

ABSTRACT

A father's involvement in the criminal justice system can create stressors on their children that lead to higher risk as well as poor outcomes in health, mental health, education, job attainment, and involvement with the criminal justice system (Charles, Muentner, & Kjellstrand, 2019). This study focuses on the relationship between a justice-involved father's perception of the stability of his parenting arrangement during childhood, his perception of his relationship with his own father, and his relationship with one of his own children. The study examines father involvement by how often he stands by a parenting or discipline decision as well as contact with his child through the frequency of activities he had with his child. Data collection involved using audio computer-assisted self interview (ACASI) and computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). Results from a chi-square test found that very involved fathers were significantly more likely to stand by a discipline or parenting decision. The key implications from this study include the importance of creating and implementing programs that will increase father involvement and support stable parenting arrangements for justice-involved fathers and their families.

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

- There are over 1.5 million men in the United States today who are involved in the criminal justice system, incarcerated in state and federal correctional facilities, that have children under the age of eighteen (McLeod, Johnson, Cryer-Coupet, & Mincy, 2019)
- In one study of people who had been incarcerated, 70% had a parent who was arrested, 60-70% had a parent who had spent time in jail or prison, 75% had a parent with a history of substance abuse problems (Kjellstrand et. Al, 2012)

Purpose of Research

- The purpose of this study is to understand how a justice-involved father's perceptions of his own personal experience with his father and his perceptions of the way his parents worked together to raise him may have a relationship with father involvement

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between a justice-involved father's perception of his relationship with his own father and his involvement in the life of one of his children?
- What is the relationship between a justice-involved father's perception of the stability of his parenting arrangement during his childhood and his own involvement in the life of one of his children?

Hypotheses

- A justice-involved father with a positive perception of his relationship with his own father will result in a greater involvement in the life of one of his children.
- A justice-involved father with a positive perception of the stability of his parenting arrangement during his childhood will result in a greater involvement in the life of one of his children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of Parenting

- Children of incarcerated parents are at higher risk of being imprisoned, having difficulty in school, have a more difficult time in job attainment, higher risk for having psychological problems, trauma, low SES (Charles et al., 2019)
- Adults who reported a high-quality relationship with their parents during their childhood had a decreased risk for mental health disorders and also a better overall mental health (Galardi et al., 2017)

Risk Factors and Protective Factors of Father's Involvement

- A study found that fathers who had experienced more childhood risk factors had less frequent contact with their children; a protective factor was that fathers with more education had more contact with their children (Galardi et al., 2017)

Understanding Multi-Partner Families

- Fathers shared that family-related barriers made it more difficult to have contact with his children than institutional barriers (Dyer, Day & Wiley, 2018)

Gaps and Limitations

- Few studies have looked at how coordination of care for men who are involved in the criminal justice system and child support system may affect children

Table 1
Sample Characteristics (N=1,771)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Collection Procedures

- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from Multi-site Family Study on Incarceration, Parenting and Partnering (MSF-IP), 2008-2014 [5 States]
- The original study is a longitudinal study, for the purposes of the current study the researchers only used research from the original baseline, creating a current study that is cross-sectional
- The method of data collection was survey data and the mode of data collection involved using audio computer-assisted self interview (ACASI) and computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI).
- The study couple participants completed up to four longitudinal, in-person interviews that collected information about relationship quality, family stability, and reentry outcomes.

Sample and Sampling Method

- The five impact states were chosen based on the stability of the program design, emphasis on couples-based services, program intensity, projected enrollment, and the feasibility of rigorous evaluation
- Furthermore, of the 1,991 men in the original study, only 1,771 men were included in the current study sample because the 220 men did not have children
- For the purposes of the current study, only the males who interviewed at baseline are included

Measures

- The independent variable, parenting arrangement stability, was measured using the one item question, "How stable was your parenting arrangement during your childhood?"
- Another independent variable, closeness to father, was measured using the one item question "How close did you feel to your biological father?"
- The dependent variables were how often a father stood by a discipline or Parenting decision and the frequency of activities with the focal child 6 months prior to incarceration

RESULTS

Chi-Square Test

- There was no significant relationship between the stability of the respondent's parenting arrangement during childhood and the frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision categories ($\chi^2(12) = 16.18, p = 0.18$)
- There was no significant relationship between the closeness to father and the frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision categories ($\chi^2(8) = 13.17, p = 0.11$)
- A significant association was found when comparing father involvement and the frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision ($\chi^2(8) = 26.83, p < 0.01$); while a Cramer's V statistic suggested a weak relationship (0.10)

Kruskal-Wallis H Test

- A significant result was found ($H(3) = 8.68, p = .034$), indicating that the four groups of parenting arrangements differed from each other
- Follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated that very unstable parenting arrangements had significantly less frequency of activities with their child ($Mean Rank = 607.76$) than those with a very stable parenting decision ($Mean Rank = 733.04$)

Table 1
Frequency of Standing by a Discipline or Parenting Decision by Father Involvement

Father Involvement	Frequency of Standing by a Discipline or Parenting Decision % (f)			
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Very involved	61.7 (216)	20.9 (73)	5.7 (20)	8.9 (31)
Somewhat involved	47.8 (189)	26.3 (104)	9.4 (37)	12.2 (48)
Not at all involved	51.4 (260)	20.8 (105)	6.5 (33)	16.8 (85)

Table 1
Sample Characteristics (N=1,771)

Characteristic	f	%
Age at baseline interview	M=32.55	SD=7.70
Race		
White	445	25.9
Black	1040	60.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	14	.8
Asian and Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	5	.3
Some other race	130	7.6
Multi-racial	86	5.0
Hispanic origin		
No	1530	89.0
Yes	190	11.0
Currently married		
No	223	31.4
Yes	487	68.6
Level of education		
8 th Grade or less	79	4.6
Some high school	510	29.7
GED	447	26.0
High school diploma	207	12.0
Vocational/tech certificate or diploma	58	3.4
Some college	277	16.1
Associate's degree	86	5.0
Bachelor's degree	47	2.7
Graduate/professional degree	9	.5
Currently incarcerated for probation/parole violation		
No	1329	77.4
Yes	389	22.6
Age at first arrest	M=16.38	SD=5.49
Number of incarcerations in life	M=6.84	SD=9.46

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics: Study Variables

Variables	f	%
Independent Variables		
How stable was your parenting arrangement during your childhood?		
Very stable	567	33.0
Stable	794	46.2
Unstable	261	15.2
Very unstable	97	5.6
How close did you feel to your biological father?		
Extremely close	434	25.4
Somewhat close	473	27.7
Not very close	800	46.9
How involved was your biological father in raising you?		
Very involved	464	27.1
Somewhat involved	552	32.2
Not at all involved	697	40.7
Dependent Variables		
How often did you stand by a discipline or parenting decision?		
Often	668	53.2
Sometimes	283	22.5
Rarely	90	7.2
Never	164	13.1
Frequency of activities with focal child in typical week 6 months prior to incarceration	M=4.85	SD=2.58

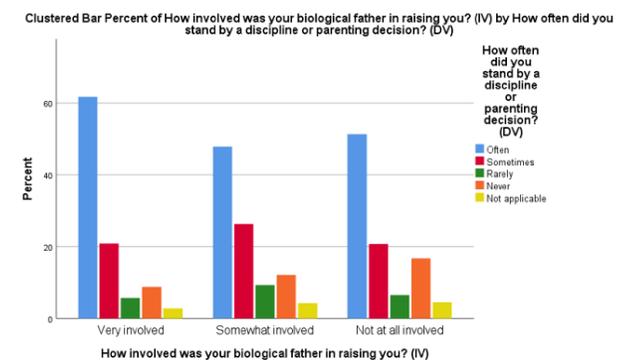


Figure 1. Frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision by father involvement.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between a justice-involved father's perception of his parenting arrangement during childhood, his perception of his relationship with his own father, and his relationship with one of his own children. There were two significant findings. First, consistent with the study's hypothesis, a justice-involved father whose own father had greater involvement in his life were connected to a higher frequency of a justice-involved father standing by a discipline or parenting decision. Inconsistent with the study's hypothesis, there were insignificant findings between the groups of justice-involved fathers with different childhood parenting arrangements and the frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision. Also, there was no significant relationship between groups of justice-involved fathers' perceptions of closeness to their father and the frequency of standing by a discipline or parenting decision.

Implications for Research and Practice

- Understanding the connections between justice-involved fathers and their children could create and implement more effective policies and services for those involved in the justice system
- The findings suggest that justice-involved fathers with stable parenting arrangements were more involved with activities with their child; policies that support evidence-based parenting and marriage programs can help increase this protective factor

Strengths

- One strength of the current study is that it has a sample size from five different sites with varying demographic backgrounds
- The study used several independent and dependent variables to understand father involvement

Limitations

- the impact of potential bias that would be related to self-responses of those participating in the study
- Another limitation is that the participants had to be English-speaking, this removed a certain population from the study

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