

Factors Influencing the Educational Attainment, Employment, Economic Mobility, and Successful Reentry of Incarcerated Parents

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Motivation

- 95% of prison inmates will return to their communities
 - Access to education can improve post-prison outcomes
 - Budget cuts have threatened capacity for education
- Parental incarceration affects children
 - Homelessness, depression, and aggressive behavior
 - More likely to go to prison themselves
- Incarcerated individuals have low education, literacy, and numeracy

Our Research

- Profile of incarcerated individuals, focusing on:
 - Parents of dependent children (any under 18 years of age)
 - Parents of grown children (all 18+ years of age)
 - Non-parents
- Outcomes
 - Pre-incarceration education
 - Enrollment and interest in education in prison

Background Characteristics

Characteristic	Dependent children	No children	Grown children	Overall
Female	7.8%	5.1%	6.1%	6.7%
White	27.5%	38.1%	45.1%	34.2%
Black	37.3%	37.1%	34.2%	36.6%
Hispanic	27.5%	18.7%	13.1%	22.0%
Other race/ethnicity	7.7%	6.1%	7.6%	7.2%
Imputed age	33.9	34.0	50.6	37.4
Imputed years of schooling	11.0	11.3	11.5	11.2

Age uses the midpoint of each five-year age bracket

PIAAC treats each education level as lasting a yet number of years

Educational Attainment

Education Level	Percentage by Category (Rounded to Nearest Integer)		
	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Primary or lower	4	2	4
Lower secondary	29	27	20
Upper secondary	54	55	55
Postsecondary, non-tertiary	8	8	11
Tertiary	5	6	9
Unknown	0	2	0
N	668	377	274

Green: higher than for parents of dependent children, statistically significant at 5% level

Red: lower than for parents of dependent children, statistically significant at 5% level

Parental Education by Own Literacy Level

- Do individuals with higher literacy/numeracy have better-educated parents?
- Parents' education is correlated with individuals' skill level
 - Individuals with higher literacy/numeracy less likely to have parents without a high school diploma
 - Literacy more correlated with mothers' education levels than fathers'

Reasons for Participating in Academic Courses

	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
Reason	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Required	10	11	15
Knowledge/skills	31	29	36
Obtain certificate	13	15	10
Job opportunity upon release	28	32	17
Job assignment	9	5	9
Family related	2	2	3
Other	6	6	10
N	247	161	120

Reasons for Participating in Basic Skills Course

	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
Reason	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Required	16	14	21
Knowledge/skills	27	31	32
Obtain Certificate	14	12	16
Job opportunity upon release	32	31	24
Job assignment	5	5	5
Family related	2	4	2
Other	4	4	1
N	230	140	89

Education Level of Interest

	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
Education level	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Grades 1-6	<1	0	1
Grades 7-9	1	0	0
HS Diploma or GED	20	17	16
Pre-Associate	14	11	17
Certificate	28	29	32
Associate's	18	17	17
Bachelor's	15	17	7
Master's	4	6	5
Professional	1	1	2
Doctorate	1	3	3
N	440	251	131

How Course is Offered

How offered	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
In prison or jail	69	64	65
Four-year college	2	3	5
Community college	5	11	7
High school or vocational two-year	15	10	9
Independent study	1	1	1
Correspondence or distance learning	2	3	1
Other	6	8	12
N	246	161	120

Why Not Interested in Academic Course

	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
Reason	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Educational qualifications	8	12	11
Want higher level	10	9	6
Don't want to give up assignment	3	8	15
Waiting list	2	4	2
Poor quality	5	9	7
Not useful	13	10	15
Other	59	48	43
N	154	83	128

Why Not Interested in Basic Skills Course

	Percentage by Category (Rounded)		
Reason	Dependent children	No children	Grown children
Educational Qualifications	12	9	9
Not eligible	27	39	25
On waiting list	3	4	3
Not interested	20	14	23
Other	38	34	40
N	446	237	177

Implications

- Incarcerated individuals need skill-building opportunities
- Very interested in job opportunities after prison
- Why are some incarcerated individuals uninterested in education?
 - Close to 25% not interested in academic courses
 - PIAAC questionnaire did not capture reasons for this
 - Targeting to appropriate education levels will reduce but not solve this problem

Contact Information

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Questions may be referred to other author(s) as needed