



Needs Created in Children's Daily Lives by the Arrest of a Caregiver

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Goal: Assess the gaps created when a caregiver is arrested

Prior to the publication of this study, it was estimated that in 2010 over 62,000 Connecticut children had a caregiver arrested and 19,000 had a caregiver incarcerated. A caregiver's arrest can be harmful to a child in various ways which include:

- Witnessing the arrest can be traumatizing
- Court dates can cause significant anxiety
- The incarceration can be very stressful



Parental incarceration is also associated with negative child outcomes that include mental health issues, physical health problems, antisocial behavior and youth incarceration.

Sample

- 45 caregivers surveyed regarding 108 children
- Caregivers were public defender clients held in lockup and arraigned at the New Britain Superior Court

Data Collection

- Survey read to caregivers and answered orally
- Recruited by public defender attorneys
- Collected data on:
 - Children's age, sex, relationship to caregiver, supports child was receiving from caregiver in the month prior to arrest (e.g., transportation, financial support)
 - Information about arrest (e.g., whether child witnessed arrest)
 - Caregiver demographics

Findings

Population Estimates for Numbers of Children and their Arraigned Caregivers

- 814 children were estimated to have a caregiver arraigned in a year at the courthouse
- 339 caregivers were estimated to be arraigned in a year at the courthouse

Child Demographics

- Mean age: 6.7 years
- 54.6% boys; 45.4% girls
- For 74.1% of the youth, the arraigned caregiver was male; for 25.9% the arraigned caregiver was female
- For 73.1% of the children, the arraigned caregiver was their legal guardian.
- 75% lived with female caregiver; 42.5% lived with male caregiver

Caregiver Demographics

- 24.4% of caregivers were female, 75.6% were male
- 48.9% were Latin American/Hispanic, 40% White, 20% African American, 6.7% Native American

Findings (cont'd)

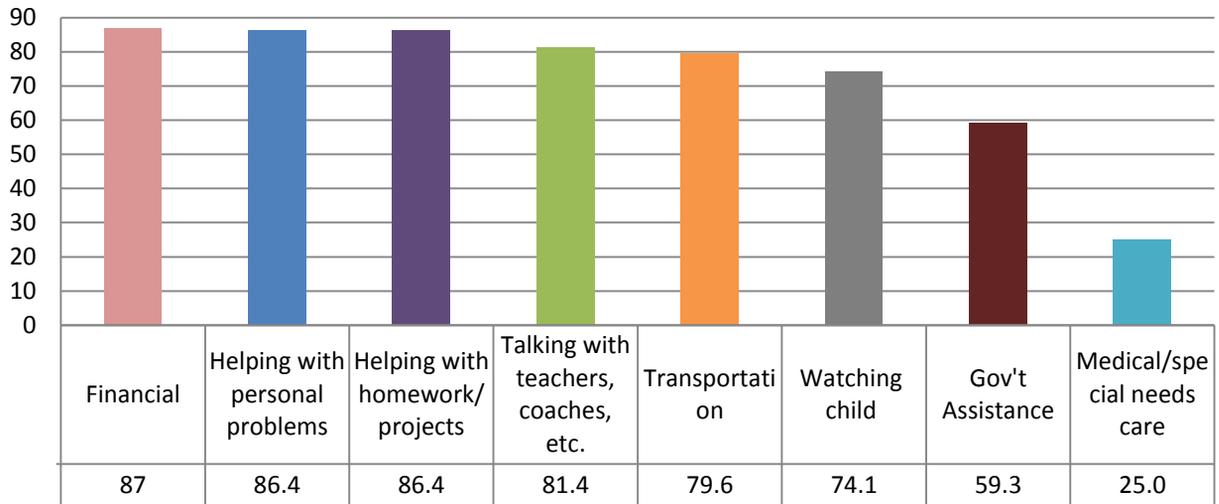
Lost Supports when Caregiver is Arrested

- Of the 8 types of support asked about, 93% reported providing at least one and 84% provided at least four types (80% of male caregivers, 96% of female caregivers).



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Percent of Children (N=108) Who Had Been Receiving Support from Arraigned Caregiver in the Month Prior to Caregiver's Arrest



Children Witnessing Caregiver's Arrest

- 82.4% of youth did not witness the caregiver's arrest
- It is projected that 143 children per year for cases at the New Britain courthouse with public defender representation will observe a caregiver arrest

Of the 10 caregivers whose children witnessed arrest:

- 5 reported that at least one child watched their caregiver get handcuffed
 - 2 reported that a gun was pointed at the caregiver
 - 1 reported a baton pointed at the caregiver

Conclusions

- It is likely that a large number of children in Connecticut are affected each year by the arrest of a caregiver.
- A non-trivial number of Connecticut children witness a caregiver's arrest.
- Caregivers' arrests are likely to have significant effects on children's daily lives (e.g., loss of financial support, transportation, and direct child care, as well as added family stress which can tax the family's ability to help children cope). Effects are likely substantial for children of both male and female arrested caregivers.
- Policies and procedures should be developed or modified to consider effects on children and families of arrested caregivers, without jeopardizing public safety.

NOTES

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