



Oklahoma's female prison population is the largest per capita in the country, with 2,351 prisoners as of July 31, 2004. In the first phase of the study, 203 female prisoners were administered a survey containing questions on demographics, criminal record, and information about families such as contact with children, placement of children, and problems with children. This is less than the proposed 250 women due to refusal of a substantial number of those randomly selected for participation at Mabel Bassett (random sample was of . Subjects came from four facilities: Turley Halfway House (n=14, 6.9%), Hillside Community Correctional Center (n=41, 20.2%), Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (n=92, 45.3%), and Mabel Bassett Correctional Center (n=56, 27.6%). The sample drawn was stratified to get a representative number of prisoners from each level of incarceration. The response rate at Turley was 66.7%, at Hillside it was 78.8%, at Eddie Warrior it was 87.6%, but at Mabel Bassett only 42.4% participated in the survey. One reason for this was that several of the women selected in the random sampling were incarcerated for harming their children. Additionally, the prisoners at Mabel Bassett were less interested in participating once they realized that there would be no direct benefit to themselves. This may be a reflection of the more serious nature of the offenses of these women.

Prisoners with minor children were asked to provide contact information for a second survey (Phase II). In Phase II, a minimum of 50 women prisoners (maximum of 100) will be asked detailed information about their mental health and substance abuse histories, history of domestic violence and abuse, and their children's caretakers. They will also be asked to provide the researcher with contact information for their children's caretakers. A Federal Certificate of Confidentiality has been requested for Phase II as well as Phase III. As of October 14, 2004, the certificate has not been received, thus preventing data collection for the second phase. However, almost 80 prisoners did volunteer to

participate in the second phase and provided information indicating that they met the screening criteria (children under 18 with whom they lived prior to incarceration). As soon as the Certificate of Confidentiality is received, we will collect and enter the Phase II data and begin contacting caretakers for participation in Phase III, the interviews with caretakers of the prisoners' children.

Female inmates are almost twice as likely as male inmates to report that they had a child of their own living with them prior to their arrest. Thus, their imprisonment is more likely to disrupt their children's living arrangements. Females are also significantly less likely than males to say those children are now living with their other parent. Taken in conjunction, these two statistics emphasize the fact that children of incarcerated mothers may find themselves not only without their mother but also without their home.

Children are affected in other ways when a parent is incarcerated. This may lead to a host of problems for these children. In particular, academic performance, conflict with friends and caretakers, and alcohol and drug problems may be prevalent. Researchers should study inmates' families as well as caretakers to gain a clearer perspective on the unintended consequences of incarceration. The state should consider focusing on alternative sanctions such as day reporting centers or nighttime incarceration when possible as well as providing services to children to intervene.

