AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

A Family Resilience Agenda for Understanding and Responding to Parental Incarceration

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ISSN: 0003-066X

2022, Vol. 77, No. 1, 56–70

https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000687

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where researchers are calling for more attention to resilience. We argue here that a family

resilience perspective is useful in considering child and family level processes that may mitigate the harmful impact of parental incarceration. In contributing to a family resilience agenda, we first review evidence that points to parental incarceration as a risk to children. We then examine research that highlights children's competence in the face of adversity as well as adaptive family processes, such as parenting and contact with the incarcerated parent, that contribute to children's well-being. We offer recommendations for methodological innovation aimed at assessing competence, evaluating interventions, and incorporating multimethod approaches that capture dynamic processes and developmental change. We conclude with practice and policy implications and emphasize how a family resilience agenda suggests the need to contextualize developmental and family strengths within broader systems of discrimination and oppression.

Public Significance Statement

Parental incarceration is a widespread form of childhood disadvantage. It is crucial to mobilize support for this population of children and their families that moves beyond an examination of the risks associated with parental imprisonment and considers youth competence and adaptive family processes. A family resilience agenda highlights developmental and family strengths in families impacted by incarceration while also recognizing broader systems of discrimination and oppression.

Keywords: children with incarcerated parents, parental incarceration, child well-being, family resilience, parenting

One in 14 American children under the age of 18 has experienced the incarceration of a residential parent at some point during their childhoods (Murphey & Cooper, 2015). Even this conservative estimate, which does include children whose nonresidential parents have been to jail or prison, suggests the wide scope of parental incarceration. Mirroring racial disparities in who comes into contact with the criminal justice system (Sawyer & Wagner, 2019), children who are Black, poor, and from rural areas are disproportionately affected by parental incarceration (Murphey & Cooper, 2015). National inmate surveys further suggest that parental incarceration may affect children slightly more than adolescents though such point-in-time estimates do not reflect ongoing exposure. Parents in state correctional facilitates, for instance, report that just over half of their children (53%) are under the age of nine, 23% of whom are under four (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Because of the magnitude and growth of the United States incarceration rate relative to other countries, parental incarceration has been characterized as a "distinctively American" and unequally distributed form of childhood disadvantage (Wildeman, 2009). Indeed, studies have repeatedly indicated that parental incarceration is associated with a variety of child

researchers are calling for more attention to resilience (Cunningham-Lynch et al., 2014). The purpose of this paper is twofold: to (a) review research on parental incarceration through a family

resilience lens and (b) to make recommendations for advancing resilience-informed research, practice, and policy.

A Family Resilience Perspective

Resilience has been defined as the "capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development" (Masten, 2014, p. 6). Resilience scholars embrace a multisystemic perspective that embodies a complex interplay of biological, psychological, social, and ecological factors that enable and support positive child and youth outcomes in the face of risk exposure (Ungar & Theron, 2019). A family resilience framework extends these capabilities to encompass key dimensions of family functioning with particular emphasis on the relational context (Hadfield & Ungar, 2018; Walsh, 2003). Families provide the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social environment that protects and nurtures children during periods of adversity that ensure their survival. Ultimately, resilient and healthy families provide children with opportunities to acquire strategies that contribute to individual and collective resilience (Ramey et al., 2015).

Resilience implies two judgments regarding children's developmental trajectories within the context of incarceration and family life. First, that significant adversity exists, and second, that children and their families are doing well in spite of it (Masten & Powell, 2003). Pathways to positive adaptive functioning are influenced by a complex matrix of experiences, choices, and contextual and developmental factors, along with the timing and nature of adversity (Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994). Moreover, resilience is not just the individual capacity of children and youth to sustain wellbeing in the context of adversity, but also the cultural capacity to enable youth to access resources and family support in meaningful ways (Ungar & Theron, 2019). In other words, resilience is a multiply determined developmental process that changes over time. A *family resilience perspective* emphasizes how family processes may improve resilience for populations who are marginalized and mitigate major challenges that occur outside the family (Hadfield & Ungar, 2018). Such a perspective seems particularly apt in thinking about sources of variability in child and youth outcomes as it pertains to parental incarceration. Family resilience points our attention to theory and empirical evidence of youth and family level processes that may mitigate the impact of parental incarceration and its concurrent risks on children (Arditti, 2012). Primary among these processes are youth coping (Compas & Reeslund, 2009), parenting (Masten, 2018), and children's contact with the incarcerated parent (Poehlmann et al., 2010).

Consistent with Masten and Powell's (2003) criteria (i.e., *the two judgments*), we begin by

family processes that directly involve children with incarcerated parents. Next, we offer an agenda for future research that emphasizes methodological innovation as well as adopting systemic

conceptualizations of resilience that emphasize the presence of competence rather than the absence of problems. We conclude by discussing implications for practice and policy.

Parental Incarceration as a Risk to Children

A substantial, multidisciplinary literature has documented the experience of parental incarceration as a risk to children that may have lasting impacts into adulthood. The focus and interpretation of this research is largely influenced by the disciplinary perspective of scholars enacting the work. Psychologists and family scientists have examined how proximal family processes such as parenting are transformed by parental incarceration and have implications for child and adolescent development (Arditti & Savla, 2015; Poehlmann, 2005). Sociologists and demographers typically emphasize how disadvantaged social locations that precede and are intensified by household incarceration have cascading consequences for children (Foster & Hagan, 2015; Haskins & Turney, 2018) along with how the risks of parental incarceration are unequally distributed (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Within criminology, concern has centered around the intergenerational transmission of criminality and how children's exposure to parental arrest and incarceration, in addition to parents' criminal behavior, may contribute to their criminal justice involvement (Murray et al., 2012).

Based on the scholarship emerging from these various disciplines, we now know that parental incarceration has numerous consequences for children and youth. These consequences tend to center around how the incarceration of a parent in jail or prison contributes to children's antisocial behavior (Murray et al., 2012), psychological and behavioral difficulties (Dallaire et al., 2015; Kjellstrand et al., 2018), traumatic symptomology (Arditti & Savla, 2015), adolescent risk behaviors (Davis & Shlafer, 2017a; Turney & Goldberg, 2019), and health vulnerabilities (Heard-Garris et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2013). Results of these studies suggest that parental incarceration is an important mechanism of risk that explains variations in American children's health and well-being (Wildeman et al., 2018). Scholars contend that child outcomes as they pertain to incarceration largely occur as a result of concentrated disadvantage and material hardship (Foster & Hagan, 2015; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014), as well as lack of stable, quality parenting in the home on the part of stressed caregivers (Turney, 2013–2014).

Economic Hardship

Parental incarceration is a marker of accumulated family adversity that also exacerbates preexisting disadvantage. Research has documented the multiple ways in which parental

hardship by leading to loss of direct financial investments from parents such as income (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010) and child support (Geller et al., 2011). Parental incarceration also introduces

new economic burdens such as financial support for the parent during confinement, legal fees and fines, and expenses associated with prison visits and phone calls (DeVuono-Powell et al., 2015). Beyond the direct and visible ways that parental incarceration may contribute to economic hardship for families, financial strain also affects caregivers for children of the incarcerated, most of whom are underresourced women. Studies have documented that parental incarceration in jails or prisons is associated with maternal distress and mental and physical health declines for children's caregivers (Arditti et al., 2003; DeVuono-Powell et al., 2015), neither of which bode well for children's development. The developmental literature confirms how material hardship can directly contribute to parenting stress, less parental warmth, and less positive parenting behaviors, which, in turn, contribute to externalizing behavior (Neppl et al., 2016) and less cognitive and social competence in children (Gershoff et al., 2007).

Family Instability

Family instability is typically defined as repeated changes in children's family structure and household environment (Fomby & Osborne, 2017), although we recognize along with other family resilience scholars that such transitions are not inevitably harmful to children (cf. Hadfield & Ungar, 2018). Despite the potential for children and families to adapt and perhaps thrive in the face of structural family transitions, the body of evidence indicates that parental incarceration is a distinct and risky form of family instability. Parental incarceration is associated with a high prevalence of residential instability and homelessness for children of jailed and imprisoned parents (Casey et al., 2015; Muentner et al., 2019; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014) and may trigger guardianship changes, particularly in instances of maternal incarceration (Tasca et al., 2011). Rates of foster care are significantly higher when mothers are incarcerated with approximately 11% of mothers and 2% of fathers in state prison reporting that their children are in a foster home or state care (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). However, the causal relationship between parental incarceration and foster care (and more broadly CWS involvement) is not entirely clear with some studies suggesting that children whose mothers had been incarcerated were already placed in foster care prior to mothers' arrest and incarceration and for reasons other than her confinement (Moses, 2006). Regardless of the causal mechanism, the literature identifies nonparental care as a risk to children's development in that it is associated with adverse childhood experiences and behavioral and emotional difficulties (Vandivere et al., 2012).

In addition to guardianship changes, parental imprisonment also appears to contribute to divorce and relationship dissolution (Lopoo & Western, 2005). Turney (2015) argued the impact of men's incarceration on relationship dissolution is immediate and that plausible mechanisms of this effect

parental incarceration (typically paternal) can be a direct contributor to frequent changes in

mothers' romantic relationships (Edin et al., 2001), which in turn may connect with negative parenting practices such as harsh discipline and withdrawal (Braman, 2004). It should be noted however, that mothers' repartnering within the context of paternal incarceration can stabilize families and even curb abuse for some women (Turney & Wildeman, 2013).

In sum, most studies suggest that parental incarceration is a risk for children and their families because it co-occurs with adverse experiences, intensifies economic hardship, and contributes to various forms of family instability. Instability in children's environments is particularly disruptive to healthy development (Luthar, 2006) and to parenting (Forman & Davies, 2003), although the effects of family instability depend on its chronicity and magnitude as well as positive countervailing influences in children's lives (Adams et al., 2016; Hadfield & Ungar, 2018). Results of some recent studies on parental incarceration are broadly consistent with this, suggesting that child outcomes may be conditioned upon child demographics and social location (Haskins, 2016; Turney & Wildeman, 2015). Although new evidence is emerging regarding heterogeneity, it is widely acknowledged that mass incarceration has "almost certainly exacerbated disparities in child health" (Wildeman et al., 2018, p. 153). Current data limitations necessitate a more complete consideration of how children's exposure to other adversities, such as domestic violence, as well as facility type (e.g., jail or prison)[1] and the conditions of a parent's confinement (e.g., controlled movement; solitary confinement) may contribute to variation in child health and well-being (Wildeman et al., 2018). For example, evidence suggests that jail terms can be particularly problematic for children given their frequency, repetition, and noncontact visiting policies (Muentner et al., 2019; Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2015).

Parental Incarceration and Resilient Children, Youth and Families

A hallmark of a family resilience perspective involves "attention to the mechanisms by which protection or vulnerability operate" (MacPhee et al., 2015, p. 4). Therefore, regulatory processes such as child-level coping and adaptation are considered in conjunction with critical relational family processes such as parenting (MacPhee et al., 2015; Walsh, 2016). Here we discuss evidence of child and youth competence with a focus on actions children and youth take that seem to benefit them in the context of parental incarceration. Next, we consider the protective value of family processes that directly involve children with a parent in prison.

Evidence of Child and Youth Competence

emotional, and behavior problems—who has them and under what circumstances. Although successful adaptation is often operationalized in terms of the absence of problems, resilience

researchers have emphasized the critical importance of considering the presence of competence in age-salient developmental tasks (Masten, 2014), such as being able to control attention and impulses, making friends and forming relationships, and completing schooling. Qualitative studies provide an important new window on youth competence. These studies suggest that children and adolescents often cope with the challenges of parental incarceration in positive, resourceful, and diverse ways—often by accessing social support and participating in activities (Johnson & Easterling, 2015; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008; Thulstrap & Karlsson, 2017). Findings from mixedmethods research also suggest evidence of competence in developmental tasks among children and youth with incarcerated parents. Johnson et al. (2018) identified four different subgroups of youth aged 7–16 that varied in the extent to which they exhibited behavior problems and competence as measured by the Child Behavior Checklist. The majority of youth were classified as "adjusted" or "striving," with relatively few participants exhibiting problems across multiple domains. Results further suggested that problems and competencies were not mutually exclusive; participants in the group that was described as "striving" exhibited some adjustment problems, but also had a mean level of competence that exceeded the "adjusted" group. Analysis of qualitative data from caregivers further revealed that variability in youth outcomes appeared to map onto variation in economic insecurity, residential instability, and parenting processes.

The results of these studies provide insight into a more complete range of child and youth adjustment in the context of parental incarceration and evidence of positive adaptation in the face of adversity. Although they are an important first step, findings warrant further investigation in larger and more diverse samples of youth. A family resilience orientation also requires researchers to identify factors that contribute to adaptive functioning over time. Resilience researchers have distinguished between *promotive factors*, variables that are beneficial to children across risk conditions, and *protective factors*, variables that serve unique functions in contexts of adversity by offsetting or tempering the development of problems (Masten, 2018). Protective factors are typically conceptualized as moderators (i.e., statistical interactions), but it is worth noting that protective factors can serve as a mediator or a moderator depending on the research question and theoretical foundation of a study (cf. Denby et al., 2017). Poehlmann-Tynan and Eddy (2019) have noted that protective factors for youth with incarcerated parents are situated at both proximal (e.g., parent– child interactions, quality of the home environment) and distal levels (e.g., neighborhood characteristics and school quality) of children's ecologies. Child-level variables such as executive function, self-regulation, and stress reactivity are also relevant protective factors (Masten, 2018), yet understudied in the literature on parental incarceration. A recent exception involved research by Zeman et al. (2018) that examined the importance of children's

development literature further suggests the importance of support from peers, extracurricular

activities, and neighborhood characteristics such as the availability of youth-serving institutions (Chase et al., 2015).

Family Processes That Involve Children

Researchers have long acknowledged the importance of considering family processes in understanding how adversity and specific changes in children's worlds affect them. Within social work, for example, the "heart of resilience research" has been characterized as the mediating or protective processes, which enable "better than expected outcomes in the face or wake of adversity" among those whom are affected (van Breda, 2018, p. 7). Indeed, the concept of family resilience extends beyond the individual to focusing on how key family processes mediate family stress, enable the family to "rally" in times of crisis, and support optimal adaptation (Walsh, 2003). A range of family processes seem to bear on children's ability to adapt to family transitions and difficulties associated with parental incarceration. These family processes include children's prior involvement and relationships with the incarcerated parent (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010), the quality of incarcerated parent– caregiver relationships (Baker et al., 2010), as well as the nature of children's contact experiences with the incarcerated parent (Poehlmann et al., 2010). Here we focus on two family processes that directly involve children: parenting and children's contact with the incarcerated parent.

Parenting

Studies of child resilience point to the primacy and significance of the relationship between parenting and children's positive adaptation in the context of adversity (Armstrong et al., 2005; Masten, 2014, 2018). Quality parenting on the part of caregivers has been theorized as an important protective process in promoting positive family outcomes in conjunction with parental incarceration and any accompanying adversities (Arditti, 2016; Turney & Wildeman, 2013; Wakefield, 2015). Research typically focuses on paternal incarceration and its effects on the partner who is not incarcerated (typically mothers of shared children). Some studies suggest that parental incarceration is associated with caregiver mental health risks, which, in turn, are theorized to negatively impact parenting (Dallaire & Aaron, 2010). Parental mental health is important in terms of shaping parenting behaviors and heightening or mitigating risk with regard to developmental outcomes among youth (Pettit et al., 2008) and particularly so in families impacted by incarceration (Noyes et al., 2018). For example, Chui's (2016) analysis of caregivers of children aged 6–18 (predominantly mothers and grandmothers) with incarcerated fathers in Hong Kong revealed high levels of psychological distress that not only significantly explained variation on

Other research points to the association between parental incarceration and the likelihood that children will experience negative parenting practices such as harsh punishment and a lack of

parental supervision (Phillips et al., 2006). Empirical reviews note disproportionate numbers of children with incarcerated parents within the child welfare system and subject to CPS reports (Berger et al., 2016). Using Australian data, Besemer and Dennison (2018) found that when a close family member was imprisoned, caregivers were significantly (50%) more likely to experience high parenting stress, even when controlling for other factors such as household income and general health. Increased parenting stress for caregivers, particularly those women that resided with children's fathers prior to men's incarceration, was also found in a recent study by Turney and Wildeman (2013). Similarly, qualitative studies suggest the material hardship brought about by paternal incarceration seems to contribute to caregiver stress and negative interactions with children (Braman, 2004; Turanovic et al., 2012).

Yet, Turney and Wildeman (2013) reported only weak average effects regarding the implications of fathers' incarceration on parenting outside of prison walls. In addition, the research found unexpected positive effects of paternal incarceration on parenting in the form of increased engagement (e.g., involvement in child-centered activities) between mothers and their children. In reviewing the literature on paternal incarceration and parenting, Wakefield (2015) theorizes that incarceration may have "both positive and negative effects on parenting quality" (p. 912). In testing this presumption using longitudinal data, she found that paternal incarceration did not decrease positive parenting strategies that may have been present prior to fathers' confinement, but significantly contributed to increases in negative parenting behaviors and declines in parenting quality. Therefore, engaging in positive parenting does not preclude negative behavior on the part of caregivers, but perhaps helps mitigate its negative effects.

Indeed, connected and nurturing relationships between youth and their caregivers have been demonstrated to promote resilience among children and help them rebound from adversity (Sands et al., 2009) A recent study by Nichols et al. (2016) found that adolescents' feelings of connection with family partially and positively mediated variance on school achievement attributable to parental incarceration. Compelling new evidence regarding how close parent–child relationships may buffer risk among adolescents experiencing parental incarceration provides further insight. Using population-based health surveillance data gathered from Minnesota youth (mean age 14.9 years), researchers found that current or past parental incarceration in jail or prison was strongly associated with higher rates of mental health problems (e.g., suicidality, self-injurious behaviors, internalizing, etc.). These effects were particularly pernicious for youth whose parent was currently incarcerated at the time of the survey. However, youth reports of close parent child relationships appeared to be protective against mental health problems with better parent– child communication moderating the negative effects of both current and past parental incarceration (Davis & Shlafer, 2017b).

parents who are raised by relatives—a scenario that is more common in conjunction with maternal incarceration. For example, Poehlmann (2005) found in instances of maternal incarceration, young

children's cognitive development was partially explained by positive caregiving environments. Other studies have suggested that caregiving scenarios could improve for children affected by maternal incarceration (by removing a troubled parent from the home) or fail to be disruptive because children are already in positive kin-based care (Hanlon et al., 2005). A strengths-based qualitative study investigating 20 grandparents (12 of whom were African American) and their 36 grandchildren offers some insights regarding the nature of these resilient connections. All grandchildren in the study had come to live with grandparents due to family adversities (such as parent's substance abuse, family violence or child maltreatment, financial inadequacy) and nine of the 20 grandparents were caring for children due to parental incarceration. Findings indicated that grandchildren talked extensively about having friends and relatives that supported them and "expressed appreciation and enthusiasm about living with their grandparents" (Sands et al., 2009, p. 35). Although some of the grandchildren in the study expressed disappointment and shame about their biological parents (particularly in cases of paternal incarceration), the context of their kin care seemed to give them opportunities to thrive.

Children's Contact With Their Incarcerated Parent

Developmental and family researchers have increasingly devoted attention to how children's contact with their incarcerated parent may contribute to family and child adjustment. Contact is widely seen as an important pathway through which a parent's incarceration may influence child outcomes (Arditti, 2016; Poehlmann et al., 2010). Yet, considerable variation exists with regard to the nature, extent, and implications of children's contact with their incarcerated parent. Contact can take many forms and include phone, mail, and visits and there are differences in children's outcomes based on contact-type (Shlafer et al., 2015). Variation also stems from the type of facility where a parent is confined (i.e., jail or prison), and institutional differences among even similar facilities regarding policies regulating movement and physical contact (Shlafer et al., 2015). For example, most jails do not permit physical contact during in-person visits and commonly offer families short barrier visits (e.g., through a Plexiglas window) or video visits. State and federal prisons are typically permitted longer contact visits with wide variation in terms of the length of visits, visiting conditions, and policies regarding how freely incarcerated parents can move about or display physical affection to their children (Shlafer et al., 2015). Other sources of variation regarding the implications of contact include developmental factors, such as children's age and the extent to which their preferences for contact are realized (Poehlmann et al., 2010). Younger children are less likely to have a choice with regard to whether they can visit their incarcerated parent as their caregivers may function as "gatekeepers" who limit contact to protect children from the prison environment (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Tasca, 2016). With growing years comes the possibility that children's preferences will equate with their preferred level of contact.

In-person visits represent the most proximal form of contact; more distal forms of contact between children and their incarcerated parent include video visits, recorded messages, letter writing, and

phone calls (Poehlmann et al., 2010). Although the majority of imprisoned parents reports some form of contact with their children, distal forms of contact are more common than in-person visits (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010). Less invasive forms of contact such as letter writing may be particularly helpful to children if visits are not feasible or contraindicated (Tuerk & Loper, 2006). Distal forms of contact may still be associated with benefits to children. Dallaire et al. (2010) found less child depression for children aged 4–14 who had more letters with their jailed parents. Distal contact may also enhance family functioning. For example, more frequent letters to children by mothers and fathers in prison were associated with more cooperative coparenting with the child's caregiver (Loper et al., 2009).

Perhaps because of their proximal nature, in-person visits hold the most potential to impact children with a parent in prison or jail. Children may spend considerable times in visiting areas with more frequent visits connected to shorter sentencing length (Glaze & Maruschak, 2010), closer proximity to the corrections facility (Cochran et al., 2016), and fewer visitation problems (Beckmeyer & Arditti, 2014). In-person visits seem to benefit incarcerated parents by strengthening family bonds (Beckmeyer & Arditti, 2014; Tasca et al., 2016), lessening psychological distress (Houck & Loper, 2002; Roxburgh & Fitch, 2014), contributing to more positive parenting attitudes (Thompson & Harm, 2000), and improving reintegration (Cochran & Mears, 2013). Less clear are the effects of in-person contact for children and youth. In-person contact has been discussed as a developmental paradox because it appears to be a mechanism to facilitate children's adjustment and a context for emotional pain and trauma (Arditti, 2012; Arditti & Savla, 2015). Yet, in-person visits do provide opportunities for families to emotionally bond and create normative family relations, such as sharing meals and playing games, which could ultimately benefit children (Tasca et al., 2016). Family members who visit may report positive emotions and excitement with regard to spending time with the incarcerated parent (although these visits may also arouse worry and concern; Tewksbury & DeMichele, 2005).

Poehlmann et al.'s (2010) comprehensive coverage of how contact affects children provides support that contact can be conceptualized as a family resilience process. Of the studies reviewed, 58% revealed visits were associated with benefits to children. Benefits for children from in-person visits were far more apparent in studies that involved family friendly interventions. For example, prison nursery programs for infants and their mothers (Byrne et al., 2010) were associated with increases in infant attachment. Other examples of the benefits of in-person visits with an intervention component include improved self-esteem for children aged 4–9 following enhanced visits with their fathers in a federal prison (Landreth & Lobaugh, 1998), and decreased behavior problems for female children and adolescents who participated in the "Girls Scouts Beyond Bars" intervention and visited their mothers in state prison (Block & Potthast, 1998). Nonintervention

with their mothers who were in state prison were less likely to drop out of school than youth in a comparison group who did not have regular contact (Trice & Brewster, 2004). Regular contact (i.e.,

visits, letter, or phone) with their incarcerated mothers also seemed to benefit children nine and over who displayed less anger and alienation (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010).

To summarize, for children and adolescents experiencing parental incarceration, there is evidence of competence and adaptive coping strategies. Moreover, research on family processes that directly involve children suggest evidence of positive parenting and contact scenarios. Not all caregiving scenarios are undermined by parental incarceration, and in some cases, children's home environments might improve. Emerging research that incorporates parental closeness as a mediating or moderating mechanism suggests it serves to protect youth from the negative effects of parental incarceration. The literature on kin care points to how close and connected relationships with caregivers support children in their home, school, and social environments. Although research examining child outcomes as it pertains to contact with the incarcerated parent is somewhat sparse, there is evidence that it is associated with benefits for children and interventions can enhance the positive potential of contact.

A Family Resilience Agenda for Understanding and Responding to Parental Incarceration

In this review, we use a family resilience perspective to consider evidence regarding the presence of adversity for children with a parent in prison or jail and evidence that children and their families are doing well in spite it. Based on this coverage we conclude that children with incarcerated parents experience significant adversity, but also manifest resilient coping and experience adaptive parenting and positive contact scenarios. That is, despite a high-risk distal environment (e.g., material hardship and instability associated with parental incarceration), families may create a low risk proximal environment for their children, which, in turn, promotes good child outcomes (MacKay, 2003).

Yet, scholarship on parental incarceration largely continues to be problem-focused as well as "discipline-specific." The multidisciplinary character of research in this area has been essential for describing the many ways that parental incarceration influences family life, but a transdisciplinary approach has considerable untapped potential for advancing research and practice. Whereas multidisciplinary work involves researchers from different disciplines working in parallel to address a common problem and interdisciplinary research involves collaboration from disciplinary-specific bases, transdisciplinary work involves integration across fields using shared frameworks that transcend and extend specific disciplinary perspectives and methods (Rosenfield, 1992; Stokols, 2006). Transdisciplinary work then has the potential to not only flesh out a complete

interventions and policies that seek to increase the quality and stability of family relationships and

involve considerable investment in communities that are hard hit by incarceration will ultimately benefit children (Gordon et al., 2018). A focus on family resilience embodies these priorities in terms of how best to conduct research with children and their incarcerated families, sustain and strengthen families connected to the incarcerated, as well as advance a policy agenda that addresses the unequal and pernicious scope of mass incarceration. As we outline below, resilience-informed research that seeks to make family strengths and competencies more visible is essential for advancing resilience-informed practice and policy.

Methodological Implications

To fully realize the potential of a family resilience approach to understanding the effects of parental incarceration on youth, methodological innovation is needed. Central to this innovation is the need to assess families as units and uncover processes by which children and their families cope and thrive when a parent is jailed or imprisoned (cf. DeHaan et al., 2013).

Researchers must analyze quantitative data in new ways, utilize multiple methods in collecting new data, and conduct intervention research (Poehlmann-Tynan & Arditti, 2018). With regard to the use of existing quantitative data, while data sets such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) and the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) offer important advantages in terms of accessibility to researchers and ability to establish proper temporal ordering, there are also limitations in terms of their use. For example, data sets such as Add Health and FFCWS were not originally designed to answer incarceration-related questions-particularly with regard to maternal incarceration and postrelease trajectories (Bloom et al., 2003) and parenting processes (Edin et al., 2001).

Suggestions to better capture expressions of child and family resilience include clustering measures of competence (e.g., Johnson et al., 2018), using latent class-based approaches that can illuminate underlying heterogeneity (e.g., Kjellstrand et al., 2018), articulating and testing moderated mediation models, conducting multilevel analysis (Card & Barnett, 2015), and incorporating new variables into studies that capture family assets and strengths. Protective factors identified by Masten (2014); Ungar and Theron (2019), and Poehlmann-Tynan and Eddy (2019) would be a productive starting point. Within resilience science, these factors are remarkably consistent, and include individual, relational, family, and community attributes (Masten, 2018). Moreover, rather than trying to isolate single risk factors, which can be particularly challenging in contexts of accumulated adversity, it may be more fruitful to focus on identifying different configurations of risk and protective factors and examining whether they confer varying degrees of

developmental competencies and family resilience processes. Method triangulation that incorporates a meaningful qualitative component could assess child and youth competence in

more compelling ways and help fill the gap that is left by standardized measures. Such approaches are particularly apt to study complex social locations and marginalized populations and give "voice" to participants (Trahan, 2011; Ungar, 2003). Qualitative methods reveal unnamed or understudied adaptive processes and diverse family experiences and generate theories grounded in people's experiences (Ungar, 2003). In addition, method triangulation that involves a combination of observation and self-report (cf. Skinner et al., 2011) is particularly useful in assessing dynamic family processes. Parenting and contact processes may require observation and can be effectively used in children's home and in correctional settings (Poehlmann-Tynan & Arditti, 2018).

Finally, intervention research that evaluates programs aimed at families of the incarcerated is sorely needed (Poehlmann-Tynan & Arditti, 2018), including differential responses to various interventions. Scholars and professionals agree that thoughtfully implemented evidencebased interventions hold promise in terms of alleviating negative consequences associated with parental incarceration and promoting positive child and youth development (Gordon et al., 2018). Our review highlights the importance of family security, parenting quality, and positive contact experiences in terms of their potential to offset adverse developmental outcomes associated with parental incarceration. Yet, intervention programs, although worthwhile, often lack rigorous evaluation in terms of their efficacy and typically do not include the caregiver of children (Eddy et al., 2013). One important exception involves Eddy et al.'s (2013) randomized controlled trial of the Parenting Inside Out (PIO) program for incarcerated parents which showed an increase in positive parent– child interaction and close and comfortable relationships with the caregiver.

Implications for Practice

Resilience focused research such as the PIO evaluation is critical in order to inform resilience-focused practice. Existing work shows promise in terms of suggesting a diverse range of family scenarios pertaining to parental incarceration and the potential of interventions to enhance adaptive family processes. Diversity also highlights the potential for differential responses to interventions. For example, studies indicate that certain parenting interventions may differentially benefit specific subgroups of parents based on race and ethnicity (Mogro-Wilson et al., 2019) or levels of parental distress at baseline (Paris et al., 2015). Children also have different needs at different ages, and interventions that are sensitive to and inclusive of different ages are essential. Adolescence, for instance, has been conceptualized as a particularly important and opportune time to implement interventions (Dahl et al., 2018; Steinberg, 2014), yet most existing programs for youth with incarcerated parents are focused on children (Hoffmann et al., 2010; Johnston,

Developmental Considerations

A family resilience perspective complements and extends developmental perspectives on resilience by centralizing children's changing needs within family systems and drawing attention to processes by which change in one systemic level influences another functional domain or systemic level (Masten & Monn, 2015). Multilevel dynamics can "alter the course of development within a child, family or across generations" (Masten & Monn, 2015, p. 7). Our review highlights the potential of quality parent– child interactions (either with the primary caregivers or via contact with the incarcerated parent) to serve as pathways of positive adaptation among families who experience of parental incarceration. The good news is that there are multiple pathways for adaptive functioning and strengthening parent– child relationships in particular, and the potential for parenting interventions to "spillover" to other developmental and systemic domains is intriguing (cf. Doty et al., 2017). For example, parenting interventions have been demonstrated to improve vulnerable children's neurobiological responses to stress (Fisher et al., 2006) and extend across generations (Mueller & Elder, 2003).

Development influences how problems are expressed at different ages and the kinds of contextual and processual influences that matter and how they are assessed (Poehlmann-Tynan & Eddy, 2019). For example, there is a critical need to identify how developmental timing of exposure to parental incarceration influences the nature and course of children's responses to it over time to develop meaningful interventions. Development also influences family level processes and adaptations—for example, how family roles and responsibilities are expressed and children's emotion socialization (Henry et al., 2015). Therefore, attending to development goes beyond age, and considers where children and adolescents are at in terms of their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial maturation and how developmental capacities may influence the experience of incarceration-related stressors and proximal family processes. A family resilience perspective encourages researchers and practitioners to focus their attention on family assets that facilitate competence in age-salient developmental tasks (e.g., secure attachment in preschoolers; forming peer relationships in adolescence). For example, many practices for in-person visits within correctional settings have been condemned as antithetical to early childhood developmentparticularly in terms of the promotion of attachment security. Therefore, infants and young children' would benefit from specific changes to promote developmentally appropriate visits such as the provision of books, toys, and infant nursery facilities (Burnson & Weymouth, 2019). Outcomes for older children with a parent in prison or jail often focus on school and risky behaviors therefore, self-regulation and peer relationships are particularly important foci (cf. Steinberg, 2014). Consequently, mentoring programs may be potentially helpful to help promote emergent coping behaviors and promote school-based competence and relational decision

Finally, family resilience frameworks center attention on how families make sense of their experience ("meaning making"). The extent to which child and youth efforts to cope fit within the

broader family or reflect a positive strengths-based outlook therefore becomes extremely relevant (Henry et al., 2015). This notion of fit aligns with interventions being developmentally sensitive (cf. Arditti, 2012) and considering children's capabilities and preferences. For example, development and meaning making must be part of the discussion around how contact with the incarcerated parent may or may not contribute to positive child outcomes. As noted by Saunders (2017), older children may perceive contact in ways that are disparate from their caregivers and with growing years, appear to want more say in determining the frequency and nature of their contact with the incarcerated parent. Holistic intervention for children and their families must tap into their meaning system within the scope of their developmental capacity and family perceptions.

A developmentally informed, family-centric approach to intervention capitalizes on the family's expertise and understandings of their situation. Such an approach facilitates the ability of family members to support each other, share power with service providers, honor self-determination and ultimately, optimizes fit between family strengths and en-vironmental resources (Arditti, 2012). An example of a developmentally sensitive, family-centric intervention is the Sesame Street Workshop's "Little Children Big Challenges: Incarceration." This multimedia kit was developed in partnership with researchers, practitioners, parents, caregivers, and service providers. The goal of the kit is to "help children thrive" when parents are incarcerated (Shlafer et al., 2017, p. 4) by providing parents and practitioners with tools to guide communication and address children's complex emotions. In this instance as well as others, practitioners become social justice "allies" for affected families by not only encouraging coping in the face of adversity, but working with families to leverage power to address systemic problems such as poverty and disenfranchisement (Anderson, 2019).

Implications for Policy

A family resilience agenda, which is grounded in notions of systemic interdependence, equates with policy initiatives that lessen incarceration, facilitate positive connections between children and their incarcerated parents in cases of confinement, and a legislative agenda that broadly focuses on antipoverty efforts aimed at supporting parents and children. The research highlights the importance of life affirming family relationships as a source of resilience, yet these kinds of close connections do not occur in a vacuum. Healthy family relationships are less likely to flourish when a parent is in prison or jail due to the socioeconomic disadvantage and stigma that seem to characterize parental incarceration (Turney & Goodsell, 2018), as well as the barriers for meaningful contact between the incarcerated and their family members (Arditti, 2012). For example, visiting environments in prisons and jails are often highly restrictive and lacking in

visits, along with the creation of more welcoming, family friendly visiting rooms and search

procedures could lessen the stress associated with visits and promote positive family outcomes (Cramer et al., 2017).

Although a family resilience agenda holds promise for contributing to a policy agenda aimed at strengthening families, it is not a miracle solution in terms of resolving the pernicious and inequitable scope of mass incarceration and its impact on incarcerated parents, their family members, and the children of the incarcerated. Scholars have noted the limitations of risk and resilience frameworks in explaining childhood experience in diverse cultural and economic contexts. Particularly problematic is the absence of research that holistically considers how cultural, political, and structural factors contribute to how children and their family members perceive risk, adapt to catastrophic stress, and actively cope (Boyden & Mann, 2005). An absence of emphasis on adaptation and positive assets is likely influenced by historical, political, and social factors that marginalize the incarcerated and their families and stem from racial and socioeconomic inequalities. There are profound racial and ethnic differences in children's exposure to parental incarceration, with children of color the population most at risk of experiencing a parent's imprisonment (Haskins & Turney, 2018; Wildeman, 2009). Institutional racism and colorism not only contribute to family inequality that potentially undermines child development, but also may contribute to overlooking assets and strengths of the disproportionate numbers of African American youth impacted by parental incarceration (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2018; Miller, 2007). Such a scenario could forestall creative policy initiatives.

A resilience agenda must go beyond the protective potential of personal, emotional, and relational resources in adapting to stress, and attend to social justice and more effective collaboration with justice-involved families and children. Anderson (2019) articulates the dangers of perpetuating the marginalization of historically oppressed African American families by constantly promoting "adaptive behaviors," without engaging in social justice work that opposes structural constraints and discrimination. Antipoverty investments aimed at communities that are most affected by mass incarceration would go a long way in addressing the needs of justice-involved families. These investments are essential for buffering material hardship associated with criminal justice involvement and promoting family stability (Adams et al., 2016). Youth that have access to material resources (e.g., financial assistance, food, shelter, medical care) demonstrate more resilience than those with limited access to such resources (Ungar et al., 2019). Therefore, initiatives that support stable levels of family income, buffer against income shocks (e.g., loss of child support that may result from a parent's incarceration), and ensure access to material resources and safety-net assets are essential in promoting resilience among children and families of the incarcerated. Yet, the expansion of incarceration in the United States has been concurrent with the penalization of poverty and downsizing of public aid. A comprehensive package of policy

reduce social and economic inequalities that precede and stem from a parent's criminal justice involvement.

Multisystemic perspectives of resilience (cf. Ungar & Theron, 2019) suggest broad possibilities for supporting the resilience capacity of children and families experiencing parental incarceration by bolstering institutional systems that support positive child development. Early childhood and place-based policy initiatives are particularly appealing in addressing the needs of children affected by incarceration because they are universal and nonstigmatizing (Noyes et al., 2018). Broad strategies aimed at schools can promote youth resilience to the extent that they facilitate access to individual, relational, and contextual resources in conjunction with children's families and communities (Masten et al., 2008; Ungar et al., 2019). The most promising initiatives aimed at children with incarcerated parents are multimodal and target challenges that disrupt parenting and involve family and community (Arditti, 2012). PIO (Eddy et al., 2008) is an example of a multimodal program than includes a prison-based parent management program, therapeutic visitation, specific versions designed for jail or prison settings, and collaborations with community agencies to provide ongoing support during reentry.

In conclusion, parental incarceration has long been conceptualized as a significant threat to the development and well-being of millions of American children, youth, and families. Yet there is evidence that children and families may do well in spite of those problems. Therefore, it is both a scientific and a social justice imperative to conduct research that illuminates resilience and develop interventions tailored to children's developmental status, the timing and context of a parents' incarceration, the social location of families, cultural and family strengths, and material needs. A family resilience agenda also necessitates a scientific, clinical, and policy focus that aims to change the social environment of families and children impacted by incarceration. Such change involves altering the very conditions that justice-involved families routinely fight to overcome as well as research, activism and broad-based policy reform aimed at decreasing mass incarceration. For example, recent reforms aimed at decarcerating nonviolent offenders, provide transitional services to prevent recidivism (cf. First Step Act of 2019) and eliminate determinant sentencing (Pew Center on States, 2010) represent promising first steps to resist overcriminalization. Ultimately, advocacy and policy reform must be specifically targeted at families of the incarcerated with an eye toward ensuring children's rights to stable and loving care.

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Received October 21, 2019

Revision received May 19, 2020

Accepted May 19, 2020

This article was published Online First November 12, 2020.

[1] In comparison to state or federal prisons that typically hold people with felony convictions and sentences of more than a