



## Family-Based Justice Center

### Greetings from the Family-Based Justice Center



As we wrap up the month of May, we want to spotlight Mental Health Awareness Month, an opportunity to highlight the importance of mental well-being for everyone, including those who may be marginalized or who face particular challenges in accessing mental health support. Today, we focus on the mental health of incarcerated people and the impact on them and their families.

Research has shown that incarcerated people are [more likely than](#) people who have never been justice involved to have experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect. These experiences, combined with the stressors of confinement, can exacerbate existing mental health conditions or trigger new ones. However, incarcerated people do not bear the burden of mental health challenges alone. Families and loved ones also face significant emotional and psychological strain from their relatives' incarceration; separation from a loved one, financial burdens, and stigma can lead to feelings of isolation, shame, and anxiety. In 2022, the Osborne Association's See Us Support Us team created a toolkit for mental health professionals who may engage with children affected by parental incarceration. You can review the toolkit [here](#).

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#### Staff Highlights:



From left to right: Melanie Jordan (Case Strategy Director, ORPC), Shawna Geiger (Director of Engagement, ORPC), and Isabel Coronado (Coordinator, FBJC).

On May 12, the Family-Based Justice Center's Sandy Mullins and Isabel Coronado spoke at the [2nd National Interdisciplinary Parent Representation Conference](#), alongside Melanie Jordan and Shawna Geiger from the Colorado Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC). They spoke on system reforms to alleviate the impact of parental incarceration, including Colorado [Senate Bill 23-039](#), awaiting Governor Polis' signature, which will reduce child and parent separation due to incarceration by requiring the court and the prison or jail where the parent is incarcerated to facilitate the parent's attendance and participation in proceedings for the parent's dependency and neglect case, and eliminating the parent's incarceration and related conditions as a basis for terminating the parent-child relationship. The presentation also included Colorado [House Bill 23-1187](#), shepherded to passage by [Elephant Circle](#), which provides alternatives to incarceration for pregnant or postpartum women facing a jail or prison sentence.

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### In the News:

The Department of Health and Human Services released new guidance to encourage states to apply for Medicaid Reentry Section 1115 Demonstration Opportunity pilots to increase healthcare for people leaving carceral facilities. Read more about the guidance [here](#).

Oregon introduced [House Bill 2890](#), which would provide substance use and mental health treatment in state-run correctional facilities. Read an article [here](#).

Susan Burton, founder of A New Way of Life, writes, "This Mother's Day, let's commit to policies to help mothers behind bars and their families." She touches on several bills that California lawmakers can move forward to ensure that parents stay connected to their families. Read the op-ed [here](#).

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## OJJDP Updates:

### RESOURCES:

- Read about OJJDP's [priorities](#).
- [Visit](#) OJJDP's webpage on racial/ethnic disparities.
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