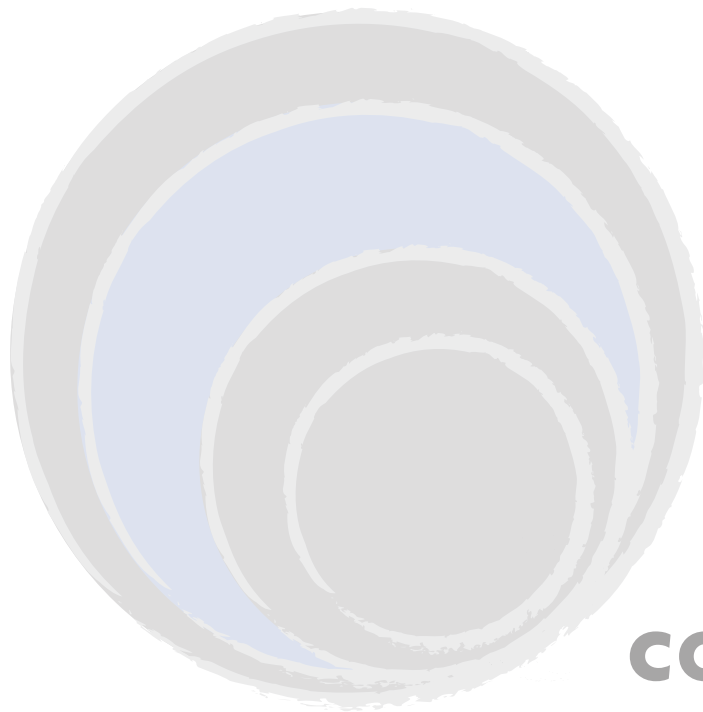


# WE'RE HERE AND TALKING

*Project WHAT!'s research findings and policy recommendations concerning children of incarcerated parents in San Francisco*



*January, 2016*



**communityworks**

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# PROJECT WHAT!

a program of  communityworks

We are Project WHAT! Youth Advocates. All of us have had a parent incarcerated either currently or in the past. We have a vision for a better San Francisco, one where our cities' youth with incarcerated parents are able to live free of judgment and blame. We have a vision where our city prioritizes supporting vulnerable populations, rather than punishing them. As youth who have the most direct experience of what it's like to grow up with a parent behind bars, we have made it our top priority to make this vision a reality.

Project WHAT!, a program of Community Works, is a youth-led program for teens with incarcerated parents that focuses on job development skills, leadership training, and policy advocacy for youth who have parents in prison or jail in the Bay Area. One of the challenges we have faced in our legislative advocacy efforts towards our vision is that there is a lack of data on our population—no government agency is required to collect data on children of incarcerated parents. Therefore, in the Fall of 2013, Project WHAT! began a Youth-led Participatory Action Research (Y-PAR) project to determine the scope of the issues children of incarcerated parents face in San Francisco. With the knowledge that 2.7 million children have a parent in prison or jail nationwide<sup>1</sup>, and an estimated 17,993 children in San Francisco had a parent incarcerated in 2010<sup>2</sup>, we knew that this population was high and the needs were great.

## OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

We started reaching out to our communities by distributing a survey to 100 youth ages 12-25 in San Francisco who have experienced parental incarceration.

We then hosted eight focus groups with service providers and community members who come into direct contact with children of incarcerated parents (including representatives from city departments, mental health care providers, youth, caregivers impacted by incarceration, formerly incarcerated parents, police officers, and therapists (see appendix for details).

Finally, on June 19th, 2014 we held an informational hearing sponsored by Supervisor Malia Cohen as the final part of our research to understand what resources and services currently exist to serve children and families impacted by incarceration, and to identify gaps in services within San Francisco.

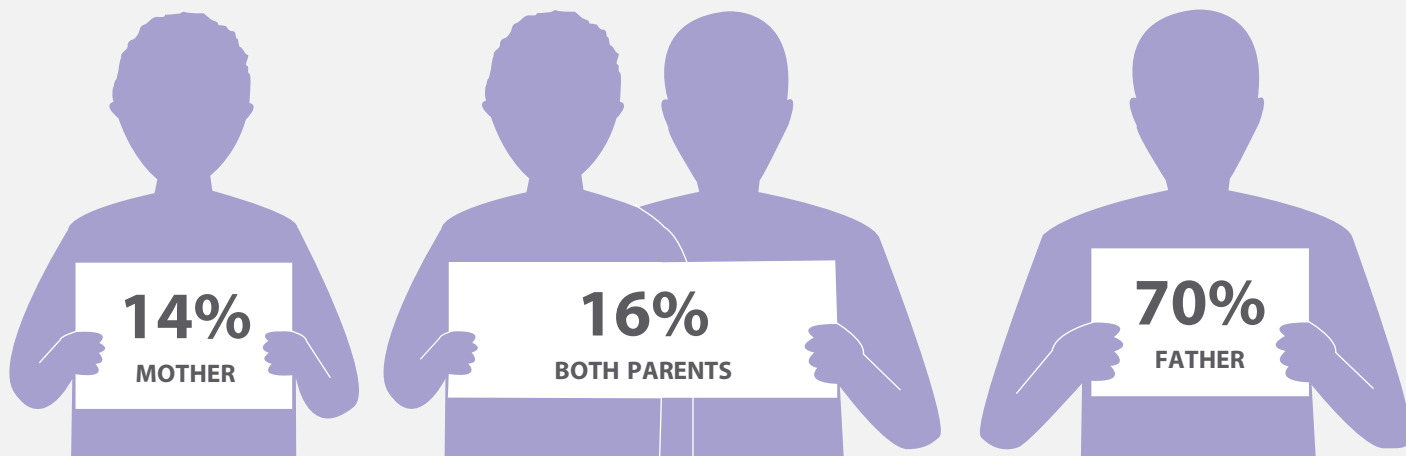
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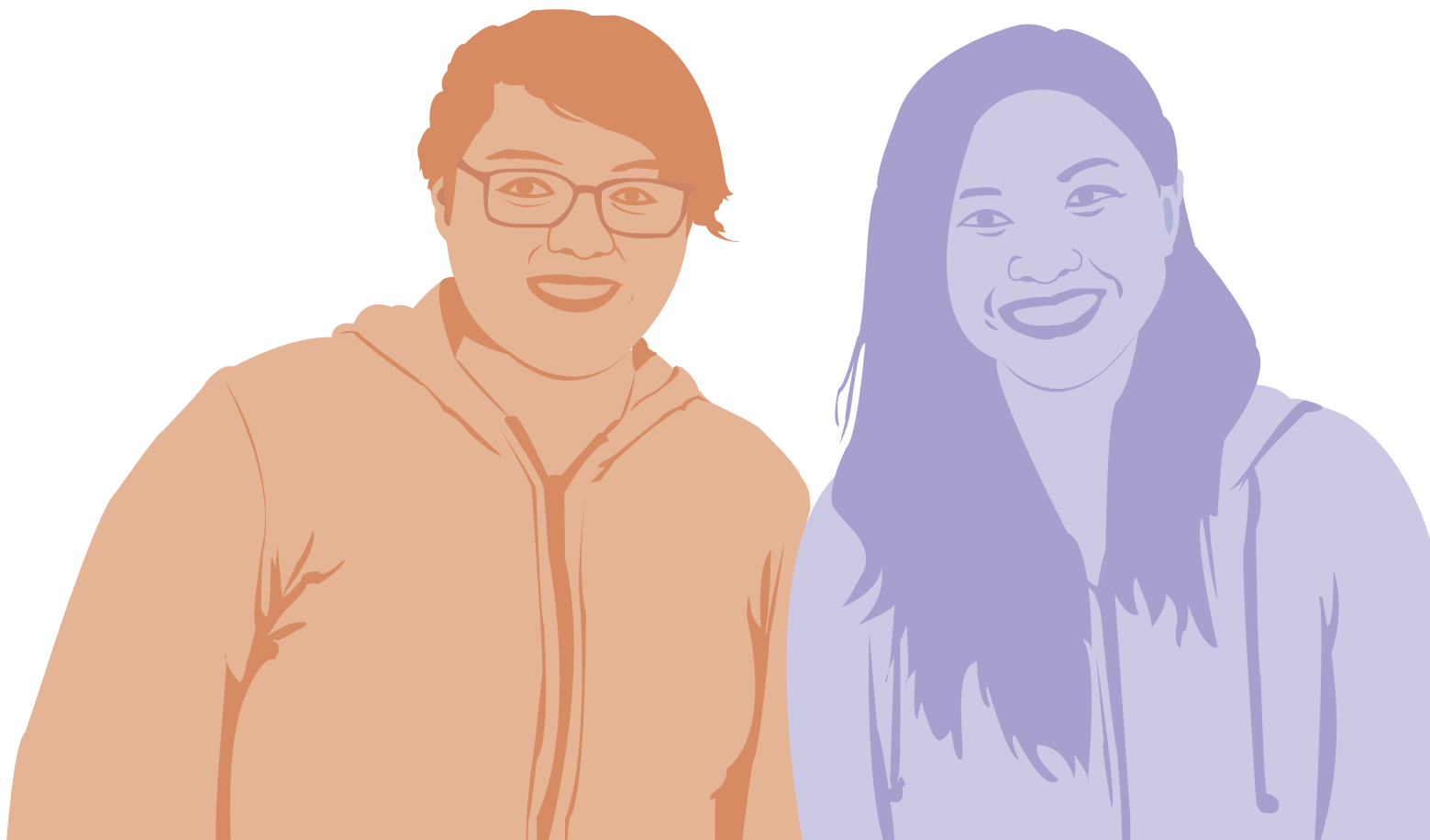
Based on the data we gathered, we identified four primary categories of challenges children with incarcerated parents face: (1) maintaining family unity, (2) access to visitation, (3) barriers to re-entry, and (4) unmet emotional needs. We developed policy recommendations that we know will improve the lives of San Francisco's children and youth with incarcerated parents.

## CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

During our research we found that 14% of youth surveyed had a mother incarcerated, 70% had a father incarcerated, and 16% had both parents locked up. The *Who Pays Report* found that approximately 70% of incarcerated people are parents.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the youth surveyed lived with their other parent or another family member, and **14% lived with no relatives: in foster care, group homes, or on their own.**

### WHO HAS BEEN INCARCERATED?







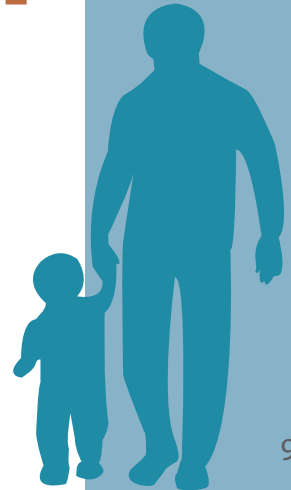
## CHALLENGE 1: Maintaining Family Unity

FROM THE MOMENT A PARENT IS ARRESTED CHILDREN ARE TRAUMATIZED BY THE SEPARATION FROM THEIR PARENT. MANY CHILDREN DON'T KNOW WHERE THEIR INCARCERATED PARENT IS, WHICH AFFECTS THEIR ABILITY TO INITIATE CONTACT. ONCE THAT BOND IS BROKEN, CHILDREN AND PARENTS FACE CHALLENGES TO MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER DUE TO BARRIERS IN COMMUNICATION THROUGH PHONE CALLS, LETTERS, AND VISITS.

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### FINDINGS

- I. Witnessing a parent's arrest is a traumatizing experience for children.
- II. Due to the many transitions that happen in a child's life during their parents incarceration, they are likely to live unstable lives causing further trauma.
- III. There is little information conveyed to children about what is happening and many don't know how to find their parent.
- IV. Channels of communication between parents and children are limited and prohibitively expensive.



## I. WITNESSING PARENTAL ARREST IS TRAUMATIZING



The cops started shooting rubber bullets at him. He was hit about four times, but didn't fall. When the cops started shooting, my brothers, my mom, and I dropped to the living room floor. The inside of our house had black streaks from the rubber bullets. Our ceiling and walls were marked up. Then they shot him with tazer guns and that's when he fell.  
- youth, 16

**43%** of youth witnessed their parent's arrest

**Half** of those youth (51%) witnessed violence or abuse by a police officer against their parent when they were arrested



Not only is witnessing a parent's arrest traumatizing, but the barriers between authorities and children often result in children having little knowledge about what is happening to their parents during arrest and incarceration. **Children are often left alone, or come home to an empty house after a parent's arrest.** A seventeen-year-old from the Young Women's Freedom Center remembers: "When I got to the house, the door was smashed in and the living room was destroyed. My room was a mess, mom's room was horrible, and everything was everywhere.

“ All of us have pointed a gun at a child’s head before, and it’s terrible. We don’t want to be doing it but it happens all the time. ”

- former police officer

Children witnessing parental arrest is a serious problem that has gone unremedied with current policies. During a focus group with the San Francisco Police Department, an officer stated: “Every day I come into contact with youth. I have arrested a parent when children were present five to eight times in the last year. There was also a time when I made an arrest of a parent and the kids were at school. **We need more focused training to deal with children of all ages.**”



The trauma from witnessing a parent get arrested can lead to PTSD, depression, and other challenges.<sup>4</sup> The resulting trauma of arrest is felt by parents as well, who are unable to take steps to protect or communicate with their children during their time of arrest. One formerly incarcerated mother explains, “[My] daughter, she was nine, she saw the police come in and take me out of the house; **they came in and tazzered me and she was sitting on the couch watching the whole time.**”

## RECOMMENDATION


**All San Francisco Police Department officers should be trained and required to follow protocol on how to reduce trauma to children when arresting a parent.**

## II. CHILDREN FACE LACK OF STABILITY


Children with incarcerated parents are often forced to move homes and change schools. These changes create additional instability and lost contact with family and friends during an already challenging time.

As a result of parental incarceration...

 **1 in 2** youth had to move

 **1 in 4** youth had to change schools

 **1 in 7** youth had to quit a sport or stop a hobby

 **1 in 10** youth were unable to attend either high school or college<sup>5</sup>



**In my case, I've been in so many different places, I never could connect with a person as a parent figure or a role model. Even my brother left. I tell people I look up to myself.**

**- youth, 14**

While many youth live with their other parent once one parent is incarcerated, nearly one third of youth (31%) rely on a grandparent to be a primary caregiver and 16% rely on another family member. Over 8% of youth are moved to foster care or a group home, which creates additional instability. One youth interviewed reflects: "If it weren't for my parents incarceration, I probably wouldn't have been in foster care as long. In foster care, **I was just being moved around from place to place, so I didn't have a stable environment around me.**"

Additionally, there are communication barriers between caregivers and other family members and youth about what is happening to their incarcerated parent. A youth from Project AVARY shared: "Nobody told me [my father was incarcerated], I believe I just guessed my father was in jail since he was away." Despite these constant changes, youth remain resilient. Another youth stated: "My parent's incarceration caused me to go into foster care. It also taught me that **when you are at the bottom, you can't see anything but the top; which motivated me. It made me outgoing and positive.**"



### III. CHILDREN DON'T KNOW HOW TO FIND THEIR PARENT

**28%** of youth **don't know where** their parent is or how to find them

**48%** of youth **were not informed** when their parent was transferred or released

Starting from parental arrest, children are not informed about the status of their parent and are not notified when their parent is transferred or released. A formerly incarcerated parent demonstrates how this impacted them. "My daughter and I had a wonderful relationship... When I was transported to my trial in Florida the system scheduled it to take four weeks to transport me and I couldn't talk to my daughter the whole time... She didn't know what was going on or where I was." More than one in five youth said that **information on how to find their parent would have been helpful.**

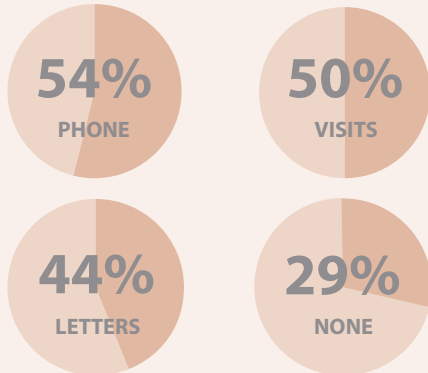
#### RECOMMENDATION

**The San Francisco Sheriff's Department should make their "inmate locator" user friendly and accessible online so that children and youth can find out where their parent is located and how to contact them.**

**Only 54%** of youth have had phone calls with their incarcerated parent

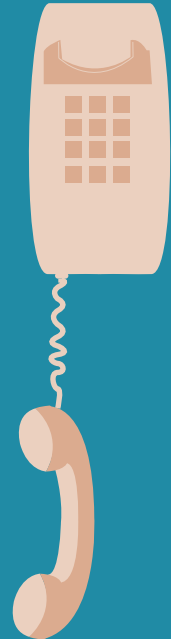
**29%** of youth had **no contact** with their incarcerated parent

WHAT FORM OF CONTACT DID/DO YOUTH HAVE?



**IV. COMMUNICATION IS TOO EXPENSIVE**

**61%**  
of youth want  
more contact  
with their  
incarcerated  
parent



**1 in 4** youth say the cost of phone calls is too high and creates a barrier for them having frequent communication



Countless barriers exist making it difficult for children to maintain contact with their incarcerated parents, but the prohibitively high costs of phone calls is a dominant factor. One youth says: **"I can't call my dad and that's really frustrating.** We just get to talk in letters and I know other people are gonna read it before my dad and I have to censor and edit."

One quarter of youth cite cost as the reason their contact is limited. Adults speak even more so to this barrier—69% of incarcerated people and families surveyed nationwide<sup>6</sup>

He wanted to call collect  
and I couldn't afford it,  
so I couldn't pick up; I  
couldn't afford to take  
the kids to go see him.

- caregiver





and 33% of those incarcerated in San Francisco County jails<sup>7</sup> say the cost of phone calls is a barrier to maintaining contact with their loved ones.

According to the *Who Pays? Report* over one third of families (34%) **went into debt to pay for phone and visitation costs**—“Families are often forced to choose between supporting incarcerated loved ones and meeting the basic needs of family members who are outside.”<sup>8</sup> From 2014 until 2016, a call from San Francisco County Jail to a local San Francisco phone number cost \$2.75 for 15 minutes and an in-state call cost \$4.05 for 15 minutes (before 2014 phone costs were much higher).<sup>9</sup> In 2016, the Federal

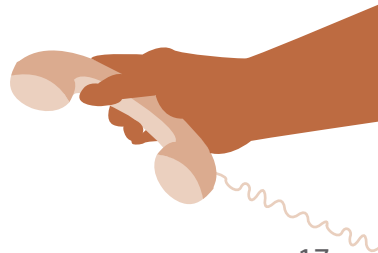
Communications Commission (FCC) regulated a cap on exorbitant prison and jail phone calls nationwide reducing the cost to \$1.65 per 15 minute call.<sup>10</sup>

A formerly incarcerated mother said: “As far as communication, the phone calls need to be made way more affordable. Should this woman have to choose between letting her son eat dinner or talking to her kid that night?”



## RECOMMENDATION

**Phone calls should be free between incarcerated parents at San Francisco County Jail and their children.**



Despite the many ways systems of incarceration separate families, children faced with parental incarceration build loving and supportive relationships.

“Both my parents have been gone for a while. I lean on my little brothers for support. I look at them and they give me motivation to do something better. They see me and treat me like I brought them this far and it’s just us, “the 3 musketeers”. If I call either one of them both of them will come running.

- youth, age 16



## CHALLENGE 2:

### Access to Visitation

WHILE VISITING IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS CHILDREN HAVE CONTACT WITH THEIR INCARCERATED PARENT, CONSISTENT ACCESS TO VISITATION IS RARE. CONSISTENT VISITATION NOT ONLY REDUCES TRAUMA TO CHILDREN, BUT IS ALSO ONE OF THE GREATEST PREDICTORS OF SUCCESSFUL RE-ENTRY, THUS REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES<sup>11</sup>. DESPITE THIS, VISITING AN INCARCERATED PARENT IS A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN.

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#### FINDINGS

- I. There is often no one to take children to visit their incarcerated parent, especially for those in foster care.
- II. Strict visiting policies unfairly discourage and prevent children from visiting their incarcerated parents.
- III. The cost of visiting is too high for families to sustainably afford, and families must often travel far distances to see their incarcerated loved ones.

## I. NO ONE TO TAKE CHILDREN TO VISIT THEIR INCARCERATED PARENT

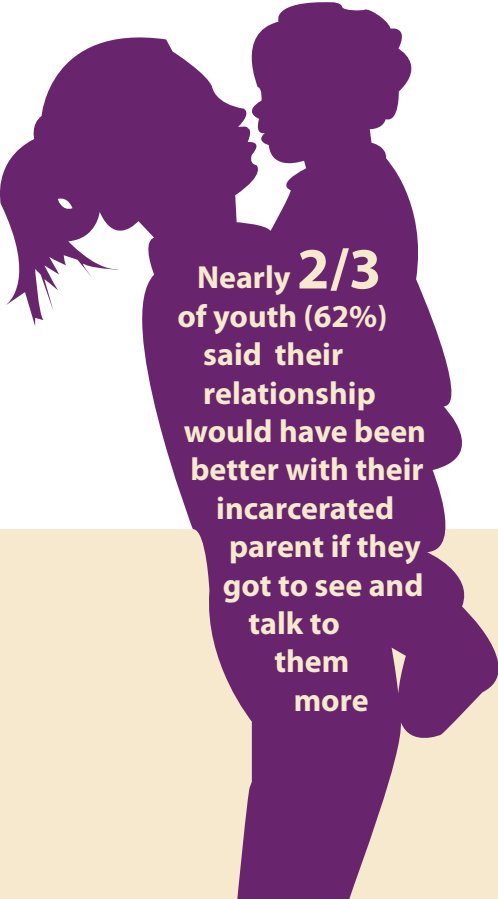


**Close to half  
of youth  
(47%) said  
no one  
would take them  
to visit their  
incarcerated  
parent**

IN A FOCUS GROUP WITH 8 SOCIAL WORKERS, ONLY  
1 HAD TAKEN KIDS TO VISIT THEIR INCARCERATED  
PARENT. MOST FELT IT WAS NOT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

Visitation is one the primary ways children have to maintain a relationship with their incarcerated parent and, while there are a multitude of barriers to visitation, a primary barrier is that there is often no one to take children to visit their parent.

Often children are being cared for by relatives or within the foster care system, dependent on social workers. A seventeen-year-old said: "I live in a group home and we have one driver who takes us out. The driver doesn't work on Sundays, and that's the only day my mom can get visits. **She is only 30 minutes away from me and I can't see her...I haven't seen her in five years.**"

A purple silhouette of a woman and a young child hugging. The woman is on the left, facing right, and the child is on the right, facing left. They are both smiling and appear to be in a warm embrace. The text is overlaid on the woman's silhouette.

Nearly **2/3**  
of youth (62%)  
said their  
relationship  
would have been  
better with their  
incarcerated  
parent if they  
got to see and  
talk to  
them  
more

Children and parents alike contend their relationships would be stronger with more frequent visitation. A formerly incarcerated mother says: **"My relationship with my sons was better [when] they would write to me and come visit."** Nearly two thirds of youth said their relationships would be better with more contact with their parents.

Three quarters of the children whose parents are incarcerated in San Francisco County Jails live in the immediate San Francisco Bay Area. However, only 34% of these children are currently visiting their incarcerated parents.<sup>12</sup> **Only 7% of parents incarcerated in the San Francisco County Jails have children who are able to visit them independently,**<sup>13</sup> meaning the majority of youth are dependent on others for visitation.

## RECOMMENDATION

**When youth are 16 years old they should be able to visit their parents by themselves in San Francisco County Jail without another parent or guardian present for their visit (which is consistent with the federal prison system's visiting age).**

## II. VISITING PROCEDURES ARE TOO STRICT



**Only 42%**  
of youth got to  
touch their parent  
during visits



Visitation in county jails is limited to communication via phone with a glass barrier. Visitors, including children, and their incarcerated loved ones are not allowed to have physical contact. Community Works' *One Family Program* is an exception to this, offering group contact visits to children within San Francisco County Jails. Prisons have contact visits available. Both jails and prisons are strict on appointment/arrival time, dress code, and other regulations that make visitation difficult for families, particularly those traveling long distances.

Even when children are able to schedule a visit, they are often turned away for minor restrictions or rule regulations. One youth says “I was turned away from San Francisco County Jail for being one minute late to my appointment.”

**14%** of youth have been **turned away** because of clothing or other minor visitation infractions

Strict visiting procedures in conjunction with limited access to visitation and unreliable communication can lead to parents being transferred without their child’s knowledge or an opportunity to say goodbye. Half of all youth (48%) are not informed when their parent is transferred or released and less than half of youth (42%) are able to touch their parent during visits.

## RECOMMENDATION

**When a parent is transferred from San Francisco County Jail to the California state prison system, children should be offered three private contact visits to say goodbye to their parent and come up with a plan to stay in communication.**

**My kids tried to come up and visit and when they came they were treated as if they were criminals.**

**– formerly incarcerated mother**



### III. COST OF VISITING IS TOO HIGH

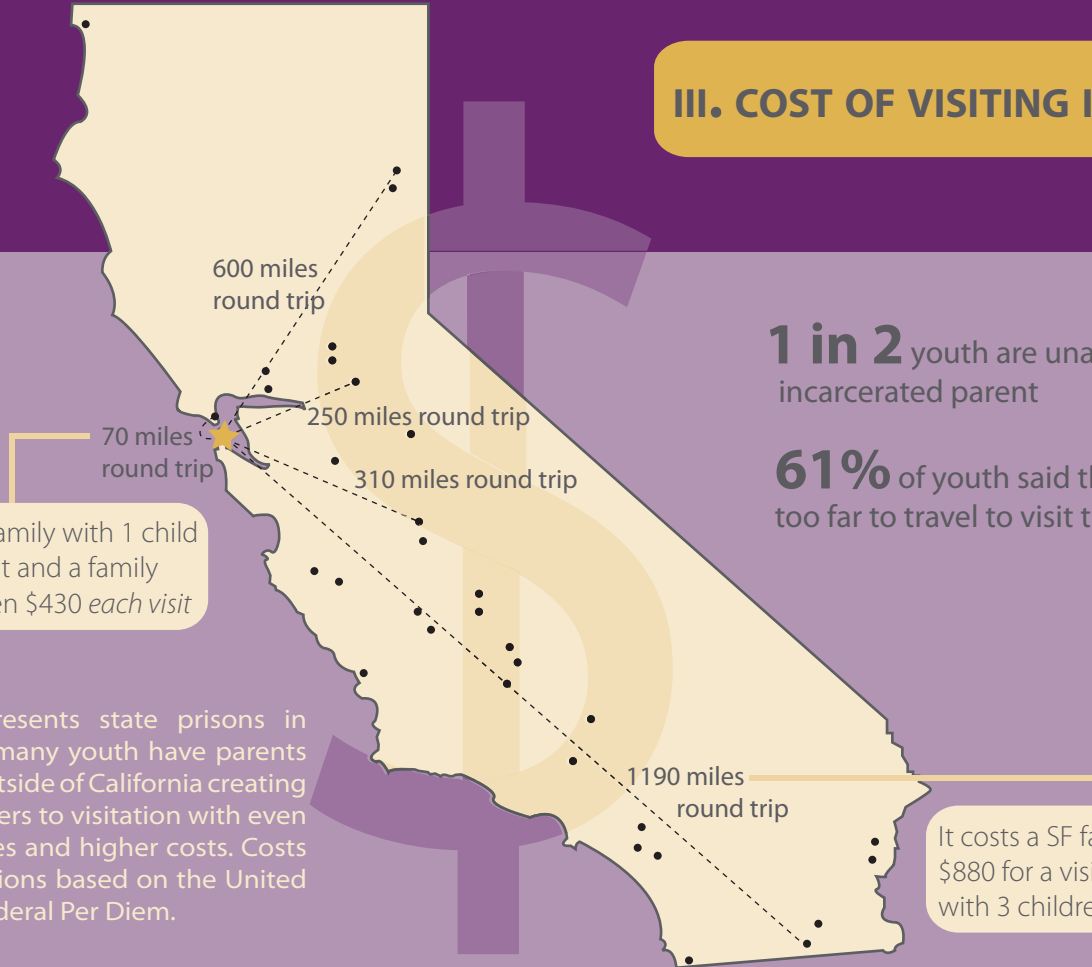
**1 in 2** youth are unable to visit their incarcerated parent

**61%** of youth said the distance was too far to travel to visit their parent

It costs a SF family with 1 child \$260 for a visit and a family with 3 children \$430 *each visit*

This map represents state prisons in California, but many youth have parents serving time outside of California creating additional barriers to visitation with even further distances and higher costs. Costs are approximations based on the United States Federal Per Diem.

It costs a SF family with 1 child \$880 for a visit and a family with 3 children \$1,110 *each visit*





“  
...they had to travel  
400 miles to come see  
me, buy groceries,  
and all that...”

- formerly incarcerated  
parent

One of the primary barriers to maintaining regular contact with incarcerated loved ones is the cost and distance associated with visiting. Many families are unable to afford visitation and/or are otherwise unable to travel the long distances. The closest state prison in California is San Quentin, a 70 mile round trip from San Francisco which, with mileage, food, and an overnight stay costs a family with one child \$260, a family with two children \$340, and a family with three children \$430. The farthest state prison in California is Centinela State Prison, 1,190 miles round trip from San Francisco which, with mileage, food and an overnight stay costs a family with one child \$880, a family with two children \$1,000, and a family with three children \$1,110. Additional costs are incurred for families who don't have access to a personal vehicle or have loved ones incarcerated outside of the state of California.



There are only nine state prisons within 125 miles of San Francisco; the remaining 26 are further. Visits to these facilities add substantial costs to already overburdened families. A formerly incarcerated mother explains, “I communicated on the phone, we had family visits quarterly; a big struggle was only so many could come on each visit and it was a financial burden—they had to travel 400 miles to come see me, buy groceries and all that...And their dad, he was on probation a lot so he couldn't come in, so their dad would wait in the parking lot while their older cousin would come. Getting them approved was a huge burden. I fought two years to get them in [to visit me].”

“ I haven’t seen my dad in three years, and before that it had been two years. My grandma drove me and my brother all the way down to see him, it was like 300 miles, and they wouldn’t let us in because the black prisoners were on lock-down. ”

- youth, age 13



## RECOMMENDATION

When a parent is transferred from San Francisco County Jail to state prison, the city of San Francisco should provide the funding to the family to cover the child’s transportation costs for a minimum of six visits per year.

## CHALLENGE 3:

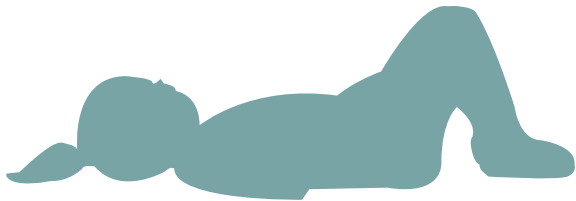
### Barriers to Re-entry

WHEN A PARENT IS RELEASED FROM PRISON, THEIR TRANSITION BACK HOME CAN BE TOUGH ON THEIR CHILDREN. FAMILIES OFTEN ENCOUNTER EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AS THEY WORK TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES.

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#### FINDINGS

- I. There are laws and policies that present barriers to formerly incarcerated people that prevent family reunification from being possible.
- II. Children of incarcerated parents have unmet emotional needs both before and after their parents are released.



## I. FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO RE-ENTRY

**9 in 10** youth felt that support with reentry would have improved their relationship with their incarcerated parent



As the **most** helpful form of support, they identified:

### SUPPORT WITH HOUSING

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Half of all youth surveyed said that housing support would have helped them, while one quarter cited transportation support. *Who Pays?* found that **nearly one in five families were unable to afford housing** because of the income lost and the financial burden of incarceration.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, our research found that the box on housing and job applications that asks about conviction history makes it harder for released parents to get jobs and live at home with their families and children after they have been incarcerated.



**1 in 2** youth (50%) said that **housing support** would have helped them develop a successful relationship when their parent was released

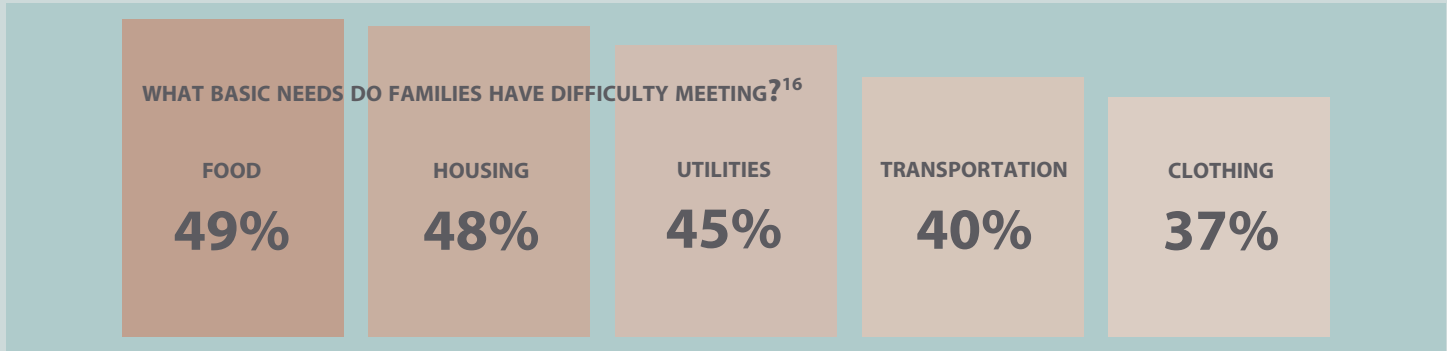


**1 in 4** youth (23%) said that **transportation support** would have helped them develop a successful relationship when their parent was released



**2 in 3** families (65%) impacted by incarceration had difficulty meeting basic needs,

**70%** of these families have children<sup>15</sup>



## RECOMMENDATION

Community-based re-entry support services should be available to all parents leaving San Francisco County Jail specializing in housing, employment, health care, and family reunification. Support services should not have an expiration date.

## II. INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT TIME OF RE-ENTRY

In addition to reentry support, our research found that **children of incarcerated parents would benefit from emotional support services**, particularly geared at family reunification. One child of an incarcerated parent said, “We have what I believe is a decent relationship. I think what would have helped would have been the time and resources to really spend on communicating about our relationship.” A formerly incarcerated parent echoed this sentiment: “...if there would be a way or a process to facilitate [family] reunification and communication.... how [else] do we get to know each other as people?”

“ **I think what really would have helped would have been the time and resources to really spend communicating about our relationship.** ”

- youth, 16

**1 in 2** youth (49%) said that they would have benefited from **family counseling** when their parent was released



Support that would have helped my father and I would have been pre and post release family therapy and counseling in order to start the conversation on what family dynamics would be like once he was out. He was gone for so long we had to learn how to live together again.

- youth, 15



## RECOMMENDATION

When a parent has been incarcerated for more than one year, restorative justice services should be offered to all children whose parents are being released from San Francisco County Jail both pre and post release.



## CHALLENGE 4:

### Unmet Emotional Needs

CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS HAVE UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND ARE SOCIALLY STIGMATIZED. CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY TRAINED ON THE UNIQUE SET OF ISSUES CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS ARE DEALING WITH AND CHILDREN HAVE LIMITED ACCESS TO PROVIDERS.

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#### FINDINGS

- I. Children of incarcerated parents are stigmatized, often feeling alone and isolated.
- II. There is a lack of emotional support services designed specifically for children of incarcerated parents in mental healthcare and school-based settings.



In addition to the countless barriers children with incarcerated parents face, they often struggle with stigma and labeling. Children face the struggle of **automatically being labeled** as going to end up like their incarcerated parent. One youth remembers: "My guardian and I were arguing and **he told me if I kept doing what I was doing, I would end up like my dad**, which brought up the emotions of resentment and anger."

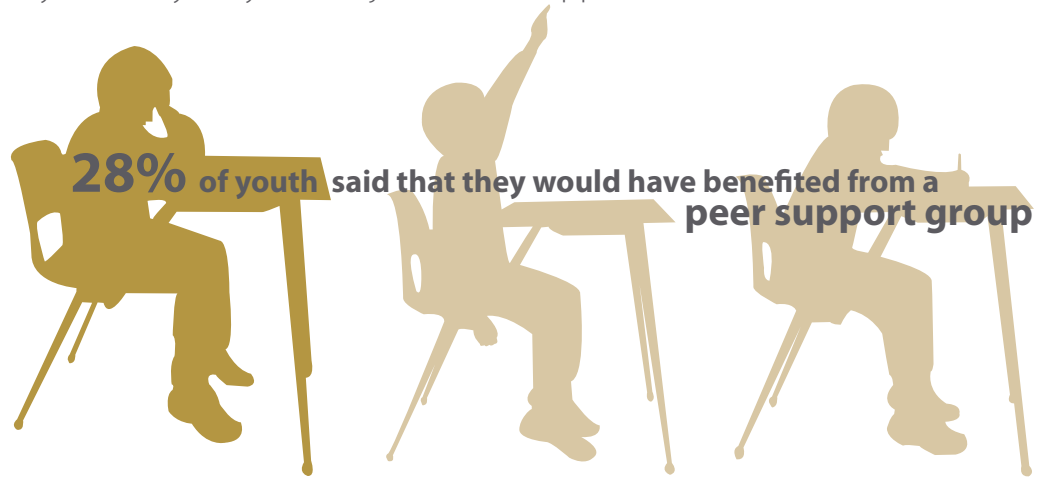
## I. CHILDREN ARE STIGMATIZED AND ISOLATED



“ Support was myself, but when I met another kid whose father was incarcerated, it made me realize I wasn’t alone. ”

- youth, 15

Since many youth face stigma and judgment as children of incarcerated parents, over one quarter of surveyed youth (28%) **advocated for peer-based support groups** to help alleviate feelings of labeling and isolation. This type of support is often nonexistent for youth at home or in school. One youth said, “I don’t have family. I don’t have any family connections. I struggle with a lot day-to-day. I don’t have support in my home. I don’t really have friends. I don’t really have anybody I could just call for support.”



## RECOMMENDATION

San Francisco Unified School District should prioritize specific support services for San Francisco’s 18,000 children of incarcerated parents.

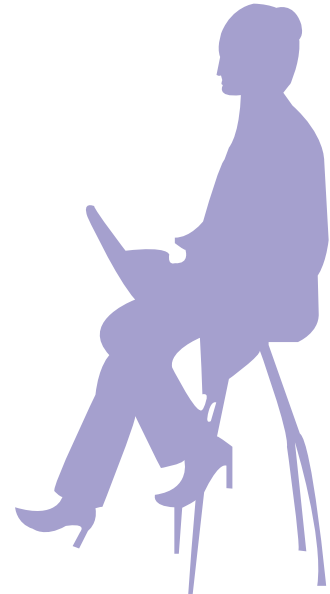
## II. LACK OF ADEQUATE SUPPORT SERVICES

Teachers, therapists, and social workers are in unique positions to provide support to children of incarcerated parents. However...

**only 14%** of youth said a **teacher or therapist** was there for them during their parent's incarceration, and

**only 2%** of youth said a **social worker** was there for them.

Those who are in positions to support children of incarcerated parents lack training and empathy towards the struggles youth are facing, causing further stigma and trauma. A child of an incarcerated parent remembers: "In kindergarten I used to get in trouble and my teacher told me that I was acting out because of my dad being in jail, and that I would end up just like him. That really hurt."





**"We could all  
use some education  
on what's involved with  
the lives of children of  
incarcerated parents.  
Most of us don't know."  
- Therapist, A Home Within**

**38%** of youth identified **therapy and counseling** as a support they would have wanted, but did not receive

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According to the *Who Pays? Report*, "survey and focus group participants shared that health impacts in their families were intergenerational and sometimes had the most severe consequences for children of incarcerated parents. Research has also shown that the stress and trauma associated with having a parent in prison, along with the loss of financial resources due to parental incarceration, can carry significant consequences for the physical and mental health of youth."<sup>17</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Teachers, therapists, and social workers should be required to attend trainings by and about children of incarcerated parents. Additional mental health care services should be offered for free to all children of incarcerated parents in the San Francisco Unified School District and the child welfare system.**

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Status as of January 2016

- ☒ All San Francisco Police Department officers should be trained and required to follow protocol on how to reduce trauma to children when arresting a parent.
- ☒ The San Francisco Sheriff's Department should make their "inmate locator" user friendly and accessible online so that children and youth can find out where their parent is located and how to contact them.
- ☐ Phone calls should be free between incarcerated parents at San Francisco County Jail and their children.
- ☒ When youth are 16 years old they should be able to visit their parents by themselves in San Francisco County Jail without another parent or guardian present for their visit (which is consistent with the federal prison system's visiting age).
- ☒ When a parent is transferred from San Francisco County Jail to the California state prison system, children should be offered three private contact visits to say goodbye to their parent and come up with a plan to stay in communication.

- ☐ When a parent is transferred from San Francisco County Jail to state prison, the city of San Francisco should provide the funding to the family to cover the child's transportation costs for a minimum of six visits per year.
- ☐ Community-based re-entry support services should be available to all parents leaving San Francisco County Jail specializing in housing, employment, health care, and family reunification. Support services should not have an expiration date.
- ☐ When a parent has been incarcerated for more than one year, restorative justice services should be offered to all children whose parents are being released from San Francisco County Jail both pre and post release.
- ☐ San Francisco Unified School District should prioritize specific support services for San Francisco's 18,000 children of incarcerated parents.
- ☐ Teachers, therapists, and social workers should be required to attend trainings by and about children of incarcerated parents. Additional mental health care services should be offered for free to all children of incarcerated parents in the San Francisco Unified School District and the child welfare system.

## CONCLUSION

This research has been a transformative process for us; we learned a lot of new information and were reaffirmed in our own experiences. We will continue to advocate and fight for our rights as San Francisco's children of incarcerated parents. While our research report focuses on our home city of San Francisco, we know these issues take place on a national scale. There are 2.7 million children of incarcerated parents in the U.S.

The issues we face are serious. Living with this stigma has been a motivation for us to work towards a better future. The lack of proper training and inexperience of those who come into contact with children of incarcerated parents has been a critical flaw that presents road blocks to our success. We persevere despite these challenges. As youth we have made it our mission to heal our communities that have been broken by incarceration. Now we ask you to join in our efforts. Spread the word that #We'reHereAndTalking, all 2.7 million of us.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alisia, Aeriella, Arvaughn, Cecilia, Daniel, Demetrius, Jana, Jessica, Leila, Montana, and Ricky are all youth advocates in the Project WHAT! San Francisco cohort. We have all had a parent incarcerated at some point in our lives, many of us still do.



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## APPENDIX

### FOCUS GROUP TIMELINE

- 2/13/2014 – Discussion group with members of the San Francisco Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership, including local city departments and agencies, community based organizations, and individuals.
- 3/29/2014 – Children and youth of incarcerated parents at Project AVARY, a summer camp and program for children of incarcerated parents.
- 4/30/2014 – Formerly incarcerated parents and caregivers of children with incarcerated parents from All of Us or None, the Grace Center, the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and individual community members.
- 5/8/2014 – Therapists and mental health care providers through private practice support groups coordinated by A Home Within.
- 6/10/2014 – Youth who have been in the juvenile justice system in San Francisco, and have also experienced parental incarceration, through the Sisters Rising program at the Young Women's Freedom Center.
- 6/27/2014 – San Francisco Police Officers through the San Francisco Police Department with varying years of service on the police force.
- 7/9/2014 – Social Workers with experience working with children of incarcerated parents through the San Francisco Human Services Agency.

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