

**Northwestern News on the Web: [http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/media\\_relations/](http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/media_relations/)**

**ATTN: NEWS EDITORS, PHOTO EDITORS**

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Pat Tremmel at (847) 491-4892 or [p-tremmel@northwestern.edu](mailto:p-tremmel@northwestern.edu)  
Mary Jane Twohey (for broadcast media) at (847) 491-4889 or  
[mjtwohey@northwestern.edu](mailto:mjtwohey@northwestern.edu)

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**CONFERENCE EXAMINES EFFECTS OF INCARCERATION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

EVANSTON, Ill. --- Leading social science researchers, practitioners and activists will address the "The Effects of Incarceration on Children and Families" at a Northwestern University conference Saturday, May 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the University in the Norris Center (Ohio State Room), 1999 S. Campus Drive. **(SPACE IS LIMITED.)**

The conference is sponsored by the Child, Adolescent, and Family Studies Program of the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) at Northwestern and supported in part by the Russell Sage Foundation. (For more information, go to [www.northwestern.edu/IPR/news](http://www.northwestern.edu/IPR/news))

The U.S. incarceration rate has tripled since 1980. About 3 percent of all U.S. adult residents are in prison, on parole or on probation. Sixty-three percent of federal prisoners have children under 18, and 7 percent of black children have a parent in prison.

These numbers tell a story far beyond mere confinement, according to IPR Director Fay Lomax Cook. "The repercussions of our criminal justice policies extend to the labor market, neighborhood stability, the operation of democracy and the well-being of children and families," she said.

Conference panels include: "The Scope of the Problem: Numbers and Theories" (8:50 a.m.), "Incarceration of Women and Effects on Parenting" (9:30 a.m.), "The Labor Market Link Between Incarceration and Families" (11:15 a.m.), "Effects of Male Imprisonment on Marriage and Families" (2:00 p.m.), and "What We Need to Know: Setting a Policy and Research Agenda for the Future" (3:45 p.m.).

- more -

INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH/add one

Participating Northwestern faculty with appointments at the Institute for Policy Research include Thomas Cook, and Kathryn Edin, professors of sociology. Cook will frame the day's discussions by considering current theories about how incarceration affects the interrelationships of prisoners with family, extended family and community members -- and under what conditions various scenarios occur.

Kathryn Edin, who studies dynamics between low-income couples, parents and children, will present findings from her ethnographic studies of low-income non-custodial fathers, particularly young fathers, who are trying to reconstruct their lives after release from prison. Edin also will discuss their difficulties in the labor market.

Other Institute for Policy Research faculty will moderate the panels:

Dorothy Roberts, professor of law, will lead a panel discussion of how the incarceration of women, especially African-American women, affects their relationships with their children. Roberts has done extensive research on racial disparities in the child welfare system.

Joseph Altonji, professor of economics, will moderate a panel on how incarceration affects the ability of ex-felons to find and hold jobs and how their prison history impacts their future earnings and career patterns. Altonji studies the black-white wealth gap and Catholic school outcomes.

Greg Duncan, professor of human development and social policy, will direct a panel focusing on how male imprisonment affects marriages and families. Duncan, director of the Northwestern/University of Chicago Joint Center for Poverty Research, studies effects of early childhood development. And sociologist Anne Nurse from Wooster College will present findings from interviews with males parolees in California that demonstrate their difficulties in reconnecting with their families.

In the concluding panel, conference committee chair Mary Pattillo-McCoy, assistant professor of sociology, will lead a roundtable of practitioners and academics who will construct a policy and research agenda for the future based on issues raised -- or not raised -- at the conference. Pattillo-McCoy is researching racial differences in educational outcomes for middle-class adolescents.

