



Greetings from the Family-Based Justice Center



This July marks 33 years since the passage of the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). People with disabilities are [overrepresented all along the criminal justice continuum](#), and it is crucial to acknowledge and address their particular needs and experiences.

About 15 percent of the United States population have a disability, compared with 38 percent of people in [state and federal prisons](#). In the last sixty years, there has been a shift towards the closure of state mental hospitals and other institutional facilities that were the main providers for people with severe mental illness. This deinstitutionalization has led to a substantial decrease in the number of people residing in such institutions, plummeting from [558,239 in 1955 to 71,619 in 1994](#). While deinstitutionalization is often seen as a positive measure, it lacked the essential public investment required to establish accessible community-based alternatives. In fact, jails and prisons now accommodate [three times as many people](#) with mental health conditions as state mental hospitals do.

While the intersection of disabilities and incarceration receives less attention than many other issues in criminal justice, its impacts are especially acute for children affected by parental incarceration, on which there is little research. A better understanding would help in developing interventions and support systems that address their specific needs.

In the News:

California has made provisions for people with a disability being released from custody to receive extra care upon release. Read the article [here](#).

“Supervision as Family Separation” calls for better balance between individual and governmental interests, as strict supervision conditions often infringe upon fundamental rights and disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Read the article [here](#).

Joshua Martoma, a 17 year-old child of an incarcerated father, describes how parental incarceration is a silent American epidemic and calls on sentencing alternatives to be prioritized in the absence of confounding factors. Read the article [here](#).

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