Data Trends and Policy Recommendations to Address the Impact of Maternal Incarceration on Kentucky’s Children
12% of Kentucky children have had a parent incarcerated, and Kentucky ranks 3rd highest in the nation.

**SOURCE:** National Survey on Children’s Health, 2017-2018.
A higher percentage of incarcerated women are parents than incarcerated men.

“When mothers are incarcerated, children are more likely to experience instability.”

Kentuckians in State Custody Who are Parents, December 2019

Source: Kentucky Department of Corrections.
Children impacted by parental incarceration would more than fill an arena

“Parental incarceration not only impacts the adults who are incarcerated but can also harm children in the long-term if their needs are not appropriately addressed...”
In every KY county, at least 1 in 3 people in state custody have children.

Children continue to feel love and affection for their parents, and the separation due to incarceration presents a strain.

Percent of those in state custody with children:
- 33% – 44%
- 45% – 51%
- 52% – 56%
- 57% – 63%

Source: Kentucky Department of Corrections.
Data note: Map reflects county of conviction.
County trends in rates of parental incarceration

- **Rural (85 Counties)**
  - 2017: 3.5
  - 2018: 3.9
  - 2019: 4.4

- **Small/Mid-size Metro (21 Counties)**
  - 2017: 3.1
  - 2018: 3.5
  - 2019: 3.9

- **Suburban (13 Counties)**
  - 2017: 2.9
  - 2018: 3.1
  - 2019: 3.2

- **Jefferson County**
  - 2017: 2.6
  - 2018: 2.8
  - 2019: 2.9

Rate per 1,000 adults
Kentucky has seen significant growth in women’s incarceration.

Source: Vera Institute of Justice, Incarceration Trends project.

KLH: Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children

K YA: Kentucky youth Advocates
Historic and ongoing practices in criminal justice contribute to disparities for Black men.

### Female Population
- Population: 7.7% Black, 2.7% Latinx, 86.6% White, 3.0% Other races
- Incarcerated Population: 6.9% Black, 0.5% Latinx, 91.2% White, 1.4% Other races
- Incarcerated Parents: 5.6% Black, 0.5% Latinx, 92.3% White, 1.6% Other races

### Male Population
- Population: 7.9% Black, 3.5% Latinx, 85.7% White, 2.9% Other races
- Incarcerated Population: 22.8% Black, 1.4% Latinx, 74.3% White, 1.5% Other races
- Incarcerated Parents: 24.2% Black, 1.3% Latinx, 73.2% White, 1.4% Other races
Options for rehabilitation usually more limited in county jails

**Female (n=4,641)**
- County custody: 52%
- State custody: 45%
- Federal custody: 3%

**Male (n=19,049)**
- County custody: 45%
- State custody: 47%
- Federal custody: 8%

*Source: Vera Institute of Justice, Incarceration Trends project.*
For many, a drug offense is their most serious offense

Female 27%

Male 15%

Source: Kentucky Department of Corrections
Most serious offense is a Class D non-violent, non-sexual offense

Source: Kentucky Department of Corrections
Ability to pay impacts release

- Disposed same day: 4%
- Financial release: 9%
- Administrative release: 13%
- Non-financial Release: 17%
- Other: 2%
- Financial Custody: 25%
- Non-financial Custody: 19%
- In custody (hold): 12%

Released the same day: 42%
In custody at end of day: 58%
Policy recommendations to support children and families

- Support **healthy relationships** between children and incarcerated parents
- Utilize **community-based treatment** for substance use issues
- Factor in **custodial parent status** to decisions on release when public safety is not a factor
- **Focus incarceration** on those who pose a risk or a threat to public safety
- **Minimize financial barriers** upon release so parents can support children