

The background of the slide features a soft, blue-tinted image of a woman and a young child in profile, looking down. The woman is on the left, and the child is on the right, with their heads close together. The text is overlaid on this image.

# **Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP)**

## **What You Need to Know**

**Strengthening Families Training Institute**

**Boise**

**March 2013**

# **Today's Agenda**

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **Overview of Project**
- **Facts**
- **Past Accomplishments & Future Plans**
- **Summary & Questions**

A faint, light blue background image of a woman's face, looking slightly to the side, serves as the backdrop for the text.

# **What is COIP?**

## **(Children of Incarcerated Parents)**

**COIP is a subcommittee to the Idaho  
Criminal Justice Commission**

**The committee is charged with improving the lives of  
children whose parent or parents are incarcerated — and  
developing public policy that helps us reach that goal.**

# Who Serves on COIP?

The committee is made up of 15 people representing:



The committee is charged with improving the lives of children whose parent or parents are incarcerated — and developing public policy that helps us reach that goal.

# **The Foundation of Our Work**

According to the Children's Defense Fund, children are ten times more apt to commit a violent crime if there are six or more of the following risk factors:

**Poverty**

**Family Structure**

**Lack of Health Care**

**Lack of Timely and Quality Mental Health Services**

**Low Birth Weight**

**Abuse/Neglect**

**Foster Care Placement**

**Poor School Quality/Low Achievement**

**Juvenile Justice System Involvement**

**Children of Color**

# The Facts

**About 1.5 million children nationwide have parents behind bars on any one day\***

**An estimated 10 million more have parents who have been imprisoned at some point during the child's life\***

**75 percent of women in prison are mothers, typically of two or three children\***

# The Facts

**Children of offenders  
are five times more  
likely than their peers to  
end up in prison\***

**One in 10 will be  
incarcerated before  
reaching adulthood\***

**The number of women  
incarcerated has  
increased threefold in  
the last 10 years –  
convicted in large part  
for non-violent drug  
crimes\***

# America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline

**The Cradle to Prison Pipeline is:**

**A loud siren of alarm and wake up call to action to every parent, faith community, public policy, political and cultural leader, child and family serving agency and citizen**

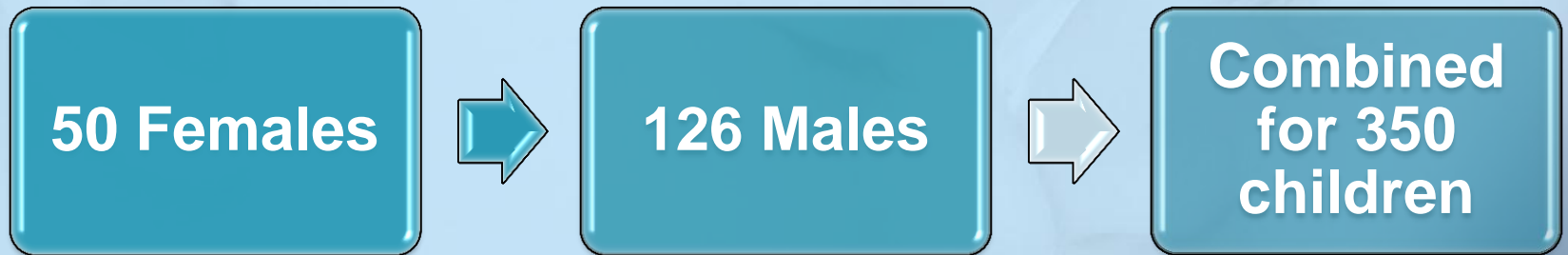
**An urgent national crisis at the intersection of poverty and race with tens of thousands of children and teens sucked into the Pipeline each year**

**Not an act of God or inevitable; it is a series of human choices at each stage of our children's development**

# Idaho's Story

**374 inmates surveyed at IDOC**

**176 had children under 18 years**



# Information on Mothers

50 percent of the women were employed at the time of their arrest making an average of \$8.81 per hour

77 percent were living with their children at the time of arrest

88 percent plan to live with their children upon release

Average age at the time of the birth of first child was 20 (youngest was 14)

# Information on Fathers

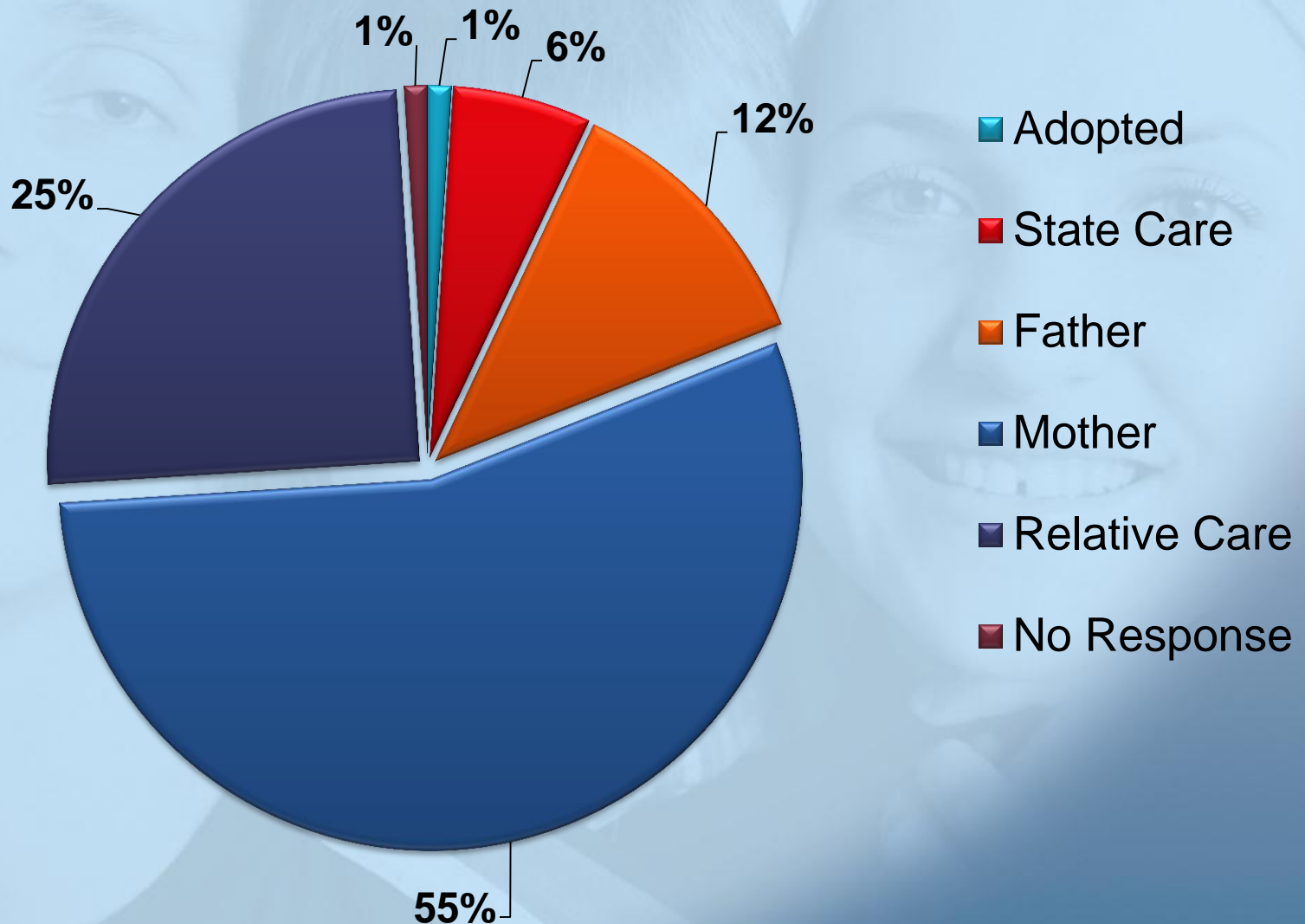
48 percent of the men were employed at the time of their arrest making an average of \$11.57 per hour

64 percent were living with their children at the time of arrest

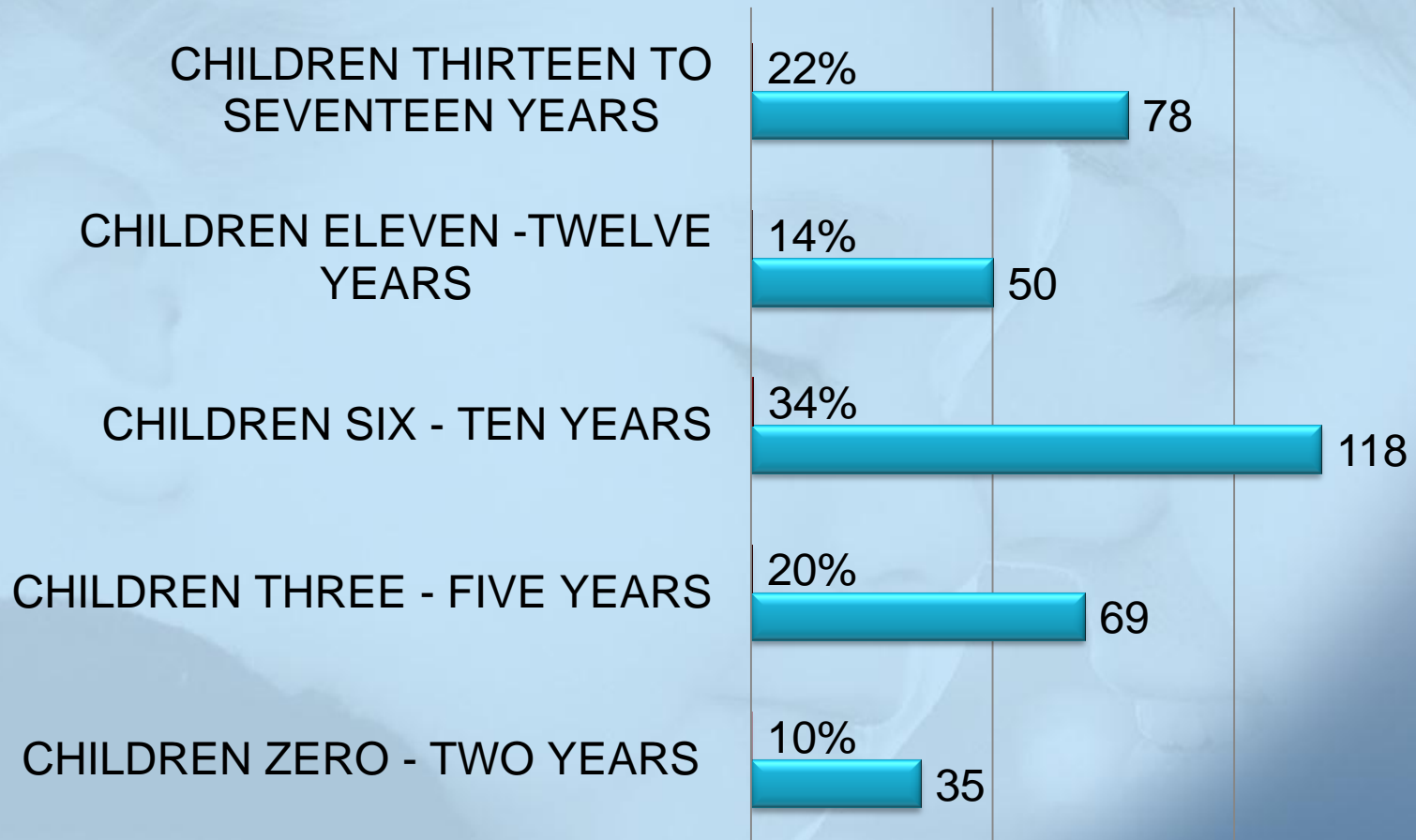
96 percent plan to live with their children upon release

Average age at the time of the birth of first child was 22 (youngest was 14)

# Custody Status of Children



# Age Range of Children





# **Idaho's Drug Endangered Children**

**73 percent of the mothers said they  
had used alcohol and/or drugs  
while pregnant**

# Children's Risk Factors

We measured the following risk factors:

Poverty  
Status

Family  
Structure

Low Birth  
Weight

Abuse or  
Neglect

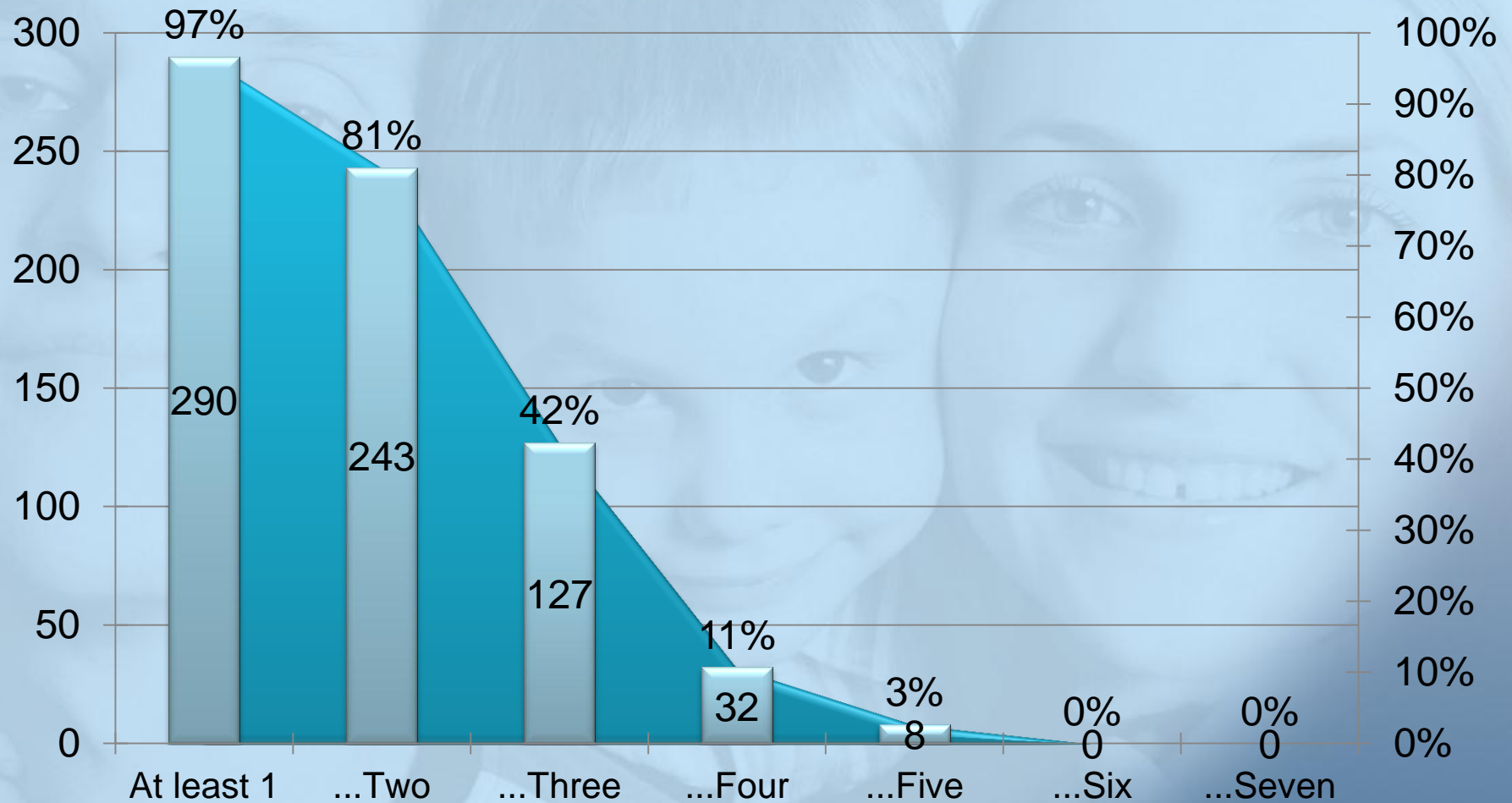
Foster  
Care  
Placement

Ethnicity

Juvenile  
Justice  
System  
Involvement

We were unable to determine lack of health care, lack of timely mental health care, poor school quality/low achievement

# Children's Risk Factors



# The Results

## What we learned:

- The top three risk factors facing the children in our survey were *poverty, family structure* and ethnicity
- Substance abuse continues to be a major contributor to our prison population
- More than two-thirds of mothers reported using alcohol or drugs while pregnant

The background of the slide features a faded, light blue image of three children's faces. On the left is a young girl with dark hair, in the center is a young boy with dark hair, and on the right is a young girl with blonde hair. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

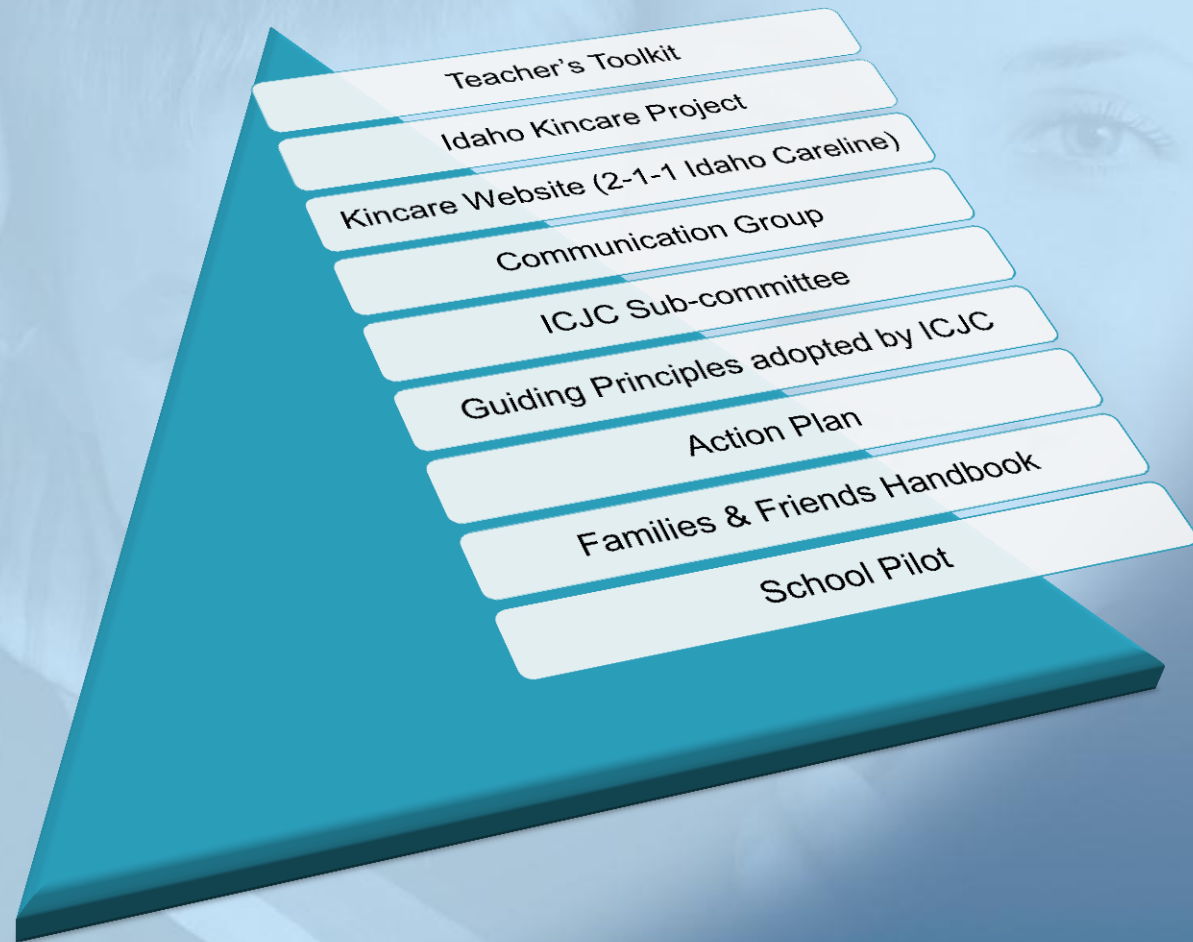
# **Supporting Data Child Poverty**

**According to the Annie E. Casey 2009 Kids Count:**

**18 percent of Idaho's children live in poverty ranking  
23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for child poverty**

**47 percent of children lived in low-income families  
(income below 200 percent of poverty level)**

# Current Efforts to Support Children




# School Pilot

*A pilot program is underway at two elementary schools: one in the Boise District and another in the Vallivue District.*

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*The pilot is directed at one-on-one counseling for children identified as having a parent in long term incarceration (6 mos. or more).*

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*Goal is to improve attendance, academics and behavior.*

# **School Pilot**

**Children are 8-11 years of age.**



**Voluntary. Parents signed off on participation.**



**Surveys were conducted with children, parents and teachers at the beginning of each pilot. Surveys focused on attendance, academics and behavior.**



**Re-surveys will be conducted at the end of the school year to measure progress.**

# School Pilot

12 lunch-hour sessions in each school term.



Conducted as though the kids are in a club.

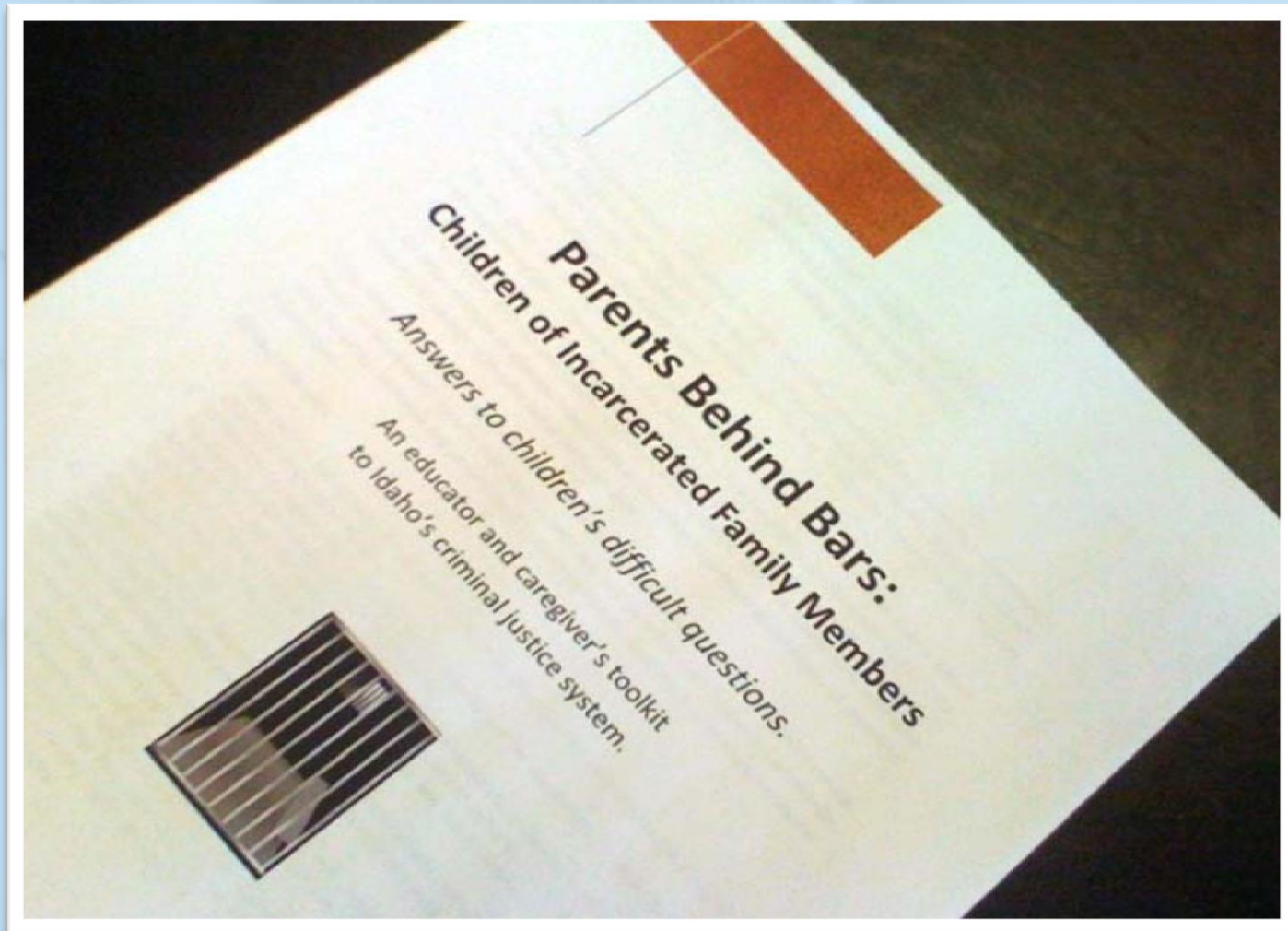


Clubs ARE NOT identified with any name that suggests prison or incarceration.



The common thread? **I'm not alone!**

# The COIP Toolkit/Family Guide



# The COIP Toolkit/Family Guide

It is a simple, easy to use guide for children whose parent(s) has been incarcerated



It provides basic questions a child might ask



It provides honest answers to children about what has happened



It's free and can be found on the internet at: Idaho CareLine 2-1-1 or <http://www.211.idaho.gov/>  
Click on the Strengthening Idaho Youth box

# What Can You Do?

Support  
the  
work of  
COIP

Use the  
Family  
Guide or  
Toolkit

- Web address:  
<http://www.211.idaho.gov/>

Make the  
guide  
available  
to  
families

Tell your  
SRO's

Victim/  
Witness  
Coordin  
ators

Help us  
spread  
the  
word

Give us  
your  
ideas

# Remember...

Right or wrong –  
children love  
their parents

Almost all  
offenders return to  
their communities  
and the majority  
regain custody or  
attempt to engage  
in a relationship  
with their children

Action must be  
taken to break  
the generational  
cycle of  
incarceration

The stigma of  
incarceration is  
profound to both  
the child and the  
parent

# In Closing...

*Children and their incarcerated parents become clients of separate public agencies, often at odds and seldom partners in addressing the family's need for rebuilding and reunification. We should understand, as clearly and as deeply as we can, that the collateral damage of our war on crime and drugs is our most vulnerable children. These children lie at the intersection of educational, social service, correctional, family service and other agencies. Coordinated, specialized, and targeted intervention can break the cycle of generational imprisonment, but not without leadership and not without commitment*

# Questions?

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# Resources

**Children's Defense Fund – America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline ([www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org))**

**The Effects of Childhood Stress on Health Across the Lifespan ([www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury))**