aggression (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011) and delinquency (Murray & Farrington, 2005; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Roettger & Swisher, 2011) are related to involvement in the criminal justice system. However, a point of contention amongst researchers is the likelihood of intergenerational incarceration; some researchers contend that parental incarceration predicts adult involvement in the criminal justice system (Dallaire, 2007a,b; Dressel & Barnhill, 1991; Johnston, 1995a,b; Murray & Farrington, 2005, 2008) while others theorize it does not (Graham & Harris, 2013).

Roettger & Swisher (2011) conducted a secondary analysis of the Add Health survey. After accounting for family socioeconomic status and family structure, as well as adolescent social attachments, their findings suggested paternal incarceration predicted adult arrests. Moreover, school attachment and grades predicted adulthood arrest. Of particular note, data suggested that Blacks (39.2%) and Hispanics (46.7%) were more likely than Whites to be arrested.

Incarcerated parents were likely to report that their parents and family members have a history of incarceration. Eddy, Martinex, and Burraston (2013) surveyed 359 incarcerated men and women; of that group 55% had a parent and 53% had sibling that served time in prison or jail. Kjellstrand and colleagues (Kjellstrand, Clearly, Eddy, Foney, & Martinez, 2012) noted that 60-70% of incarcerated parents indicated that their parents were incarcerated as well.

**Cumulative and intergenerational risk.** Parental incarceration engenders cumulative risks for children; these children experienced more risk factors than children whose fathers had not been incarcerated (Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Phillips Burns, Kramer, & Robbins, 2002; Phillips et al., 2006). Paternal incarceration places children and



families at risk for a variety of challenges that reduce the likelihood that these children have opportunities to optimize developmental and educational outcomes (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Miller & Barnes, 2015; Turney & Lanuza, 2017). Children of incarcerated parents were more likely to be Black (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Arditti et al., 2003; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Lee et al., 2012), to live with poorly educated caregivers (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Turney & Haskins, 2014), to live in impoverished neighborhoods (Chung & McFadden, 2010; Wildeman, 2009). Moreover, Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) suggested Black children (16%) were eight times more likely than White (2%) children to have multiple incarcerated family members.

Children of incarcerated parents experienced teacher stigma (Dallaire et al. 2010), attended worse schools (Hagan & Foster, 2012), had less academic success (Shlafer et al., 2017; Hagan & Foster, 2012), and were less likely to attend and graduate college (Hagan & Foster, 2012; Miller & Barnes, 2015; Turney & Lanuza, 2017). In the long-term, children of incarcerated fathers were also more likely than their peers to have poor relationships with spouses, to divorce, and to live separate from their own children (Murray & Farrington, 2008). These factors have long-lasting negative effects on generations of families (Bowlby, 1982; Geller et al., 2009, 2011, 2012; Murray & Farrington, 2005, 2008; Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015; Wakefield, 2015;).

Collectively these risks contribute to almost insurmountable hurdles and the intergenerational transmission of inequality (Borja et al., 2015; Foster & Hagan, 2009; Hagan & Foster, 2012; Murray & Farrington, 2005, 2008; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Researchers (Graham & Harris, 2013) theorized that intergenerational incarceration is not inevitable, other evidence posited that at minimum paternal incarceration poses intergenerational cumulative risks

(Geller et al., 2012; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Roettger & Swisher, 2011; Schlafer et al., 2017; Wildeman, 2010).

### **Post Paternal Incarceration**

Once fathers are released from correctional confinement, financial and emotional challenges remain for their families. As articulated by Geller and colleagues (Geller et al., 2009), previously incarcerated fathers had significantly lower employment rates, work hours, and annual income. Upon release, previously incarcerated fathers have difficulties finding employment as a history of incarceration reduces such opportunities and depletes economic resources, thus perpetuating the ongoing disadvantage for children and families (Arditti & Few, 2006; Chung, 2012; Gellar et al., 2009; Gellar et al., 2011; Grinstead et al., 2001; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011). After accounting for demographic characteristics, fathers with a history of incarceration contributed 25% less financial support than a father without a history of incarceration (Geller et al., 2011).

The transition of re-integrating into the family structure depends on several factors including gender, visitations during incarceration, incarcerated parent participation in parenting classes, mental health status, marital status, and the number of convictions (Mowen & Visher, 2016). Wilson et al. (2010) posited parents that participated in parenting classes while incarcerated experienced increased communication with their children as well as individual improvements in self-esteem, self-mastery, parental satisfaction, and parental confidence. Parents who participated in parenting classes also reported less stress and depression and had more positive interactions with family during incarceration, contributing to more positive familial relationships after incarceration (Eddy et al., 2013).

### **Neighborhoods and Natural Mentors**

Children with a history of paternal incarceration were likely raised in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Annie E. Casey, 2016; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Research suggested poor and non-thriving communities have limited resources to support the families (Chung & McFadden, 2010; Wildeman, 2009). In addition, children are surrounded by criminality and violence (Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Annie E. Casey, 2015). Murphey and Cooper (2015) suggested approximately 33% of children with incarcerated parents witnessed violence in their communities. In their sample of 69 children between ages 6 to 12 years old, Mackintosh and colleagues (Mackintosh et al., 2006) suggested 36% of the children report seeing someone beaten or shot, 25% hid from shootings, and 27% were unable to play outside their homes due to neighborhood violence. Researchers posited children who live in neighborhoods with adversity likely have increased levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Briggs, Quinn, Orellana, & Miller, 2015). Wilbur et al. (2007) suggested children's exposure to violence correlate with depression and externalizing behaviors.

Furthermore, Wakefield and Wildeman (2011) underscored racial disparities in relation to parental incarceration. The authors contended that residential segregation and mass incarceration practices in urban areas contributed to the aforementioned effects which are most pronounced amongst ethnic minorities. Similarly, negative effects of disadvantaged neighborhoods are detrimental even to children and families with no incarcerated parents (Hatzenbueler, Keyes, Hamilton, Uddin, & Galea, 2015; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010; Clear, 2007).

Many children who live in adverse conditions simultaneously experience fewer positive

natural mentors (Bockneck et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2013; Merestein et al. 2011). In their ethnographic study of 34 children with an incarcerated mother, father, or both, Nesmith and colleagues (Nesmith et al., 2006) related narratives of children with incarcerated parents. The children shared that they do not have adults in their families or neighborhoods to use as role models. More specifically, one child said, “I don’t really have anybody to look up to....I have nobody to follow in their footsteps” (Nesmith et al., 2006, p. 20).

Although the justice system may view incarceration as a panacea, the incarceration of parents places children at high-risk (Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Schwartz-Soicher et al., 2011; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Paternal incarceration is a risk mechanism contributing to short- and long-term deleterious risks. The internalizing and externalizing behaviors of the children vary because they are a diverse group; some children show a greater degree of resilience and do have positive outcomes (Arditti et al., 2003; Briggs et al., 2016; Dewit, et al., 2016; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008;).

Adjustment during and after parental incarceration is contingent on several factors. The support children receive during parental incarceration influences adjustment during the separation. Quality non-familial adult relationships were an important protective factor (Bockneck et al., 2009; ICF International, 2011; Jarjoura et al., 2013; Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Myers et al., 1999; Travis & Waul, 2003).

## **Mentorship**

Mentorship is an intervention and preventative measure for “at-risk” youth (DuBois et al., 2011; Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Formal mentorship is considered frequent one-on-one contact between an unrelated adult and a child, with a relationship framed by commitment, respect, and

loyalty and a foundation of trust (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Spencer, Tugenberg, Ocean, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2013). Mentoring “at-risk” youth originated in the early 20th century as a mechanism to support young males involved in the juvenile criminal justice system (Baker & Maguire, 2005). Since, mentoring has evolved to support youth in various at-risk circumstances including single-parent households, foster care, and parental incarceration (Herrera et al., 2013; Tierney & Grossman, 1998). Since the mid 1990’s, formal mentorship has proliferated as suggestive findings evolved from various studies (Bilchik, 2006; DuBois & Rhodes, 2006; DuBois et al., 2011; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Haddock et al., 2015; Herrera et al., 2007; Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes, Grossman & Resch, 2000) indicating that mentoring is a protective factor that ameliorates negative outcomes for disadvantaged groups of youth. As of 2014 more than 4.5 million at-risk youth were enrolled in a formal mentoring program in the United States (MENTOR, 2014).

The existing literature, albeit somewhat scarce, suggest mentoring at-risk youth reduces internalizing and externalizing behaviors (DuBois, Neville, et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2005; DuBois et al., 2011; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Herrera et al., 2013; Jackson, 2002; Tolan et al., 2014). Dewit and colleagues (Dewit et al., 2016) surveyed at-risk youth between ages 6 to 17 either paired with a Big Brother Big Sister mentor ( $n = 859$ ) or on the waitlist ( $n = 105$ ). Findings suggested mentored youth reported significantly fewer behavioral problems as well as fewer symptoms of depression and social anxiety compared to non-mentored youth (Dewit et al., 2016). Further, youth in their study showed improvements in parental emotional support and child coping skills, corroborating findings that associated parenting behaviors and youth internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Dewit et al., 2016; Mackintosh et al., 2006). Similarly, Weiler and colleagues (Weiler, Haddock, Zimmerman, Krafchick, & Youngblade, 2015) studied

315 high-risk youth (e.g. adolescent offenders) who participated in a 12-week mentoring program. After accounting for baseline differences, analysis of the pre- and post-intervention suggested mentored youth report significantly fewer antisocial behaviors, less acceptance of problem behaviors, and increased autonomy from substance use (Weiler et al., 2015). Moreover, Herrera and colleagues (Herrera et al., 2013) suggested mentoring significantly decreased and prevented internalizing behaviors, as reported by parent and youth. Tolan and colleagues (Tolan et al., 2014) conducted a meta-analysis of studies that focused on mentoring delinquent youth in which findings suggested reduction in delinquency, drug use, and aggression, as well as improved academic achievement.

Mentored youth behavioral outcomes were moderated by youth's gender, race, or a combination of both gender and race (Dewit et al., 2016; Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Recent research suggested relative to non-mentored boys, mentored boys had stronger perceptions of emotional support from peers and parents while mentored girls were less likely to display behavioral problems and depressed mood and increased self-esteem (Dewit, et al., 2016). Although boys did not experience improvement in internalizing or externalizing behaviors, researchers posited boys may benefit from mentoring just as much as girls (Dewit et al., 2016), which is contrary to earlier research (Liang et al., 2013; Spencer, 2007). Grossman & Tierney (1998) surveyed 959 at-risk youth between ages 10 to 16 in which 56.8% were ethnic minorities and 62.4% male. Findings suggested relative to non-mentored youth ( $n = 472$ ), mentored youth ( $n = 487$ ) were nearly 50% less likely (45.8%) to start using illegal drugs. Moreover, minority youth were 70% less likely than non-mentored youth to start using illegal drugs. Mentored minority girls (72.6%) were less likely than mentored minority boys (67.8%), to initiate drug use (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Similarly, mentored minority girls were 53.7% less likely than

non-mentored minority girls to initiate alcohol use (Grossman & Tierney, 1998).

Mentorship improves self-identity and youth-adult relationships (DuBois, Neville, et al., 2002; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Tolan et al., 2014). Thomson and Zand (2010) and others (DuBois, Neville, et al., 2002; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Spencer et al., 2013) suggested mentored youth improved self-perception, social interactions, and decreased anti-social behaviors. Karcher (2008) examined 516 Latino students in which 252 were enrolled in a school-based mentoring program. When compared to non-mentored youth, data suggested mentored youth report significantly higher levels of self-esteem, social support from friends, and connectedness to peers (Karcher, 2008). Notably, younger boys and older girls reaped the greatest benefits from mentoring as young boys reported significantly higher levels of empathy, cooperation, hopefulness and connectedness to school and culturally different peers, while older girls reported significantly higher levels of school connectedness, self-esteem, self-in-present, and support (Karcher, 2008). However, older boys were likely to have significantly lower, and negative, connectedness to teachers (Karcher, 2008). Other findings suggested improvement in parent relationships mediated positive outcomes in self-identity and school-related outcomes (Rhodes et al., 2000). Additional research suggested positive parental relationships improved youths' confidence and trust with other adults, which influenced social skills (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Behrendt, 2005). Moreover, a positive teacher-student relationship increases youth motivation, academic competence and achievement, school engagement, school value, and behavioral outcomes (Reddy, Rhodes, Mulhall, 2003). Improvement in parent and teacher relationships through mentoring improves youths' social and educational outcomes.

Findings suggested mentorship influences educational outcomes (Deutsch, Krueger,

Henneberger, Futch-Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2016). Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, and McMaken, (2011) evaluated school outcomes of 1,139 youth between ages 9 to 16 in which findings suggested that after 9 months of mentorship teachers reported mentored youth ( $n = 565$ ) improved in school-related areas and had fewer unexcused absences. Likewise, youth self-reported having a more positive perception of their academic abilities and better grades than non-mentored youth ( $n = 574$ ) (Herrera et al., 2011). DuBois et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 82 studies that evaluated youth mentoring programs. Findings suggested mentoring programs had significant positive effects on school attendance, grades, test scores and academic achievement (DuBois et al., 2011). Data suggested that mentorship improved youth self-efficacy and had positive effects on youths' academic outcomes (DuBois, et al., 2002b).

In their random and quasi-experimental study, Herrera, DuBois, and Grossman (2013) offer findings regarding positive outcomes of mentoring for youth with individual risk, such as difficulties in school or problem behaviors and environmental risk, such as family economic strains or family risks. Data analysis of seven mentoring programs that served 1,310 youth between ages 8 to 15 over a 10 month period suggested mentored youth report significantly fewer depressive symptoms, greater acceptance by their peers, more positive belief about school success, and better grades (Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013). Herrera et al., (2013) and others (DuBois, et al., 2002a ) posited youth with more environmental risks showed more positive changes in internalizing behaviors when mentored.

**Community-based mentoring** Researchers suggested community-based mentoring (CBM) may be more beneficial because CBM consists of more interaction and opportunities for mentor and youth dyads to facilitate a close relationship (Bayer et al., 2015; Karcher, 2008). Dyads in CBM may meet 4 to 8 hours weekly within the community (Bayer et al., 2015;



Karcher, 2008). CBM lasts through the calendar year thus fostering sustained relationships (Bayer et al., 2015; Karcher, 2008). In their analysis of a community-based nationwide mentoring program, Rhodes and colleagues (Rhodes et al., 2000) examined the effects of mentorship for 959 youth who were either paired with a mentor ( $n = 487$ ) or on the waitlist ( $n = 472$ ). Findings suggested that mentored youth improved in of global self-worth, school value, and grades which were mediated by parental relationships (Rhodes et al., 2000)

In their first meta-analysis, DuBois et al. (2002) suggested CBM is nearly twice as effective as mentoring in a school environment. Bayer et al. (2015) suggested youth and mentors were less likely to have close relationships in programs that met at the same weekly time and location and when dyads met less frequently.

**Group mentoring.** Findings suggested improved effects with group mentoring compared to one-on-one mentoring (DuBois et al., 2011). In their qualitative study, Deutsch et al., 2016 interviewed 113 seventh grade girls and their mentors who participated in an all-girl group mentoring program. As a result, 42% youth reported improvement in academics, 88% relational development, 71% self-regulation, and 87% self-understanding (Deutsch, et al., 2016). Further, youth attributed academic improvement (20% vs. 39%), relational improvement (52% vs. 28%), self-regulation (27% vs. 35%), and self-understanding (39% vs. 39%) to group mentoring or to their mentor, respectively (Deutsch et al., 2016). Literature presents suggestive evidence that peers and adults contribute to youth development and thus combining one-on-one mentoring with group mentoring likely amplified mentoring benefits (Deutsch, Wiggins, Henneberger, & Lawrence, 2013; DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2005). Carswell and colleagues (Carswell, Hanlon, O'Grady, Watts, & Pothong, 2009) evaluated outcomes of Black youth between ages 11 to 16 predominately from low-income unstable families in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods

enrolled in a group mentoring program. Findings suggested youth who participated in group mentoring improved grade-point average and positive teacher-reported behavior (Carswell et al., 2009). Kuperminc and Thomason (2013) suggested group mentoring may be more culturally appropriate for some ethnic groups.

### **Mentoring Children with a History of Parental Incarceration**

Children of incarcerated parents are considered “high-risk” because of the cumulative effects of associated ACEs and other risk factors (Herrera et al., 2013). Acknowledging that in 2003, the U.S. Department of Human and Health Services through the Family and Youth Services Bureau established and funded Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program (Meade & Mellgren, 2010). Initially, under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment of 2001 and currently through the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, 149 awards totaling \$49.3 million over three years were given to state and local governments, community, faith-based, and tribal organizations. Award recipients are required to recruit, screen, train, monitor and evaluate mentors for children of incarcerated parents. The first and only published study of the outcomes of children enrolled in MCP was in 2012 by Bruster and Foreman.

Bruster & Foreman (2012) surveyed 35 youth and 49 caregivers in a Mentoring Children of Prisoners program. The sample of youth was comprised of 54% Black children, and 24% White children, with 64% male and 30% female. Findings suggested youth improved self-motivation, self-confidence, and school value. More specifically, youth and caregivers suggested mentors helped youth increased self-confidence and increased school effort (Bruster & Foreman, 2012). Notably, youth and caregivers suggested mentors provided guidance and were a sounding

board for the youth. These results affirmed previous research regarding mentoring at-risk youth (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Bruster and Foreman (2012) did not use statistical analyses to evaluate data or indicate the percent of respondents that “agreed” to each survey question measured. Thus, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

**Seminal mentoring research.** What is regarded as the first report to specify mentoring outcomes for children with a history of parental incarceration, Jucovy (2003) suggested mentorship is a protective factor for children of incarcerated parents. After one year of mentoring 556 youth, mentors (93% and 61%) and caregivers (82% and 60%) suggested improvements in child self-confidence and “sense of future”, respectively. Likewise, mentors and caregivers reported increased positive academic and behavioral outcomes including higher grades, fewer skipped days of school, and less likely to begin using drugs or alcohol. Moreover, Jucovy’s data suggested youth who were mentored 12 months or longer had the most favorable outcomes. Although data suggested mentoring benefits for the vulnerable population, Jucovy did not use statistical tests to evaluate data, stating “Amachi is still a very young program..too soon for a rigorous evaluation of outcomes” (p.34, Jucovy, 2003). As a result, suggestive data is preliminary at best. Fortunately, research by Johnston (2012) corroborated these findings and suggest mentorship improved attitudes, relationships with others, and school performance as well as delay engagement in risk behaviors of children of incarcerated parents.

**Subsequent research.** Since 2003, few researchers (Bruster & Foreman, 2012; ICF International, 2011; Shlafer et al., 2009; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010) have empirically evaluated mentorship for children of incarcerated parents. In their mixed methods analysis of 57 youth between ages 4 to 15 with the history of parental incarceration, Shlafer and colleagues (Shlafer et al., 2009) suggested youth who completed the 6 month study and had consistent and frequent

contact with their mentors exhibited fewer externalizing behaviors, as reported by mentors.

However, findings from a subsequent study using the same data suggested collectively, mentored youth did not improve internalizing (19%) or externalizing (33%). On the contrary, internalizing behaviors (44%) increased while externalizing behaviors (32%) remained constant. Similar to Mackintosh et al, 2006, Shlafer and Poehlmann (2010) suggested other factors influenced youth behaviors; caregivers' perception of youth were associated with youth externalizing behaviors. Hence, caregivers who felt more negatively about their relationship with the youth were more likely to observe increased levels of externalizing behaviors (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010).

The Amachi Mentoring Children of Promise Program is a mentorship specifically for children with incarcerated parents. Their goal is to reduce the likelihood of intergenerational crime and incarceration. As a program requirement, mentors meet one-on-one with their mentees one to four times each month. In 2011, the ICF International (2011) conducted a rigorous evaluation of the Amachi Texas mentoring program. Data suggested mentored girls had more improved parental relationships than mentored boys. However, mentored boys had more improved outcomes of self-worth and "sense of future" than the mentored girls.

Moreover, after 6 months of mentoring, youth reported more positive caregiver-child relationships. Findings suggested not only did mentored youth benefit from mentorship but caregivers benefited as well. Children reported that caregivers provided more positive reinforcement, knew who the youth's friends were, knew where the youth were when they were not home, and expected youth to follow rules; all of which are characteristics that reduce adolescent internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Allen et al., 1998; Murphey & Cooper,

2015).

However, after 6 months of mentoring, there were no significant impacts on academic or school-related outcomes for all mentored youth. Notably, youth in mentoring relationships longer than 12 months reported significantly higher connection to school, community and family, yet again no differences in academic or other school related outcomes (ICF International, 2011). Researchers noted that mentor and parent characteristics may have influenced youth outcomes, however the researchers did not indicate whether the program provided on-going training for mentors or support for the dyad which also could have contributed to improved outcomes (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; Karcher, 2008; Parra et al., 2002).

In their qualitative study, Laasko and Nygaard (2012) interviewed 23 children enrolled in a mentoring program specifically for youth with a history of parental incarceration. Findings suggested youth improved self-confidence, signs of happiness, sociability, openness, school performance and evidence of trust. In one example, a 10-year-old youth explained that she trusted her mentor and was willing to share challenges concerning her anxieties. The youth elaborated and said, "I would think probably I changed a lot. Probably from my behavior. It's better" (p. 22, 2012). Similarly, a 15-year-old male suggested that his mentor was a part of his family. The youth felt that his mentor is a person that he can talk to about his anger and self-esteem. The researchers noted that incarcerated parents with children in the mentoring program reported mentors helped their children have aspirations of attending college. Sentiments similar to these were repeated throughout.

Laasko and Nygaard (2012) suggested youth who bonded with their mentor benefited the most from mentoring. In addition, youth who bonded with their mentors spoke of their mentors

teaching them new skills such as fishing, the value of saving money, or alternative behavioral options to displaying aggression. The researchers suggested such interactions not only supports youth cognitive and emotional development but also provides a foundation of life skills. Hence, mentorship is beneficial because mentors engage in positive interactions which can improve self-esteem and influence how children view others (Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Reagan-Porres, 2013; Shlafer, et al, 2009).

Collectively, research specific to mentoring children of incarcerated parents suggested children improve emotional, social, and cognitive well-being (Bruster & Foreman, 2012; ICF International, 2011; Jucovy, 2003; Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Shlafer et al., 2009). However, methods used in these studies were not without limitations. First, neither study delineated which parent experienced incarceration, as paternal and maternal incarceration effects children differently, thus mentoring outcomes may differ (Dallaire, 2007b; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010; Huebner & Gustafson, 2007; Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005). Second, empirical rigor is not evident in the studies. Neither Jucovy (2003) nor Bruster and Foreman (2012) used statistical tests and therefore did not report statistical values to compare to that of mentoring youth with no history of parental incarceration. Shlafer and colleagues (Shlafer et al., 2009; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010) data was from a small sample and filter youths' behaviors through caregiver, mentor, and teacher reports. Finally, few studies underscored positive changes in children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Taken together, rigorous empirical research of mentoring outcomes specific to children with a history of paternal incarceration is lacking and thus rigorous research is needed to elucidate the benefits of mentoring for this vulnerable population (Herrera et al., 2013; Johnston, 2012; Vigne, et al., 2008).

**Factors affecting mentoring outcomes.** Children in some mentoring programs were

more successful than children in other mentoring programs (Herrera et al., 2013; ICF, 2011; Jarjoura, DuBois, Shlafer, & Haight, 2013; Johnston, 2012; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2007). In fact, findings suggested modest and occasional negative effects associated with the youth in mentorship (Spencer, et al., 2013). Research suggested a close relationship is necessary for youth to increase resilience (Bayer, Grossman, & DuBois, 2015; DuBois & Rhodes 2006).

Additionally, various factors such as mentor, youth, and program characteristics affect dyad contact, closeness, and length of mentorship and accounts for variation in youth outcomes (Bayer et al., 2015; Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2009; DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002, 2011; DuBois, Neville, et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2011; Karcher, 2008; Parra et al., 2002; Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2013).

**Youth interpersonal history.** The youth's background and interpersonal history affected the quality of relationship and thus their outcomes (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005). Children of incarcerated parents are accompanied by specific risks that may generate a challenging or unsuccessful mentorship (Deutsch, 2016; DuBois et al., 2011; Jarjourja et al., 2013; Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2007). These children may be hesitant to trust their mentor or establish a relationship with adults due to past relationships when youth may have been abandoned or maltreated by adults (Ahrens, DuBois, Garrison, Spencer, Richardson, & Lozano, 2011; Jarjoura et al., 2013; Merestein et al., 2011; Spencer, 2007). In Spencer et al., 2013, mentors indicated that the child's family instability contributed to sometimes challenging relationships. Herrera et al., 2013 maintained that residential instability or unstable family dynamics makes the mentoring relationship difficult to sustain. Findings also suggested youth's level of social competence influenced how they interacted with their mentor (DuBois et al., 2011; Werner & Smith, 1982). Further, literature suggested youth with higher levels of

externalizing behaviors may be less likely to benefit from mentoring (Blechman & Boop, 2005; Rhodes, 2005)

*Youth developmental stage and gender.* Youths' age (Spencer et al., 2013; Thomson & Zand, 2010) and gender (Dewit et al., 2016) influenced the quality and longevity of relationship. Several researchers (Chu, Saucier & Hafner, 2010; Karcher, 2008; Spencer et al., 2013) suggested older adolescents reported higher levels of support as they were likely to perceive mentoring provides a sense of social and quality support. Other researchers (Bayer et al., 2015; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002) however, suggested younger adolescents tended to have closer relationships with mentors that contributed to a higher degree of trust and closeness. In their study, Thomson and Zand (2010) surveyed at-risk youth between ages 9 to 16, 30% of which were Black and 33% from single-parent homes. Findings suggested younger youth were more likely to report better relationships and to be transparent with their mentor (Thomson & Zand, 2010).

Further, Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield & Walsh-Samp (2008) suggested girls were more likely to report longer mentoring relationships and higher levels of mentoring support. Rhodes and colleagues (Rhodes et al., 2008) suggested girls (12.4 years of age) reported receiving more support from mentors because they were older than the boys (12.2 years of age). Nevertheless, Dewit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, and Lipman (2016) suggested mentored girls reported better outcomes than non-mentored girls in both problem behaviors and depressed mood although the same was not true with mentored boys. Clark & Ayers (1995) suggested that female personality characteristics contributed to the mentoring relationship; girls tended to make more emotional connections and expected higher levels of closeness, communication, and empathy. Liang, Bogat, and Duffy (2005) suggested girls are more likely to improve self-identity through



relationships and to depend on others for emotional support. Yet, findings from more recent research suggested mentored boys were more likely than mentored girls to report stronger perceptions of emotional support from peers and parents (Dewit et al., 2016). Due to converging findings of outcomes, the differential effects of mentoring on girls and boys is still unclear and requires further examination.

**Contact.** Youth that maintained frequent and consistent contact with mentors had better outcomes (Converse & Kraft, 2009; Shlafer, et al., 2009). Research suggested frequent contact is important and may have contributed to a closer relationship (Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Parra, DuBois, Neville, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005) and longer sustained relationships (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Shlafer et al., 2009 suggested youth with more sociodemographic risks were more likely to spend more time and meet more frequently with their mentors and as a result had fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors than those who reported less frequent contact with their mentors. Likewise, DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) surveyed 2,053 youth between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Results suggested youth with frequent contact had closer and longer relationships with their mentor, increased self-esteem and physical activity as well as less likely to report depression and drug use (DuBois et al., 2005).

**Length of mentoring relationship.** Several mentoring theorist (Bayer et al., 2015; Dewit et al., 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; ICF International 2011; Rhodes et al., 2008; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013) suggested youth in longer mentoring relationships were likely to have better outcomes when compared to youth in shorter mentoring relationships. In their sample of 928 youth between ages 10 to 16, Rhodes, Reddy, and Grossman (2005) suggested youth in longer mentoring relationships had significant improvements in parental relationships and were less likely to use alcohol while youth in relationships shorter than 12

months did not experience these improvements. Similarly, youth in DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) study who were in longer relationships were less likely to report having smoked in the last month. Grossman & Rhodes (2002) suggested youth in mentoring relationships longer than 12 months have higher levels of self-worth, social acceptance, and scholastic competence, parental relationship quality, and less drug or alcohol use compared to youth in shorter relationships. Moreover, mentors suggested it takes youth an extensive amount of time to be transparent (Spencer et al., 2013). In fact, Grossman and Rhodes (2002) suggested youth in mentoring relationships that terminated within the first three months experienced lower levels of self-worth and scholastic competence when compared to youth who have never been mentored. Following this logic, Bolen (2002) suggested changes in youth's cognitive and behavioral development is a slow process that may take a substantial amount of time.

Research suggested the quality of the relationship and the number of activities were associated with the length of the relationship because both quality of the relationship and engagement in activities facilitates closeness and cements a bond between the mentor and youth (Dewit et al., 2016; Reagan-Porres, 2013). Additional findings suggested the quality of mentoring relationship significantly predicted youth's attachment to their caregiver and friendship with adults (Thomson & Zand, 2010).

***Closeness.*** In the context of this research, the word closeness can be considered as a synonym to attachment, in that there is no extant research using attachment as a construct. Each of the aforementioned factors contribute to *closeness/attachment* in the relationship which may influence youth self-perception as well as social and academic outcomes (Bayer, et al., 2015; DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; Jarjoura et al., 2013). Bayer et al., (2015) analyzed data from 1,139 youth, majority of which were female (54%) and minority (63%). Findings suggested

youth that have close relationships with their mentor were more likely to improve educational outcomes. When youth reported being close to their mentor, teachers were more likely to rate youth as showing improvement in academic performance and youth reported increase in beliefs of scholastic efficacy (Bayer et al., 2015). Researchers suggested youth who did not report having a close relationship with their mentor despite having long relationships -did not show gains in academic performance and were more similar to non-mentored youth on multiple measures (Bayer et al., 2015). Thus, the researchers contended the length of the relationship does not promote positive outcomes, but rather the degree of closeness/attachment between mentor and youth. After three months, more than 80% of youth reported being *somewhat close* or *very close* to their mentor (Bayer et al. (2015). However, findings suggested youth who were in longer relationship reported higher levels of closeness/attachment compared to youth in shorter relationships (Bayer et al., 2015). Factors that contribute to closeness/attachment include mentor training, location and frequency of meetings, size of group meetings, and age of mentor (Bayer et al., 2015). Researchers (Bayer et al., 2015; Laasko & Nygaard, 2012) suggested closeness/attachment is required for youth to experience benefits from mentorship.

Spencer (2007) maintained that to enable a close bond between mentor and youth, the dyad must spend a significant amount of time engaged in quality interactions. Activities that involved collaboration and working together to address youth concerns helped youth feel most connected (Reagan-Porres, 2013). Similarly, Laasko and Nygaard (2012) and others (Bayer et al., 2015) suggested youth with a history of parental incarceration who form a bond with their mentor were more likely to show developmental improvement in self-identity, cognitive, socioemotional development as well as educational improvement. Rhodes (2005) reiterated these sentiments and suggested with a close mentor-youth bond, the youth initially shows

improvements in cognitive, emotional and identity development and later in school and overall well-being. Bayer et al. (2015), Laasko and Nygaard (2012) and Rhodes (2005) considerations of the evolutionary nature of the mentorship relationship and youth outcomes align with Ainsworth's (1989) theory of how youths' "internal working models" gradually change over time.

**Mentoring Programs.** Although specific program characteristics are beyond the scope of this study, it is important to underscore variables that affect youth outcomes as the structure of mentoring programs affect dyad relationship dynamics (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; DuBois et al. 2011; Herrera et al., 2013; Shlafer et al., 2009; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2007). Mentoring programs are most effective when mentors are trained and provided on-going support to the dyad (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; Karcher, 2008; Lakind, Eddy, & Zell, 2014; Rhodes, 2002, 2008). Herrera et al. (2013) suggested training is a factor that effects youth outcomes during mentorship. Parra and colleagues (Parra, DuBois, Neville, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002) posited training influences mentors' perception of their mentoring abilities. In their work, mentors who were more confident about mentoring reported higher levels of contact with youth, fewer relationship obstacles, and more involvement in program activities (Parra et al., 2002). Moreover, mentor efficacy was directly associated with youth's feelings of closeness (Parra et al., 2002) and longer relationships (DuBois, Neville, et al., 2002). Bayer et al. (2015) also suggested youth matched with mentors who received more training reported closer relationships.

Further, mentor programs that recruited mentors with experience working with youth (Lakind, Eddy, & Zell, 2014) or professions in helping roles (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2011) were likely to have a greater impact. Lakind, Eddy, and Zell (2014) posited that mentors do not have the skills or background to work with children must have training.

Although ethnographic studies of mentoring programs suggest parents and youth prefer mentors of the same race or gender, empirical findings suggest there were no significant differences whether youth are matched with mentors of the same race or gender (Bayer et al., 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Prior research examining mentoring programs that support children of incarcerated parents is situated within a theoretical lens that view mentorship as a means to mediate negative effects of paternal incarceration. Within this framework, the attachment theory (Darling, 2005; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Poehlmann, 2005b; Poehlmann et al., 2008; Shlafer et al., 2009), the socialization theory (Dallaire, 2007a,b; Foster & Hagan, 2009; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b), and the risk and resilience theory (Dallaire, 2007b; Darling, 2005; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Woodard & Coop, 2016) explains how experiences that precede mentorship influences the effectiveness of mentorship for children of incarcerated fathers.

**The attachment theory.** The attachment theory posits that upon birth children form an attachment to their primary caregiver (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1973). Children develop either a secure attachment with consistent, responsive and comforting parenting or an insecure attachment with inconsistent or harsh parenting (Ainsworth, 1989; Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Patterson et al., 1989). With respect to the former, these children feel valued, competent, feel they are deserving of love (Makariev & Shaver, 2010) and have positive expectations of others (Bolen, 2002). In cases of the latter, children have negative expectations of themselves and others (Bolen, 2002; Makariev & Shaver, 2010) and view the world as threatening and unpredictable; this insecure attachment can cause anxiety and anger (Makariev & Shaver, 2010). Given that incarcerated parents and caregivers may exhibit negative parenting behaviors, children may form insecure attachments (Makariev & Shaver, 2010). Moreover, attachment

theorist (Makariev & Shaver, 2010) posited that the effects associated with paternal incarceration including financial strain and several relocations further contribute to children's insecure attachment; creating multiple layers of insecure attachment (Block & Potthast, 1998; Dallaire et al., 2015; Dannerback, 2005; Gabel & Johnston, 1995; Geller et al., 2009; Johnston, 1995c; Roth, 2005; Wildeman, 2010; Wilson, et al., 2010). However, there is a paucity of research that have examined attachment in children of incarcerated fathers.

Allen, Moore, Kuperminc and Bell (1998) posited attachment predicts internalizing and externalizing behaviors. As a result, findings suggested children with insecure attachment were more likely to exhibit anxiety, depression, aggression, and anger compared to children with secure attachment who were more likely to regulate their emotions (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Further, children with secure attachment were more likely accepted by pro-social peers (Allen et al., 1998; Bolen, 2002). However, insecure attachment may well lead to the association with deviant peers and delinquency (Bolen, 2002). Similarly, Bolen (2002) suggested secure youth are well versed in social interactions and have the skills to negotiate in diverse settings such as in school; the same is not true for children with insecure attachment.

Conversely, separation from an attachment figure, may also result in insecure attachment (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1973; Bowlby, 1979; Schlafer et al., 2009). As a "strong activating trigger", incarceration is a traumatic process and lengthy time between the separation and unification which causes adverse effects (Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002). However, Ainsworth (1989) suggested when children are separated from their attachment figure, older siblings may necessarily become a secure base and both siblings exhibit less distress. Siblings may often act as secondary attachment figures because older siblings often monitor younger siblings (Foster & Hagan, 2009; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Stewart, 1983).

Additionally, the attachment theory posits supportive adults can positively influence children during the separation from their parent (Ainsworth, 1989; Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Poehlmann, 2005a, b). Children especially attach themselves to mentors when they do not have a secure relationship with their parent (Ainsworth, 1989). Thus, mentors can facilitate children's attachment security (Makariev & Shaver, 2010), offer a sense of stability and security and, therefore, provide a *secure base* for the youth (Bowlby, 1988). In that vein, mentors act as secondary attachment figures to youth (Ainsworth, 1989; Darling, 2005).

**The socialization theory.** Bandura (1977) suggested children view family as models for behavior. Moreover, Vygotsky (1969) and Bandura (1977) theorized that children learn behaviors through interactions. Socialization, or social learning, is the process in which child behaviors are learned from repeated interactions with family (Patterson et al., 1989; Vygotsky, 1969). Learned behaviors, whether prosocial or antisocial, influence children's actions (Ainsworth, 1989; Aaron & Dallaire, 2009; Foster & Hagan, 2009; Patterson, et al., 1989). More recent research by Bolen (2002) suggested children self-assess based on characteristics of the primary caregiver. Therefore, children may reflect parents' exhibition of incarceration-specific behaviors, such as engaging in criminal activity or substance abuse (Lee et al., 2014; Phillips et al., 2002). Sack (1977) and Murray and Farrington (2005) findings substantiated this notion in that of the sons of incarcerated fathers exhibit criminal behaviors similar to their father's offense. Within the context of the home, family social interactions may place children at risk for poor outcomes (Woodard & Copp, 2016). Reed and Reed (1997) contended that parent and familial involvement in the criminal justice system may contribute to the transmission of intergenerational incarceration. This contention provided support for research that suggested an increase in antisocial and delinquent behaviors during paternal incarceration (Makariev &

Shaver, 2010; Sack, 1977). Further, researchers of the socialization theory posited that incarceration of a parent negatively affects children because of the decrease in parental supervision, parental support, and role models (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Lee et al., 2013).

Other influences such as lack of supervision, association with deviant peers, and developmental stage contribute to youth behaviors. Upon parental incarceration, the remaining parent, or new caregiver, may work longer hours to care for children thus leaving children unsupervised by an adult (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Bruns, 2017; Foster & Hagan, 2009; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). Consequently, the resulting attachment between siblings may pose a risk to younger siblings because children of incarcerated parents are more likely to have delinquent older siblings who influence delinquent behaviors (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010). Thus, socialization of siblings may contribute to negative behaviors from children of incarcerated parents (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010).

In effect, adolescence is a developmental stage in which children typically have decreased parental supervision and parental influence as well as increased peer influence (Ainsworth, 1989; Darling, 2005). Adolescent children of incarcerated parents are likely to associate with deviant peers for several reasons. Children who lack parental attachment were likely to socialize with deviant peers (Patterson et al., 1989). Secondly, Bolen (2002) asserted that prosocial peers reject children of incarcerated parents because of their antisocial behaviors, thus prompting them to engage with peers that participate in delinquent activities (Patterson et al., 1989). Thus, it is plausible that the combination of the two explains the increased risk of adolescent children, compared to children in early or late childhood, of displaying antisocial behaviors and engaging in delinquent activities (Brendgen, Vitaeo, & Bukowski, 2000; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Naudeau, 2010). Due to increased



opportunities for negative socialization children of incarcerated parents have a heightened susceptibility to such delinquent and antisocial behaviors (Davis & Schlafer, 2017; Geller et al., 2009; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Sack, 1977; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Additionally, the socialization with deviant peers significantly predicted externalizing behaviors (Hanlon et al., 2004).

In light of the socialization theory, mentors influence youth behaviors (Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b) by presenting positive role models who are consistent and responsive (Stovall & Dozier, 1998). Akers (1985) contended that individuals learn new behaviors and develop new beliefs when they have close interaction with others. Therefore, as mentors facilitate a close relationship with youth begin to incorporate mentor behaviors into their own actions. Mentors also provide social capital for youth in which youth assess and refine their thinking as they interact with their mentor thus youth begin to reconstruct views of themselves (Dworkin, Larson, Hanson, 2003; Yates & Youniss, 1996). As a result, from a neurophysiological perspective, youths' *inner organization* is subject to change because of mentoring environmental influences in which internal changes manifest externally through behavior choices (Ainsworth, 1989). Similar to Rhodes (2002) and Spencer (2007), Ainsworth (1989) further suggested development of adolescents' cognitive skills improves their attachment relationships.

**The risk and resilience theory.** According to Coie et al. (1993) risk factors exacerbate negative outcomes and may impact development. The researcher also suggested that protective factors may mitigate effects of risk factors (Coie et al., 1993). As noted earlier, risk factors exist prior to parental incarceration (Tasca et al., 2011) however, parental incarceration may be traumatic event that creates new problems and exacerbates pre-incarceration problems rather than ameliorating them (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). Risks associated with parental incarceration

include increased levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, antisocial and delinquent outcomes as well as academic challenges (Dallaire & Zeman, 2013; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Lowenstein, 1986; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Phillips et al., 2002; Sack, 1977; Trice & Brewster, 2004). Cumulative ACEs and other risk factors, lead to more negative life-long outcomes (Dallaire, 2007b; Murphey & Cooper, 2015; Poehlmann, 2005a) and are threats children's long-term health and socioeconomic well-being (Geller et al, 2009; Geller et al., 2011; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Lee et al., 2013; Murray & Farrington, 2005). Further, children of incarcerated parents are also at-risk due to financial and economic strains (Arditti et al., 2003; Arditti & Savla, 2015; Dallaire & Wilson, 2010), caregiver behaviors (Ainsworth, 1989; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Poehlmann, 2005b), and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Herrera et al., 2013; Murphey & Cooper, 2015).

Nevertheless, protective factors can contribute to a child's resiliency and influence a child's ability to deviate from negative outcomes (Dallarie & Zeman, 2013; Hagen, Myers & Mackintosh, 2005; Sack, 1977; Thombre et al., 2009). Examples of protective factors that promote resiliency include a secure parent-child bond (Allen et al., 1998; Garner et al. 2012; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2002; Poehlmann, 2005b), a stable home environment during parental incarceration (Hanlon, O'Grady, Bennerr-Sears, & Callaman, 2005; Johnston, 1995d; Poehlmann, 2005b), responsive and consistent parenting (Ainsworth, 1989; Mackintosh, Myers, & Kennon, 2006; Makariev & Shaver, 2010; Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Poehlmann, 2005b; Sack, 1977), and engagement with a caring adult (Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013; ICF International, 2011; Jucovy, 2003; Laasko & Nygaard, 2011; Reagan-Porras, 2013; Rhodes, 2002).

Despite the risks associated with this vulnerable group, mentoring contributes to child resiliency through important relationships, social interactions, and protective factors (Christian, 2009; Jarjoura et al., 2013; Jucovy, 2003; Merenstein et al., 2011; Stovall & Dozier, 1998). Secure attachments fostered by positive mentorship increase child resiliency (Ainsworth, 1989; Bayer et al., 2015; Bowlby, 1973; ICF International, 2011; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Merenstein et al., 2011; Shlafer et al., 2009)

### **Mentoring Program**

Y-NOW is a community-based one-on-one and group mentoring program for youth between ages 11 and 15 with a history of parental incarceration, either current or past. The program is located in an urban city in the Midwest. The purpose of Y-NOW is to facilitate experiences, through mentorship, that helps youth discuss and process their emotions surrounding the separation from their parent. Particularly, this group of children have fewer opportunities to discuss their feelings regarding their parent's incarceration. Thus Y-NOW provides a platform through regular and frequent interactions with caring adults; ultimately teaching the youth how to cope.

Y-NOW recruits students from schools with high rates of parental incarceration with the assistance of school guidance counselors. Youth and mentors are recruited through Y-NOW flyers posted in schools and local business or through referrals. Mentors must be at least 21 years of age, pass a criminal and child abuse background check, receive approval from at least three of their four personal and professional references, and be able to transport youth to follow-through mentoring throughout the 10-month mentoring period. Program staff seek adults that are willing to listen and are open to understanding the youth.

Y-NOW implements research- and theoretical-based mentoring structures. Components of Y-NOW include screening and training mentors, facilitating a close bond between each mentor and their youth, as well as continued support for the mentor-youth dyad through the duration of the 10-month period. The youth interact with their mentors in either one-on-one activities or during bi-weekly group meetings with other mentor-youth dyads.

### **Instrumentation/Measures**

**Achenbach YSR.** Adolescent internalizing and externalizing behaviors were measured using the Achenbach YSR (2009) survey which assesses adaptive and maladaptive behaviors in children between ages 11 to 18. The Achenbach YSR (2009) survey includes a series of 112 questions that align to nine different syndrome scales. The nine syndromes include anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, rule-breaking behavior, aggressive behavior, and “other problems”. The Achenbach YSR uses an additive model combining various syndromes to calculate an internalizing and externalizing behavior value. The internal reliability coefficient of the internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors are .88 and .91, respectively (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001).

Previous researchers who examined children with a history of parental incarceration used the Achenbach YSR (2009). Bockneck, Sanderson and Britner (2009) used the Achenbach YSR (2009) to measure withdrawal/depression and delinquency in a sample of 35 school-age children with incarcerated parents. Shlafer et al., (2009) used the Achenbach to measure internalizing and externalizing behaviors of children with incarcerated parents before and after mentorship.

**Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE).** The Adverse Childhood Experience was

designed by Felitti et al. in 1997 to measure the risk of childhood abuse, neglect and trauma and the effects thereof on adult health and wellbeing (Felitti et al., 1998). Findings indicated that ACEs negatively affected individuals and contributed to stress, diseases, and other unfavorable outcomes. Paternal incarceration is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), due to its potential of social, emotional, and cognitive neurodevelopmental impairments (Arditti & Savla, 2015; Felitti et al., 1998). Moreover, several researchers (Anda, Tietjen, Schulman, Felitti, & Croft, 2006; Felitti et al., 1998; Garbarino, 1990) posited that ACEs is a cumulative model and as children experience additional negative experiences children encounter risk of physiological dysfunction multiples.

Murphey and Cooper (2015) was the only study found which used an adapted form of ACEs as a measure for children with incarcerated parents.

**Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment (IPPA)—Revised Version.** The Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment was designed by Armsden and Greenberg in 1987 and measures the attachment to both parents and peers. The IPPA is a 25-item self-report questionnaire. On the version of the IPPA that was used, internal reliabilities in the standardization sample were as follows : mother attachment, .87; father attachment, .89; and peer attachment, .92 (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Allen et al. (1998) used the IPPA to determine the association between attachment and adolescent behavior as well as peer interactions of 131 at-risk youth between ages 14-18. Several researchers (Rhodes et al., 2000; Rhodes et al., 2008) used the IPPA to measure the influence of mentorship on parental attachment. Rhodes et al., 2000 and Rhodes et al., 2008 used the same data set including 1138 at-risk youth between ages 10 to 16 in a nation-wide well-known

mentoring program.

**Student Engagement Instrument.** Designed by Appleton and Christenson in 2004, the Student Engagement Instrument measures six school related areas. The 30-item survey measures three areas of psychological engagement including teacher-student relationships (TSR), peer support at school (PSS), family support for learning (FSL) and cognitive engagement including control and relevance of school work (CRSW), future aspirations and goals (FG), intrinsic motivation (IM). Internal reliability range from .72 to .88 for each of the six sub-scales (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006).

In the first published implementation of the Student Engagement Instrument, Appleton and colleagues (Appleton et al., 2006) measured school engagement in 1,931 urban ninth grade students. More recently, Shlafer et al. (2017) used the School Engagement Instrument to measure psychological school engagement of 114,828 students in a large urban school district in the Northwest.

Collectively, this literature review provides research regarding experiences and outcomes of children who experience paternal incarceration. Children with a history of paternal incarceration are likely to experience a variety of challenges in every area of their lives including home, neighborhood, and school. Collectively, these obstacles may affect their overall well-being. However, despite these cumulative risks supportive non-parental adults are protective factors for children of incarcerated parents (DuBois et al., 2011; Jucovy, 2003; Jarjouja et al., 2013; Rhodes, 2002; Shlafer et al., 2009). Engagement in mentor training and meaningful mentoring activities facilitate a close relationship (Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Reagan-Porres, 2013). Such interactions helps establish an emotional connection that buffers youth's ability to

modify their thinking and therefore make behavioral adjustments (Laasko & Nygaard, 2012; Weiler et al., 2015). Mentorship positively effects a variety of domains allowing youth to display more pro-social behaviors which contribute to positive relationship attachment with parents, teachers, and peers while simultaneously encouraging youth to improve academic outcomes. Although risks continues to exist, youth experience protective factors that can ameliorate negative effects of the risks suggesting the possibilities of more favorable life outcomes.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

#### **Participants**

The subjects of this study were adolescent males and females with ages ranging from 11 to 18. There were 80 participants 61% (49) of whom reported a history of paternal incarceration. The average age of the 40 female participants was 13.95. The average age the 41 male participants was 14.02. Prior to any measurement, participating youth were assigned to one of three groups. The treatment group ( $n = 25$ ) are adolescents who were previously enrolled in Y-NOW mentoring program and have a history of paternal incarceration, either current or past. The youth had participated in Y-NOW for the entire 10-month period and graduated from the program within the last three years. The control group ( $n = 24$ ) are adolescents who have never been enrolled in Y-NOW but have experienced paternal incarceration, either current or in the past. The comparison group ( $n = 31$ ) have not been enrolled in Y-NOW, and report never experiencing paternal incarceration. Participants completed a demographic profile reporting the following: ethnicity, gender, age, grade, current caregiver, zip code, and status of paternal incarceration. In addition, mentored youth indicated the ethnicity, gender, and age of their mentor.

#### **Mentoring Program/Intervention**

One month prior to mentorship, mentors participated in a two-day training led by the Y-NOW director, case manager, and volunteer coordinator. The first day of training focused on activities that promote self-reflection; the director encouraged the mentors in training to assess personal values, cultural perspectives, and possible biases that could hinder the mentoring relationship. The second day of training focused on activities that taught mentors how to support



their youth. For example, when youth express emotions about the incarceration of their parent, or related experiences, mentors are encouraged to give youth their full attention, to listen without judgment, and to avoid offering suggestions unless solicited. An important message often repeated during the second day is that mentors are to be “present”, supportive, and consistent despite what the youth says or does. Y-NOW mentors are well-trained and the training is well thought out.

To initiate the mentorship experience, youth and mentors attended an out-of-town three day retreat facilitating team-building and group bonding. Youth and mentors participated in a three day retreat at a camp in Southern Indiana. The first day, Y-NOW staff established program expectations which includes 100% participation in all activities. One activity, for example, consisted of youth and mentors being seated in a large circle. One Y-NOW staff member read a statement such as “Have lived in a single-parent home”. All to whom the statement apply moved to a different seat. The purpose of such activities was to delineate group similarities helping the youth to be open to sharing their experiences as well as creating a bond between youth and mentors within the group.

Over the next two days of the retreat, youth participated in a ropes course and were paired with their mentor. The purpose of the ropes course, including zip-line, was to promote youth collaboration amongst one another and the adults. The purpose was also to establish trust and to build courage. At the end of the second day mentors and youth were paired based on shared characteristics, as well as youth interest and needs.

Mentors and youth attended bi-weekly group meetings held at Y-NOW. Prior to each group meeting Y-NOW provided dinner and board games for mentors and youth dyads. Table

tops and had printed labels with the Y-NOW eight themes: joy, responsibility, participation, community, vision, commitment, support, and forgiveness.

During group meetings, youth engaged in conversations and activities regarding their incarcerated parent(s) and topics related to parental incarceration such as how to deal with grief and loss, and anger management, as well as topics appropriate to their physical and mental developmental stage. Time was also allotted for youth to discuss the educational and personal goals that he/she set prior to the retreat. Additional activities include lock-ins, family days, community service, and a visit to a local half-way house as well as attendance and grade incentives.

During the 10-month commitment, mentors and youth agreed to talk weekly via the telephone, to have bi-monthly face-to-face meetings to attend bi-monthly group meetings held at Y-NOW on alternating weeks. There were no requirements for the length of telephone conversation, but mentors were required to spend at least one hour in face-to-face meetings. Examples of face-to-face meetings included excursions going to a museum, attending a college basketball game, or working out at a gym. Mentors were required to document monthly telephone calls and face-to-face meetings.

### **Sampling Approach**

For this study, Y-NOW youth were recruited using caregiver contact information provided by Y-NOW staff. A telephone script was used to invite parents or guardians to allow their child or the child for which they care to participate in this study, see Appendix A. Alternative sampling methods such as referral sampling is useful and often one of the few options when obtaining subjects from vulnerable populations with characteristics that are

sensitive (Lavrakas, 2008; Petersen & Valdez, 2005). For youth who did not participate in Y-NOW snowball sampling through referrals from Y-NOW graduates was used. Similar to referral sampling, snowball sampling is useful when obtaining subjects with characteristics that are sensitive (Goodman, 1961). The researcher also visited local community centers to invite parents/guardian and youth to participate.

To minimize differences between groups, all participants were recruited from the same zip codes. When using convenience sampling, recruiting from the same zip code helps control for bias associated with socioeconomic status, cultural and environmental bias (Lavrakas, 2008). Using the G-Power analysis software, the required sample size is 74 adolescents detect a large effect ( $d = .45$ ) with alpha at .05 and beta at .20. This study included 80 adolescents between ages 11-18.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection began December 2017 and concluded February 2018. Participants were recruited and then traveled to Y-NOW or a local community center location where they met with the researcher. While at the location, the researcher reviewed the consent form with the parent/guardian, read “Potential Risks”, “Benefits”, and “Confidentiality” sections to parent/guardian, reviewed surveys, and obtained parent/guardian signature. After obtaining parental/guardian consent, prior to collecting data, the adolescents were required to give verbal assent in response to a scripted statement, see Appendix B. The statement informed participants that the information they provided is confidential and would be used in a study. The youth had the choice to opt-out of the study at any time.

Four self-administered surveys were used to measure student outcomes. The surveys

include: Achenbach Youth Self-Report (YSR) (2009), Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire, Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, and Student Engagement Instrument using paper and pencil without names written on the surveys. However, a six-digit coding system was used to match consent forms and survey if it was necessary to identify students in instances where abuse or criminal activities was reported. The six-digit number was placed on the front of the Achenbach survey, as the other surveys were inside of the Achenbach. The six-digit number on the consent form was covered with a black permanent marker after the first evaluation of the data. When data entry was complete, each survey was disposed of following security procedures.

To ensure that participants information was not easily known to other participants, staggered starts of surveys was utilized, youth were seated as far apart from one another as possible and asked to speak in a low voice when asking questions. While the adolescents completed the surveys, the researcher remained in the room to answer questions and to ensure participants' information was kept confidential from peers and anyone else that was on site during this process. At the conclusion of data collection, consent forms were stored and secured.

### **Analysis Design**

Using a convenience sample and a treatment-control design, data from three distinctive groups: the treatment group, the control group, and the comparison group, were used to determine whether there were differences in outcomes among adolescents. The aim was to determine whether behaviors of mentored adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration differed from adolescents with the same history and no mentorship. Adolescents in the treatment group and the control group have experienced paternal incarceration. However youth in the

treatment group have participated and graduated from Y-NOW mentoring program. The comparison group is important because although they have not experienced paternal incarceration they live in similar neighborhoods, therefore group 3 outcomes may resemble that of youth from the treatment group and the control group.

## Measures

**Achenbach Youth Self-Report (YSR).** Although the instrument measures outcomes of nine syndromes, this study included syndromes that which are supported by the literature. Moreover, eight questions were removed for study purposes, for a total of 104 questions. Responses to questions are either *not true* (0), *somewhat or sometimes true* (1), or *very true or often true* (2). The Achenbach YSR (2009) is a structural equation model in which questions are manifest indicators of latent constructs are used to predict latent factors. For instance, a composite score of latent constructs anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, and somatic complaints are used to predict internalizing behavior while latent constructs rule-breaking and aggressive behaviors are used to predict externalizing behaviors, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Achenbach YSR Indicators and Latent Variables

Latent Factor	Latent Construct	Questions
Internalizing Behaviors	Anxious/Depressed	14, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 45, 50, 52, 71, 112
	Withdrawn/Depressed	15, 42, 65, 69, 75, 102, 103, 111
	Somatic Complaints	47, 51, 54, 56a-g
Externalizing Behaviors	Rule-Breaking Behavior	26, 28, 39, 43, 63, 67, 81, 82, 90, 96, 99, 101
	Aggressive Behavior	3, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 37, 68, 86, 87, 89, 94, 95, 104

*Figure 1.* Outline of Achenbach YSR latent constructs and latent factors. Specific questions measure specific outcomes then are used to measure the latent factors of internalizing and externalizing behavior.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).** This study is interested in how adolescent the comparison of risk amongst the three groups. A series of eight statements from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire was administered. Examples of the questions include: Have you ever “Had times when you did not have clothes, food, or shelter”, “Experienced separation from your parents, or are your parents divorced”, or “Seen or experienced neighborhood violence”. The total number of events experienced is the adolescents’ ACEs number.

**Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment (IPPA)—Revised Version.** The adolescents’ perception of maternal and peer attachments were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never or almost never true, 5 = always or almost always true) response format to elicit

information about adolescents’ relationships with their mothers, fathers, and peers. The IPPA yields Attachment scores (based on responses to all 25 items) and three subscale scores—Trust (10 items), Communication (9 items), and Alienation (6 items)—for each attachment figure.

**School Engagement Instrument.** For this study only psychological school engagement was measured. Similar to Achenbach (YSR), SEI uses a structural equation model in which manifest indicators of latent constructs to predict latent factors. For example, questions from TSR, PSS, and FSL are used to predict psychological school engagement while CRSW and FG are used to predict cognitive school engagement, see Figure 2. All items are scored on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree).

Figure 2. Student Engagement Instrument

Latent Factor	Latent Construct	Questions
Psychological Engagement	Teacher-Student Relationship	3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 21, 22, 27, 31
	Peer Support at School	4, 6, 7, 14, 23, 24
	Family Support for Learning	1, 12, 20, 29

Figure 2. Outline of School Engagement Instrument YSR latent constructs and latent factors. Specific questions measure latent constructs then are used to measure the latent factors of school psychological and cognitive engagement.

**Statistical Analysis**

The research questions addressed are a) What are the differences in behavioral and school-related outcomes between adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration previously enrolled in formal mentorship and adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration never enrolled in formal mentorship? b) What are the gender differences in behavioral and school-related outcomes for adolescents previously enrolled in formal mentorship? The three groups

were compared on each measure collected to determine the effects of mentoring and gender on the outcomes.

General linear models (2 x 3 factorial ANCOVA) was utilized to investigate the impact of mentorship and gender. The general form of the model will be:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = outcome(s) (Anxious/Depressed, Internalizing, Aggression, Rule-Breaking, Externalizing)

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$e_i$  = error

Covar (A) = maternal or peer attachment

Covariates were added to each model to adjust for confounding effects. Maternal attachment was added to anxious/depressed, internalizing behaviors, and aggressive behavior models because each influence and are influenced by attachment (Allen et al., 1998). Family conflict increases with paternal incarceration and as a result, adolescents may experience ineffective parenting behaviors. Harsh parenting negatively effects caregiver-child relationship and thus influences attachment levels. Data suggest children with insecure attachment have a negative perspective about others and the world which may influence adolescent's aggression; thus controlling for maternal attachment reduced the likelihood of attachment confounding the effects of anxious/depressed, internalizing and aggressive behavior.



Peer attachment was used as a covariate as research indicated peer attachment influences adolescent rule-breaking, externalizing, and psychological behavior. Research suggested paternal children of incarcerated parents likely socialize with deviant peers and learn deviant behaviors which predicts externalizing behavior (Hanlon et al., 2005). Peer attachment was used as a covariate in psychological school engagement, because school attachment includes attachment to peers, which may vary depending on the school participants attend or their interactions with school mates; thus using peer attachment as a covariates controls for differences in relationships with peers at school.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Descriptive Statistics

In this study, 80 adolescents (40 boys, 40 girls), ages 11 to 18, with an average age of 14 ( $M = 13.99$ ,  $SD = 1.99$ ) completed measures to determine the effects of mentorship for children with a history of paternal incarceration. Participants were predominately Black (89%), 10% were bi-racial, and 1% Hispanic. A majority (63.5%) reported “mom” as the primary caregiver, while 17.5% reported “mom and dad”, 11% reported “grandmother”, and 8% reported other caregivers, including one in foster care. Of the 80 adolescents, 61% reported a history of paternal incarceration. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scores range from 0 to 7, with an average number of 2.72 ACEs. More than 50% (52.2%) of the youth reported experiencing 3 or more ACEs. Adolescents who reported a history of paternal incarceration experienced more ACEs ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ) than adolescents who did not report a history of paternal incarceration ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ).

The treatment group, adolescents who were previously enrolled in Y-NOW, comprised approximately one-third (31%) of the sample, while the control group, adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration never enrolled in Y-NOW, was 30% of the sample. Likewise, 39% is the comparison group, adolescents who reported never experiencing paternal incarceration. The average age for the treatment group is 13.4 ( $SD = 1.35$ ) however, the control ( $M = 14.4$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ) and comparison groups ( $M = 14.2$ ,  $SD = 2.00$ ) are slightly older. Table 3 outlines gender of adolescents and grouping.

As to the timing of the mentoring relationship for the treatment group, 80% graduated from Y- NOW in the last year and 20% graduated in the last two to three years. As for the

Table 3

*Gender of Participants by Paternal Incarceration and Mentorship*

	Treatment Group ( <i>n</i> )	Control Group ( <i>n</i> )	Comparison Group ( <i>n</i> )	Total ( <i>n</i> )
Boys	13	11	16	40
Girls	12	13	15	40
Total	25	24	31	80

mentors of the adolescents in the treatment group, 40% of the youth reported having a male mentor, while 60% reported having a female mentor. Thirty-six percent of the mentors were Black, 60% were White, and 4% Hispanic. The majority (64%) of the mentors were between 20 to 40 years of age while the remaining 36% were older than 40. Forty-eight percent of the mentor-youth dyads were the same gender and race, while 40% were the same gender different race, 4% were different gender same race, and 8% were of different gender and different race.

The average scores of the outcomes are outlined in the last column of Table 4. The average internalizing score was 14.53 ( $SD = 9.55$ ) and the average externalizing score was slightly lower ( $M = 12.30$ ,  $SD = 8.05$ ). The average maternal, paternal, and peer attachment scores were 3.93 ( $SD = .74$ ), 3.17 ( $SD = 1.20$ ), and 3.94 ( $SD = .59$ ), respectively. Psychological school engagement ranged from 1 to 5 and adolescents reported an average score of 3.31 ( $SD = .53$ ).

In Table 4, the average scores of outcomes are outlined by gender and grouping. Male participants ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ) reported more ACEs compared to female participants ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ). However, female participants reported higher levels of internalizing and externalizing behavior. In comparison of attachment outcomes, male participants reported higher

levels of maternal and paternal attachment while female participants reported higher peer attachment, see Table 4.

In light of grouping outcomes, the control group reported the highest number of ACEs in addition to the highest levels of externalizing behavior and higher peer attachment. Likewise, the comparison group reported the highest levels of internalizing behavior and maternal attachment as well as psychological school engagement, see Table 4.

### Statistical Analyses

**Correlations.** The association between internalizing and externalizing variables as well as psychological school outcomes were analyzed through bivariate correlation using Pearson's  $r$ . The strength of correlations was determined using a scale of 0 to 1. Values less than .5 indicated a weak correlation. Values approaching .5 indicated a moderate correlation. While values greater than .5 indicated a strong correlation. Internalizing behavior was strongly correlated with externalizing behavior ( $r = .65, p \leq .01$ ), and weakly correlated with maternal attachment ( $r = -.40, p \leq .01$ ) and school engagement ( $r = -.35, p \leq .01$ ). Comparably, externalizing behavior was moderately correlated with psychological school engagement ( $r = -.46, p \leq .01$ ) and maternal attachment ( $r = -.52, p \leq .01$ ). Table 5 outlines the intercorrelations of variables.

In addition to the above correlations, measures of association were also calculated for paternal incarceration, mentorship, and ACEs. Because the variables include categorical data the Chi-Square test was used. The Chi-Square test revealed associations between ACEs and other variables including: paternal incarceration ( $X^2 = (2, N = 80) = 16.07, p = .025$ ), and mentorship ( $X^2 = (2, N = 80) = 23.39, p = .054$ ). However, ACEs is not associated with gender ( $X^2 = (2, N = 80) = 3.89, p = .792$ ).

Table 4

*Mean Values by Gender and Group*

Outcome	Male (n = 40)	Female (n = 40)	Mean (SD)			Total
			Treatment Group (n = 25)	Control Group (n = 24)	Comparison Group (n = 31)	
ACEs	2.95 (1.65)	2.50 (1.68)	2.96 (1.40)	3.38 (1.84)	2.03 (1.52)	2.72 (---)
Anxious/Depressed	3.73 (3.30)	6.15 (4.42)	3.64 (3.28)	5.29 (3.30)	5.71 (4.94)	4.94 (4.06)
Internalizing Behavior	11.35 (7.29)	17.70 (10.54)	11.96 (8.29)	15.63 (7.67)	15.74 (11.50)	14.53 (9.55)
Rule-Breaking Behavior	3.98 (3.02)	4.93 (3.72)	4.12 (2.74)	6.08 (4.26)	3.45 (2.68)	4.45 (3.40)
Aggressive Behavior	6.58 (5.20)	9.13 (5.27)	7.00 (3.95)	10.00 (5.15)	6.87 (6.13)	7.85 (5.36)
Externalizing Behavior	10.55 (7.68)	14.05 (8.11)	11.12 (5.85)	16.08 (8.66)	10.32 (8.30)	12.30 (8.05)
Maternal Attachment	4.10 (.71)	3.76 (.74)	3.77 (.82)	3.88 (.83)	4.10 (.57)	3.93 (.74)
Peer Attachment	3.83 (.55)	4.05 (.61)	3.94 (.57)	4.01 (.71)	3.89 (.51)	3.94 (.59)
Psychological Engagement	3.40 (.57)	3.22 (.49)	3.24 (.58)	3.20 (.55)	3.43 (.48)	3.31 (.53)

*Note:* N = 80

Table 5

*Summary of Correlations of Behavior, Attachment, and School Engagement Outcomes*

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Anxious/Depressed	1							
2. Internalizing Behavior	.91**	1						
3. Aggressive Behavior	.65**	.66**	1					
4. Rule-breaking Behavior	.52**	.51**	.67**	1				
5. Externalizing Behavior	.66**	.65**	.95*	.87**	1			
6. Psychological Engagement	-.32**	-.35**	-.40**	-.46**	-.46**	1		
7. Maternal Attachment	-.42**	-.40**	-.45**	-.51**	-.52**	.28*	1	
8. Peer Attachment	-.28*	-.27*	-.23*	-.19	-.23*	.28*	.28*	1

Note:  $N = 80$ , no missing values.

\*\* $p \leq .01$ . \* $p \leq .05$

**Equality of the groups.** There were significant differences between the three groups. Chi-Square analyses indicated caregiver status ( $p \leq .01$ ) as well as the number of ACEs reported ( $p \leq .05$ ) by the three groups are significantly different. The control group reported more ACEs than the treatment group, however the comparison group reported the fewest number of ACEs. Moreover, data suggest there is a significant difference in age between the treatment and control group,  $p \leq .01$ , however there is not a significant difference in age between the control and comparison group ( $p > .5$ ).

**General Linear Model.** A general linear model (2 x 3 factorial ANCOVA) was used to analyze the data. The critical value of  $p \leq .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. Also, the two research questions were combined to address each of the following imbedded research questions.

**Question 1: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent anxious/depressed**

**behavior?**

The impact of mentorship and gender on anxious/depressed behavior while adjusting for participants' maternal attachment was analyzed using the following formula:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Anxious/Depressed Behavior

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Maternal Attachment

$e_i$  = error

Table 6 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for anxious/depressed behavior [ $F(6,73) = 5.59, p = .001, R^2 = .315$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. Levene's test confirmed the homoscedasticity assumption was met ( $p = .085$ ). When controlling for maternal attachment, a significant main effect was found for mentorship ( $p \leq .05$ ). Follow-up post-hoc test using Bonferroni adjusted t-tests indicated that adolescents in the treatment group ( $M = 3.64$ ) reported significantly less anxious/depressed behavior than the comparison group ( $M = 5.71$ ). There were no significant differences between the treatment group and the control group ( $M = 5.29$ ), see Table 4. Maternal attachment was significant ( $p \leq .001$ ). There were no significant main effects found for gender ( $p = .067$ ) as well as no significant interaction effects found between mentorship and gender ( $p = .482$ ).

Table 6

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Anxious/Depressed

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	410.754 <sup>a</sup>	6	68.459	5.590	.000	.315
Intercept	496.308	1	496.308	40.529	.000	.357
Maternal Attachment	219.430	1	219.430	17.919	.000	.197
Mentorship	110.545	2	55.272	4.514	.014	.110
Gender	42.198	1	42.198	3.446	.067	.045
Mentorship* Gender	18.069	2	9.035	.738	.482	.020
Error	893.934	73	12.246			
Total	3255.000	80				
Corrected Total	1304.688	79				

a. R Squared = .315 (Adjusted R Squared = .259)

**Question 2: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent internalizing behavior?**

The impact of mentorship and gender on internalizing behavior while adjusting for maternal attachment was analyzed using the following formula:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Internalizing Behavior

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Maternal Attachment

$e_i$  = error



Table 7 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for internalizing behavior [ $F(6,73) = 4.86, p = .001, R^2 = .285$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. Levene's test confirmed the homoscedasticity assumption was met ( $p = .252$ ). Maternal attachment was significant ( $p \leq .001$ ). Although a significant main effect was found for gender ( $p \leq .05$ ), there was no significant main effect was for mentorship ( $p = .061$ ). Females ( $M = 17.70$ ) reported significantly higher internalizing behaviors compared to males ( $M = 10.55$ ), see Figure 3. There were no significant interaction effects found between mentorship and gender ( $p = .630$ ).

Table 7

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Internalizing Behavior

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2058.138 <sup>a</sup>	6	343.023	4.861	.000	.285
Intercept	2884.254	1	2884.254	40.869	.000	.359
Maternal Attachment	986.770	1	986.770	13.982	.000	.161
Mentorship	411.440	2	205.720	2.915	.061	.074
Gender	361.417	1	361.417	5.121	.027	.066
Mentorship * Gender	65.707	2	32.854	.466	.630	.013
Error	5151.812	73	70.573			
Total	24088.000	80				
Corrected Total	7209.950	79				

a. R Squared = .285 (Adjusted R Squared = .227)

### **Question 3: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent aggressive behavior?**

The impact of mentorship and gender on aggressive behavior while adjusting for

maternal attachment was analyzed using the following formula:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Aggressive Behavior

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Maternal Attachment

$e_i$  = error

Table 8 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for aggressive behavior [ $F(6,73) = 5.14, p = .001, R^2 = .297$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. Levene's test confirmed the homoscedasticity assumption was met ( $p = .086$ ). When controlling for maternal attachment, a significant main effect was found for mentorship. Follow-up post-hoc test using Bonferroni adjusted t-tests indicated that adolescents in the treatment group ( $M = 7.00$ ) reported significantly less aggressive behavior compared to the control group ( $M = 10.00$ ). There were no significant differences between the treatment and comparison group ( $M = 6.87$ ). Maternal attachment was significant ( $p \leq .001$ ). No significant main effects were found for gender ( $p = .236$ ) and no significant interaction effect was found between mentorship and gender ( $p = .492$ ).

Table 8

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Aggressive Behavior

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	673.175 <sup>a</sup>	6	112.196	5.135	.000	.297
Intercept	996.409	1	996.409	45.603	.000	.385
Maternal Attachment	372.059	1	372.059	17.028	.000	.189
Mentorship	143.971	2	71.985	3.295	.043	.083
Gender	31.244	1	31.244	1.430	.236	.019
Mentorship * Gender	31.299	2	15.649	.716	.492	.019
Error	1595.025	73	21.850			
Total	7198.000	80				
Corrected Total	2268.200	79				

a. R Squared = .297 (Adjusted R Squared = .239)

**Question 4: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent rule-breaking behavior?**

The impact of mentorship and gender on rule-breaking behavior while adjusting for peer attachment was analyzed using the following formula:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Rule-breaking Behavior

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Peer Attachment

$e_i$  = error

Table 9 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for rule-breaking behavior [ $F(6,73) = 3.59$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $R^2 = .228$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. The homoscedasticity assumption using the Levene's test was not met ( $p = .003$ ), however the groups are balanced and the study is adequately powered. When homogeneity of variance is violated but the sample is balanced and of adequate size, ANOVA is robust to this violation (Howell, 2007). When controlling for peer attachment, a significant main effect was found for mentorship ( $p \leq .01$ ). Follow-up post-hoc test using Bonferroni adjusted t-tests indicated the control group ( $M = 6.08$ ) reported significantly higher rule-breaking behavior compared to the comparison group ( $M = 3.45$ ). However, there were no significant differences between the control group and the treatment group ( $M = 4.12$ ). Peer attachment was significant ( $p \leq .01$ ). There was no significant main effect found for gender ( $p = .082$ ) as well as no significant interaction effect found between mentorship and gender ( $p = .115$ ).

Table 9

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Rule-Breaking Behavior

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	207.752 <sup>a</sup>	6	34.625	3.590	.004	.228
Intercept	210.462	1	210.462	21.822	.000	.230
Peer Attachment	82.514	1	82.514	8.556	.005	.105
Mentorship	113.265	2	56.633	5.872	.004	.139
Gender	30.071	1	30.071	3.118	.082	.041
Mentorship * Gender	43.048	2	21.524	2.232	.115	.058
Error	704.048	73	9.644			
Total	2496.000	80				
Corrected Total	911.800	79				

a. R Squared = .228 (Adjusted R Squared = .164)

**Question 5: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent externalizing behavior?**

The impact of mentorship and gender on externalizing behavior while adjusting for peer attachment was analyzed using the following formula:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Externalizing Behavior

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Peer Attachment

$e_i$  = error

Table 10 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for externalizing behavior [ $F(6,73) = 4.84, p = .001, R^2 = .285$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. Levene's test confirmed the homoscedasticity assumption was met ( $p = .209$ ). When controlling for peer attachment, a significant main effect was found for mentorship ( $p \leq .01$ ) and gender ( $p \leq .01$ ). Follow-up post-hoc test using Bonferroni adjusted t-tests indicated the treatment group ( $M = 11.12$ ) reported significantly less externalizing behavior compared to the control group ( $M = 16.08$ ), yet there were no significant differences between the treatment group and the comparison group ( $M = 10.32$ ). Moreover, Figure 4 presents results which indicate females ( $M = 14.05$ ), specifically in the treatment group and comparison group,

reported significantly higher externalizing behavior than males ( $M = 10.55$ ). Peer attachment was significant ( $p \leq .05$ ). There were no significant interaction effect between mentorship and gender ( $p = .067$ ).

Table 10

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Externalizing Behavior

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1455.381 <sup>a</sup>	6	242.563	4.841	.000	.285
Intercept	1668.483	1	1668.483	33.302	.000	.313
Peer Attachment	673.441	1	673.441	13.441	.000	.155
Mentorship	587.809	2	293.904	5.866	.004	.138
Gender	361.307	1	361.307	7.211	.009	.090
Mentorship * Gender	281.494	2	140.747	2.809	.067	.071
Error	3657.419	73	50.102			
Total	17216.000	80				
Corrected Total	5112.800	79				

a. R Squared = .285 (Adjusted R Squared = .226)

**Question 6: How does mentorship and gender impact adolescent psychological school engagement behavior?**

Using the following formula I analyzed the impact of mentorship and gender on psychological school engagement while adjusting for peer attachment:

$$Y_i = \mu + A_i + B_i + AB_i + \text{Covar}(A) + e_i$$

$Y_i$  = Psychological School Engagement

$\mu$  = constant

$A_i$  = Mentorship

$B_i$  = Gender

$AB_i$  = Interaction

$\text{Covar}(A)$  = Peer Attachment

$e_i$  = error

Table 11 presents results of the general linear model. An overall model significance was found for psychological school engagement [ $F(6,73) = 2.87, p = .014, R^2 = .191$ ]. To evaluate the assumptions of normality, linearity, and independence, graphical analyses of the residuals were completed and no violations were revealed. Levene's test confirmed the homoscedasticity assumption was met ( $p = .629$ ). When controlling for peer attachment, a significant main effect was found for gender ( $p \leq .05$ ). Females ( $M = 3.22$ ) reported significantly lower psychological school engagement than males ( $M = 3.40$ ). Peer attachment was significant ( $p \leq .05$ ). There were no significant main effects for mentorship ( $p = .105$ ) as well as no significant interaction effect between mentorship and gender ( $p = .542$ ).

Table 11

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Dependent Variable: Psychological Engagement

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4.306 <sup>a</sup>	6	.718	2.872	.014	.191
Intercept	5.498	1	5.498	22.005	.000	.232
Peer Attachment	2.696	1	2.696	10.788	.002	.129
Mentorship	1.161	2	.580	2.323	.105	.060
Gender	1.122	1	1.122	4.489	.038	.058
Mentorship * Gender	.309	2	.154	.618	.542	.017
Error	18.240	73	.250			
Total	897.050	80				
Corrected Total	22.547	79				

a. R Squared = .191 (Adjusted R Squared = .125)

Figure 3 is a chart showing the mean values for each group for the significant outcomes.

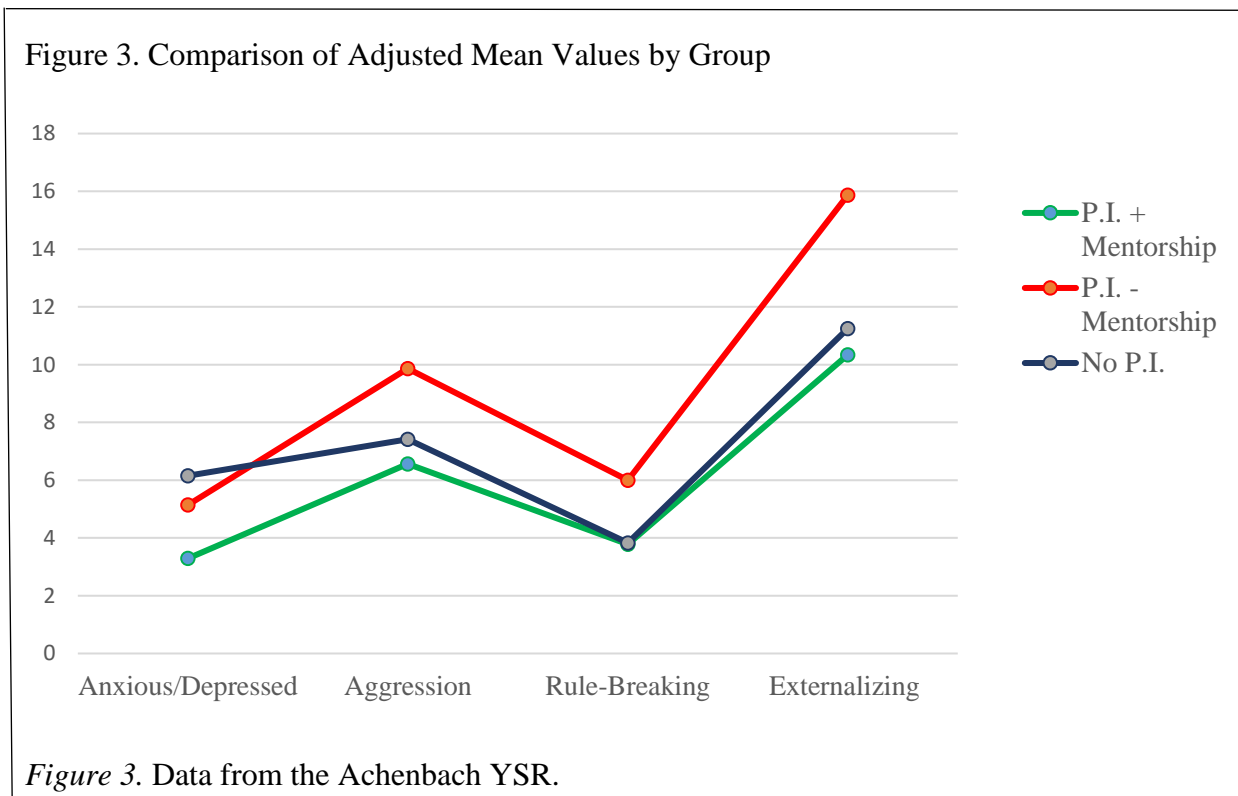




Figure 4 is a chart showing the mean values of male and female participants for each significant outcome.

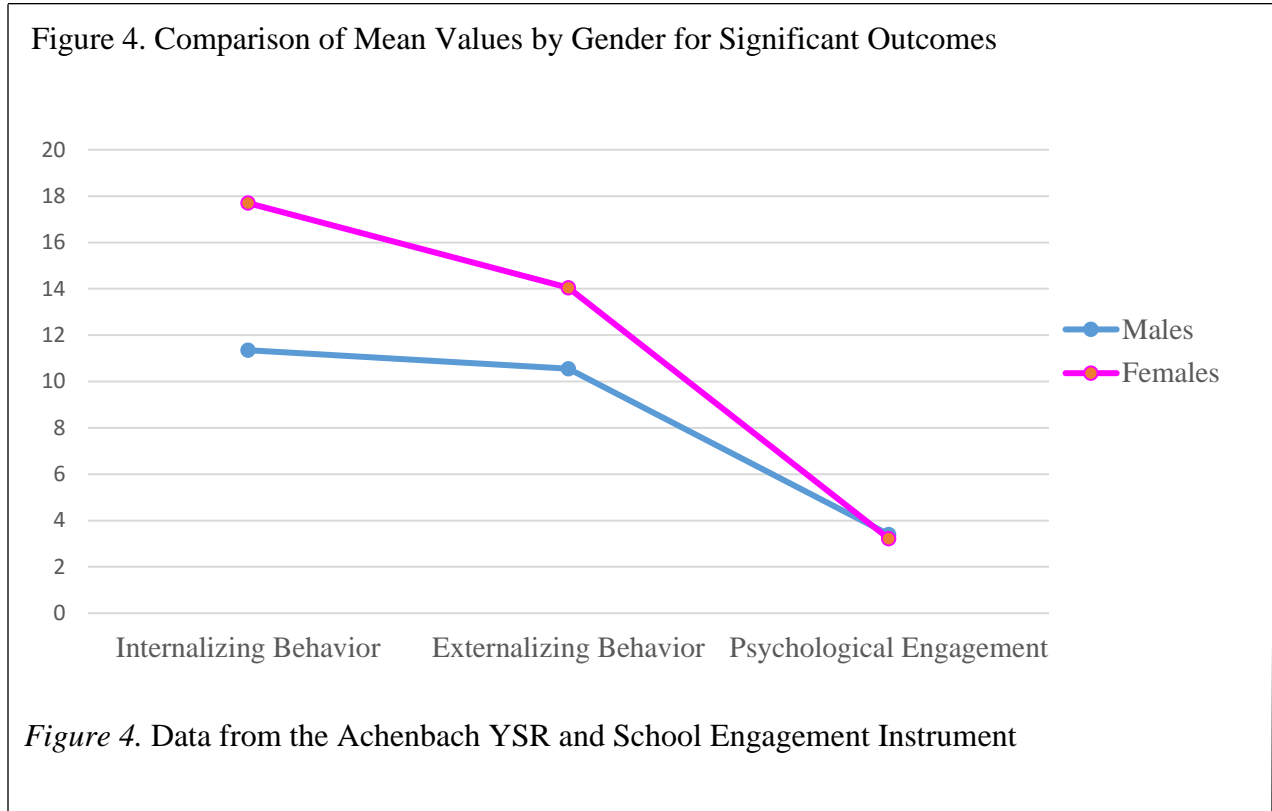


Table 12 provides a summary of the models including the variables significance level, effect size, the amount of variance explained in each model.

Table 12

*Summary of Model Results*

Model	$\eta^2$	p
**Anxious/Depressed ( $R^2 = .315$ )	.315	.001
*Mentorship	.110	.014
Gender	.045	.067
Mentorship * Gender	.020	.482
**Maternal Attachment	.197	.001
**Internalizing Behavior ( $R^2 = .285$ )	.285	.001
Mentorship	.074	.061
*Gender	.066	.027
Mentorship * Gender	.013	.630
**Maternal Attachment	.161	.001
**Aggressive ( $R^2 = .297$ )	.297	.001
*Mentorship	.083	.043
Gender	.019	.236
Mentorship * Gender	.019	.492
**Maternal Attachment	.189	.001
**Rule-breaking ( $R^2 = .228$ )	.228	.004
**Mentorship	.139	.004
Gender	.041	.082
Mentorship * Gender	.058	.115
**Peer Attachment	.105	.005
**Externalizing Behavior ( $R^2 = .285$ )	.285	.001
**Mentorship	.138	.004
**Gender	.090	.009
Mentorship * Gender	.071	.067
**Peer Attachment	.155	.001
*Psychological Engagement ( $R^2 = .191$ )	.191	.014
Mentorship	.060	.105
*Gender	.058	.038
Mentorship * Gender	.017	.542
**Peer Attachment	.129	.002

\*p &lt; .05, \*\*p &lt; .01

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The prevalence of paternal incarceration in the U.S. has led to an unprecedented number of children being separated from their parents, specifically fathers. As a result of potential ill effects and already existing life challenges, children with a history of paternal incarceration have serious life difficulties and disadvantages. Given that paternal incarceration influences adolescent behaviors and affects children later-in-life outcomes, highlighting mechanisms that improves outcomes can inform communities of how to intervene with this high-risk population. Yet, few studies have examined mentorship specifically as a protective factor. Thus, the purpose of this study was twofold: first to fill the gap concerning the paucity of research of mentorship for adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration; second, to delineate gender differences in mentorship outcomes within this population. The two research questions that guided this study are a) What are the differences in behavioral and school engagement outcomes between adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration previously enrolled in formal mentorship and adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration never enrolled in formal mentorship? b) What are the gender differences in behavioral and school engagement outcomes for adolescents previously enrolled in formal mentorship?

### **Differences between Mentored and Non-mentored Adolescents**

In general, this study provided support of mentorship specifically for children with a history of paternal incarceration. After adjusting for potential confounds that influence the behaviors of these adolescents as well as mentorship outcomes, the current study found significant differences between adolescents. Similar to Dewit et al. (2016) and colleagues (Grossman & Tierney, 1998), mentored adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration

reported fewer anxiety/depression, aggression, rule-breaking, and externalizing behaviors compared to adolescents with the same history never enrolled in mentorship. What is perhaps most interesting is that there were no significant differences between mentored adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration and adolescents without a history of paternal incarceration. This suggests not only does mentorship improve outcomes related to anxiety/depression and externalizing behaviors, but based on findings, mentorship can minimize differences -between adolescents with and without history of paternal incarceration.

In terms of adolescent behavior, there are several factors that may have contributed to mentored adolescents reporting fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors. In the current study, mentored youth were significantly younger than the non-mentored youth. In line with Kjellstrand and Eddy (2011b) and Hanlon et al., 2004, the age difference may have contributed to the measured differences in behavior as younger adolescents are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviors. Conversely, previous research noted younger children reported better mentoring outcomes compared to older children possibly and reported closer relationships with their mentors (Bayer et al., 2015; Karcher, 2008; Thomson & Zand, 2010). Thus due to the age difference, relationships of mentored adolescents in this study may had increased levels of trust which facilitated positive change in adolescent behavior.

The current study found no differences in school engagement outcomes between mentored and non-mentored adolescents. While previous research presents conflicting results of school outcomes, further analysis suggests the measurements used may influence significance. Similar to the current study, ICF International (2011) measured school connection and reported no difference between the mentored and non-mentored children of incarcerated parents. In contrast, Grossman & Tierney (1998) found significant differences in school outcomes using

attendance and grades. This result suggest the use of other school measures may have resulted in significant differences. Also, a statistical association occurred between internalizing and externalizing behavior and elevated externalizing behavior reported by adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration may influence unmeasured school outcomes such as unexcused absences, disciplinary referrals, and academic achievement. Lastly, the self-reported nature of the survey may have contributed to the inability for the school engagement instrument to reach statistical significance, therefore minimizing an important benefit of mentorship. As is, further analysis is warranted to determine if mentorship contributes to differences in other school outcomes such as grades that were not measured in the current study.

In terms of risk, mentored adolescents reported fewer ACEs than non-mentored adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration. Though few studies have compared risks, in particular ACEs, current findings align with previous research of at- and high-risk youth. Data suggest families with high risks are less likely to seek community resources (Herrera et al., 2013). Thus, it is possible that either families with fewer ACEs enrolled their children in mentorship or families with more ACEs were overwhelmed by their circumstances that they did not seek social supports for their children. This is possibly an important and informative finding; communities can more actively support families with a history of paternal incarceration by encouraging children to enroll in formal mentorship. In light of mentorship outcomes, Herrera et al. (2013) suggest mentored adolescents with fewer environmental risks such as living in public housing or family experiencing difficulties paying bills are more likely to benefit from mentorship. Though results provide additional support for mentoring children of incarcerated parents, this topic requires further examination so as to improve the provision of mentoring programs for children.

### **Gender Differences in Mentorship Outcomes**

The second research question involved comparing outcomes of males and females. It was hypothesized that mentored females would have more favorable outcomes than males. After adjusting for potential confounders that influence gender outcomes, significant differences were found between males and females behavior and school engagement. Contrary to Dewit et al., (2016) findings, female adolescents in this work reported significantly higher internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior, and lower school engagement. The cause of these elevated problem behaviors is unclear, but previous research concerning youth interpersonal history provide rationale that may help explain current findings. First, elevated female aggression is consistent with findings from Swisher & Shaw-Smith (2015). It is plausible more mentored girls resided with their father prior to incarceration or their fathers experienced multiple incarcerations contributing to higher externalizing behavior. Second, higher levels of negative behaviors may also be in part explained by ineffective parenting by caregivers. In line with findings from Wakefield (2015), mentored girls display more depression and aggression due to exposure to harsh parenting. Third, Hanlon et al., (2004) postulate children of incarcerated parents are more likely to socialize with deviant peers possibly influencing child behavior. Mentored female adolescents may have formed close relationships with anti-social peers.

In addition, the mentoring relationship itself may have contributed to female adolescents' report of more negative outcomes. It is possible female adolescents and their mentors had less contact throughout the mentoring relationship; data regarding the specific number of contacts was not available. With less contact there was less interaction contributing to a decreased degree of closeness and trust between the dyad (Bayer et al., 2015; Reagan-Porres, 2013).

When analyzing anxious/depressed, internalizing, and aggressive behavior models the effect size of maternal attachment ( $\eta^2 = .20$ ;  $d = .16$ ;  $\eta^2 = .19$ ) either doubled or nearly doubled the effect size of mentorship ( $\eta^2 = .11$ ;  $\eta^2 = .07$ ;  $\eta^2 = .08$ ), respectively. This result suggest while mentorship is an effective intervention, improving the relationship between adolescent children and the mother is the most effective intervention to decrease negative behaviors. However, in the psychological school engagement model, the effect size of mentorship ( $\eta^2 = .06$ ) is half that of peer attachment ( $\eta^2 = .13$ ). Therefore, this result suggests that providing interventions that support positive peer relationships will improve school engagement more than mentorship. In the rule-breaking and externalizing behavior models, mentorship ( $\eta^2 = .14$ ;  $\eta^2 = .14$ ) and peer attachment ( $\eta^2 = .11$ ;  $\eta^2 = .16$ ) had similar effect sizes, respectively. These results suggest mentorship and peer relationships are equally important domains to address adolescent rule-breaking and externalizing behavior.

Adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration previously enrolled in mentorship have better behavioral and school engagement outcomes compared to those not previously enrolled in mentorship. Further, mentored males have more favorable outcomes compared to mentored females. Overall, mentorship increases resiliency as measured by a decrease in internalizing and externalizing behaviors; thus mentorship operates as a protective factor for children of incarcerated fathers.

### **Study Limitations and Strengths**

Although the analyses reconcile much prior research on this topic and contribute empirically to broader research on the outcomes of mentorship for children of incarcerated fathers, there are several limitations in areas related to: (a) research; (b) participants; (c)

measures and data collection; (d) generalizability.

Research regarding the effects of paternal incarceration is confounded by research that included both maternal and paternal incarceration; it was difficult deciphering the impact of paternal incarceration to that of maternal incarceration. Due to the inclusion of both parents, the disadvantageous effects of paternal incarceration on their children and families has not yet been thoroughly researched.

Limitation regarding participants include self-reported data, small number of and age of mentored youth, and locations where surveys were completed. Data was self-reported and from a single source. As with most self-reported data, participants may report what they feel is socially acceptable particularly true for what people see as negative behavior. For example, given the stigmatization of paternal incarceration, these children may feel the need to underreport having an incarcerated father or certain behaviors. As a result, the accuracy of self-reported data affects validity of study findings. Also, this study included a small number of participants who were previously enrolled in mentorship. It is possible that the youth who elected not to participate have different, possibly less favorable, outcomes than the youth who decided to participate. Therefore, study findings may have differed if additional youth had participated in this study. Moreover, mentored youth were significantly younger than the non-mentored youth in the study; suggesting that age could have mediated the differences in mentorship outcomes. Lastly, the location where participants completed the surveys may have influenced their responses because distractions around the participants may have disrupted their thinking.

Limitations in data collection and measures include -minimum collection of family risks and factors surrounding incarcerated fathers. Minimum data regarding overall family risks were



included. Research is clear that family income level, family and residential stability, and parenting behaviors influence adolescent behavior (Geller et al., 2009, 2012; Kjellstrand & Eddy, 2011b; Woodard & Coop (2016). Therefore inclusion of these factors will further explain mentorship outcomes. To further understand the impact of mentorship and gender on outcomes, it is also necessary account for variables related to the father's incarceration. Differentiating between current or past paternal incarceration, the number of times the father has been incarcerated, the severity and type of crime, and whether the father resided with the child prior to incarceration is vital. Thus, collecting data specific to the paternal incarceration itself would provide a deeper understanding regarding the effects of mentorship for this group of adolescents, especially differences in gender outcomes.

In addition, the use of multiple measures of school-related surveys may have better suited this study. Inclusion of participants' grades, attendance, test scores, school value, or school connectedness could have been used to assist in the measurement of possible school related benefits of mentorship for children with a history of paternal incarceration.

Mentorship limitations included fidelity of mentorship policies and generalizability of mentorship. It was unknown whether mentors and youth met the program requirements of talking over the phone weekly, meeting twice a week for an outing, or attending bi-weekly group meetings. Youth in dyads that met the requirement possibly had a more secure attachment to their mentors and mother than youth in dyads that did not meet the requirement. Moreover, attachment may have influenced mentored youth behavioral outcomes.

Mentoring programs are themselves quite varied. Y-NOW is a community-based, one-on-one and group mentoring program that has supported youth with a history of parental

incarceration for more than 13 years. Y-NOW has experience and firsthand knowledge regarding the concerns of children and families in this population. Moreover, Y-NOW's mentor training sessions are intense and specific to the needs of children with a history of parental incarceration thus better equipping Y-NOW mentors with skills to support this specific population of youth. Thus, newer mentoring programs with a variety of program specifications may not have the same impact on youth resulting perhaps in different mentorship outcomes.

Despite these limitations, the present study has several strengths. First, the treatment-control design permits the comparison of mentorship outcomes for adolescents affected by paternal incarceration. Second, inclusion of a comparison group that had not experienced paternal incarceration adds context to study findings regarding the deleterious effects of paternal incarceration and the positive effects of mentorship. Without this group, it would be more challenging to determine a baseline of adolescent behavior within the specific group. Third, all participants resided in the same zip codes and thus shared similar demographical characteristics.

As for mentored youth, all came from the same mentoring program minimizing variability in the intervention. Furthermore, data of adolescent ACEs was collected to numerate differences in risks experienced by children of incarcerated fathers and those not affected by paternal incarceration. Data suggest paternal incarceration is a risk factors because it incurs additional risk for children and families because children with such history reported significantly more ACEs than their counterparts. Lastly, this study used rigorous statistical analysis to determine whether mentorship yields better outcomes. Controlling for confounding factors such as maternal and peer attachment clarifies the effect of paternal incarceration and mentorship on behavioral outcomes.

### **Implications for Practice and Policy**

Current research findings posit that mentorship is a protective factor for children with a history of paternal incarceration. Therefore, quality mentoring programs, of a hybrid type or one-on-one mentoring model, should be studied to determine additional factors that influence outcomes for children of this population. Moreover, factors related to the mentor, such as background and age, and the program such as years of service to children of incarcerated parents and program structures, should be systematically studied. Components of quality mentoring programs include: (a) screening and training of mentors; (b) on-going training for mentors; (c) supporting to the dyad for the duration of the mentorship that lasts at least 10 months; (d) clear mentorship expectations; (e) facilitating of a secure attachment between mentor and youth through the mentorship; (f) offering support to the youth.

In addition, mentoring programs should continue to evolve to meet the needs of the youth. The use of activities that facilitate development for youth, specifically female adolescents, is needed. Previous, and outdated, research regarding gender outcomes suggested males have higher aggressive behavior; current findings suggests female adolescents reported significantly higher internalizing and externalizing behavior. Mentoring programs should reinforce the importance of mentor consistency in making weekly phone calls and bi-weekly face-to-face contact between mentors and youth. Increased contact facilitates closer relationships and increasing mentorship effects thereby; influencing youth behavioral outcomes.

More mentoring programs should consider including a hybrid model of mentorship to address diverse needs of youth in the program. This model would include a component of the traditional one-on-one relationship as well as small group facilitated interactions. Research

suggest youth, especially girls, in mentoring programs require their peers and adults to optimize development. The hybrid models offers this structure maximizing the benefits of mentorship.

The cost of youth participation in Y-NOW is unknown. However, MENTOR (2014) suggested mentorship has a \$3 return on investment to society. Thus, mentorship through quality mentoring programs could not only offer short-term benefits for the youth but long-term benefits to society. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should evaluate and continue to fund mentoring programs that serve children of incarcerated parents as both a service to the child, but also as an economic and societal investment.

Findings suggest closer familial relationships, specifically between children and mothers, would improve adolescents' behavioral well-being. There are two lines of thinking that could contribute to better familial relationships. Parenting classes should be offered to incarcerated parents teaching positive parenting and how to create or recreate a secure attachment upon the child with reintegration. In addition, caregivers of children with incarcerated parents should also be offered positive parenting classes as well as to offer support during this distressing family time. The family unit should intentionally facilitate closer relationships with the children, especially daughters, to strengthen the parent-child attachment so bruised by the parental incarceration.

Programs such as Save Kids of Incarcerated Parents (SKIP) help families facilitate closer relationships. SKIP works with the children and caregivers a supportive "circle" of positive relationships. The program also provides a community of support through an online platform where teens between ages 13 to 17 to share their experiences with other children who've also experienced parental incarceration.

The community of caregivers, family, neighbors, and educators, should encourage youth to enroll in quality formal mentoring programs. In a well-designed program, mentors offer tailored support which helps youth improve internalizing and externalizing behaviors; quality mentorship can improve outcomes of children with a history of paternal incarceration.

Although parental incarceration is stigmatizing, the heightened and open conversations about incarceration within communities may embolden children and families to reach out for additional support. Moreover, more mentoring programs should offer mentorship specifically for the fragile children of incarcerated parents given that millions of children are affected by parental incarceration.

As noted, after parental incarceration families experience strains in material resources. Fathers experience difficulties with obtaining a job and the family units continues to suffer disproportionately affecting Black families. Therefore, in the larger context there are unequal effects of incarceration on Black children, their communities, and schools; this social justice issue not only affects the offender, but the entire family and particularly the vulnerable child. Policy makers should consider provision of alternatives to correctional confinement of non-violent offenders giving fathers an opportunity to continue to support their children minimizing family strain and child trauma and clearly reducing the likelihood that their children experience unfavorable life outcomes. This will require the judicial system to consider the offenders' crime and concomitant family responsibility prior to sentencing.

### **Future Research**

There is considerable potential for future research in this area. As noted, there are several factors that contribute to behavioral outcomes of adolescents with a history of paternal

incarceration. Future studies should account for family risks including parenting behaviors as well as the frequency of changes in caregivers and residence. Prior studies of parental incarceration suggested instability contributes to increased negative child behaviors (Borja et al., 2015; Dallaire et al., 2015; Geller et al., 2012). Thus including this depth of data will further explain differences in mentoring outcomes between adolescents with a history of paternal incarceration.

The results produced in the current study are based on a history of paternal incarceration; however there are several unknowns about the father's incarceration. Future research should seek to account for differences in outcomes of mentored adolescents based on the timing and frequency of paternal incarceration. Likewise, future studies should also account for the incarcerated father's residence prior to incarceration as it may help explain differences in gender outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

The present study provides valuable information as to why changes to antiquated policies and practices are overdue. Criminal justice policies initiated and implemented nearly four decades ago and still in effect today were fashioned to punish the offender, findings suggest there are many more innocent victims – their children and families also are penalized. A disproportionate number of arrests and hence incarcerations occur in neighborhoods that are marginalized by biased societal systems of oppression. As a result, minority children, specifically those in disadvantaged neighborhoods are at higher risks of being separated from their fathers. And this separation, accompanying stigma, and the reduced living circumstances have lifelong negative ripple effects for children.

Current findings suggests children of incarcerated fathers reported significantly higher risks. Therefore, paternal incarceration has a detrimental effect on adolescent well-being. Nevertheless, mentored children who have experienced paternal incarceration reported better behavioral outcomes compared to children who had been enrolled in mentorship; suggesting children of incarcerated parents need additional support to improve their behaviors. These children are a vulnerable group of youth that with quality mentoring programs can change their lives and possibly become more resilient against cumulative risks that would otherwise result in unfavorable life outcomes.

While working with the participants in this study, it was obvious that the children have are intelligent and have analytical skills. But such positive attributes seemed somewhat suppressed due to circumstances out of their control. Nevertheless, as more youth join quality mentoring programs, caring and supportive adults will help youth flourish. Mentorship is a powerful agent, improving life outcomes for children experiencing paternal incarceration.

The current study findings expands upon prior research in several ways. The use of a control group and a comparison group provided insightful data about the benefits of mentorship. The statistical analyses expands research because it contributes to reliable data that supports prior research which posited mentorship is a protective factor for children of incarcerated fathers; increasing child resiliency in the midst of risks. Study findings contribute to the literature by elucidating mentorship as a protective factors that decrease externalizing behaviors and thus help children of incarcerated fathers negate less than favorable outcomes. In regards to gender, female adolescents need additional support to address their behavior and school engagement. In my personal experience as a secondary teacher for eight years, I have noticed an increase in girls' aggressive behavior; this research seemed to have affirmed my observation.

More studies should examine the effects of mentorship for children of incarcerated parents as it is a mechanism in which children can at least partially overcome a serious life trauma. Clearly, mentorship should be researched to inform and influence policy change to provide mentors and caring adults to children with a history of paternal incarceration enabling paths to a more positive life trajectories.



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## Appendix A

**Telephone Script:** Hello, my name is Loretta Hardin. I am calling to invite your child or the child you care for to participate in a study about ways to support children with a father who is/has been in prison/jail but I need your permission. I invite you to meet me at a community center near you to review the surveys and if you would like for your child or the child you care for to participate you will sign a consent form. If you agree to allow your child or the child you care for to participate, the child will answer questions about their experiences, behavior, school, and their relationship with friends and parents. They will not write their name on any papers and if at any time they feel uncomfortable they may skip questions or stop. If you want them to be in my study now but change your mind later, that's ok. Do you have any questions? Would you like to meet me to review the consent form for child or the child you care for to participate in this study?

## Appendix B

**Script for verbal assent:** Hi, my name is Loretta. You are invited to participate in a study about ways to support children with a father who is/has been in prison/jail. Your parent/guardian has given you permission to participate, but, I need your permission too. If you agree to participate, you will answer questions about your experiences, your behavior, school, and your relationship with friends and parents. You will not write your name on any of the papers. When I explain my study to other people I will not use your name. Your parent/guardian, friends, teachers or mentors will not see your answers to the questions. However, please note that there are three situations in which I would not be able to keep your answers private and would be required to report them to authorities: (1) If you tell me that you have been or are being hurt by anyone, (2) If you tell me that you are thinking about hurting yourself, or (3) If you are thinking about hurting others. While answering questions, if you feel uncomfortable you may skip questions or stop. If you are unsure about a question, please use a low voice to ask for help, and I will come to your seat to answer your question(s). If you want to be in my study now but change your mind later, that's ok. If you have questions later you may ask your parent/guardian for my number. Do you have any questions? Would you like to participate in this study? (If yes: Thank you for your participation. If no: thanks for your consideration.)