

Research on the Caretaking of Children of Incarcerated Parents: Findings and Their Service Delivery Implications

This paper reviews research findings on caretaking-related problems associated with the absence of parents from the home following incarceration. It focuses on the impact of incarceration on the welfare and adjustment of urban African American children and on the assumption of caretaking responsibilities by other caretakers, principally maternal grandmothers. Noting the complex situational difficulties involved and the potential burdens associated with surrogate parenting in general, and with this population in particular, the service-provider implications of this parenting arrangement are considered in this review. Findings indicate that problems associated with incarceration of parents tend to be intergenerational and vary considerably in complexity and severity. To the extent that they impact the children involved, these issues should be addressed in coordinated service delivery focusing on prevention.