Children of Incarcerated Parents: The Relation of Contact and Visitation to the Parent-Child Relationship and Internalizing and Externalizing Problems

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Participants were 40 children of incarcerated parents, ages 9-18, and their caregivers. A series of multivariate regression analyses revealed that more frequent visitation was related to fewer child internalizing problems, and more frequent contact and visitation were related to stronger perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Additionally, fewer feelings of alienation in the parent-child relationship were associated with fewer internalizing and externalizing problems. Lastly, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were important predictors of frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Although the small, convenience sample limits the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings, this study was innovative in its examination of a possible mediating role of the parent-child relationship in the relation between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and in measuring children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. Practical implications and future research are discussed.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Chris and Pandy Hedge, and my brother, Josh (Bub) Hedge. I couldn’t possibly put into words how much your love and support means to me, but I certainly will try.

Momma – Thanks for being my biggest fan, the constant voice in my head, and the best kind of friend. No daughter has a more loving mom than I do, and I pray to someday be half the wonder-mom you have always been. I’m here today because you taught me that women can be strong, beautiful, smart, confident, and full of heart.

Daddy – Thanks for providing me with every opportunity to pursue my dreams, and for constantly nagging me to never settle for anything but my very best. When I came home with a 98% on a test, I didn’t quite appreciate your jest regarding what happened to the other 2 percentage points, but it sure did make an impression. I’m here today because you taught me that success is a dream followed by dedication, determination, sacrifice, and plain old hard-work.

Bub – Thanks for being the annoying big brother, the best role-model, and the friend who will always understand where I’m coming from. I’ve wanted to be just like you for as long as I can remember – funny, loving, respected, and cool. I’m here today because you let me crash on your sofa when I was lonely, you gave me loving advice when I needed it, and you showed me how to persevere through any struggle.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This project would have failed without the time and efforts of Stacey Scott. She made hundreds of calls to families and recruited the majority of the children and caregivers who participated in this research. She did it with a smile on her face and without expecting anything in return. Thank you, Stacey. I owe you a margarita!

Thank you to all of the faculty, staff, and students at IFNL. I’m beyond thankful for your support, but more importantly, I am very grateful for the opportunity to know so many intelligent and loving people from so many diverse backgrounds. My life and my studies were enriched by your perspectives and your friendships.

I very much need to thank my extended family members, including my sister-in-law, Unetta, my neice and nephew, Brooklyn and Braden, my grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, great-aunts, uncles, and cousins. I have felt so loved and so supported from afar by all of you. I’ve always wanted to make you proud. I love you.

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Mondays. Ashleigh, thanks for making me go running and work-out when it was the last thing I wanted to do. Also, thanks for joining me for a drink after a few long Saturdays of dissertation writing. I’m really looking forward to our vacation this summer! Andy, thanks for keeping me sane through some of my loneliest days. Your friendship is a constant comfort.

In addition, I want to thank the children and caregivers who opened their hearts to me while participating in this study. Your stories have stuck with me and I will not forget you. I pray that we will all do more to support you in the future.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my dog, Zoe. She literally never left my side as I wrote every word in this document. She’s definitely this girl’s best friend. Zoe, I promise we are going on more walks, more hikes, and more trips to the dog park in the near future.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study examined the relation among frequency and type of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent and social, emotional, and behavioral problems of children and youth. It also explored the parent-child relationship as an underlying mechanism linking frequency and type of contact and visitation to social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Importantly, children’s views of contact and visitation were used to further understand how their perspectives impact frequency of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, and the research questions and hypotheses.

Background of the Study

Millions of children in the United States are faced with separation from at least one of their parents due to parental incarceration. Current estimates indicate that 1.7 to 2.7 million children have a parent in prison (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010), and as many as 10 million minor children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives (Johnston, 2012). A 2007 National Inmate survey found that 1,706,600 children under the age of 18 had an imprisoned parent. This total is 2.3% of the nation’s children (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Millions of additional children have a parent in a local jail (Western & Wildeman, 2009), bringing the estimate to nearly 4% of children in the United States (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010). By way of comparison, in England and
Wales, 125,000 or 1% of children under age 18 have a parent in prison (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009).

Between 1996 and 2006, the incarcerated population grew by an average of 6.5% every year, thereby increasing the number of children with incarcerated parents each year (Western & Wildeman, 2009). In the past two decades, the number of children with incarcerated fathers has grown by three-quarters while the number with incarcerated mothers has more than doubled (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). More than one in 100 adults in the U.S. are in prison or jail (Pew Charitable Trust, 2008), and most prisoners have at least one minor child (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). More specifically, 62% of female state prisoners and 56% of female federal prisoners reported having a minor child while 51% of male state prisoners and 63% of male federal prisoners reported having a minor child.

In better news, recently released statistics indicate a decline since 2006 in the number of inmate admissions to state and federal prisons. Specifically, the number of admissions to state and federal prisons in the United States was 609,800 offenders in 2012, the lowest number since 1999 (Carson & Golinelli, 2014). Perhaps fewer children will face parental incarceration in the future.

Parental incarceration disproportionately affects minority children and children from disadvantaged families and communities. This disparity is especially dramatic for African American children with undereducated parents. For example, by age 14, 51% of African American children born to a father who dropped out of high school will experience his imprisonment, whereas this is true for only 7% of white children (Wildeman, 2009).
Children of incarcerated parents are much more likely to develop social, emotional, and behavioral problems compared to their peers (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009). They are also more likely than others to do poorly in school, to enter the criminal justice system as children, and to be incarcerated as adults (Dallaire, 2007; Johnston, 1995; Murray, 2005). Likewise, parental incarceration is considered one of seven adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) associated with a multitude of poor health and mental health outcomes reaching far into adulthood, including illegal drug use (Roettger & Swisher, 2011), a 2-3 fold increase in adolescent alcohol use (Dube et al., 2006), an increased number of sexual partners (Hillis, Anda, Felitti, & Marchbanks, 2001), increased risk of physical violence in adolescent dating relationships (Miller et al., 2011), increased risk of depressive disorders (Chapman et al., 2004), a 2-5 fold increased risk of attempted suicide (Dube et al., 2001), and a multitude of health risk factors for several of the leading causes of death in adults (Felitti et al., 1998).

Historically, children of incarcerated parents have been understudied. Much of the research has focused on offenders’ needs rather than children’s needs (Corston, 2007). The small group of studies with a specific emphasis on children of incarcerated parents have primarily utilized the perspectives of parents and caregivers (Shlafer & Poehlman, 2010) to examine parental incarceration as a risk factor for social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009). Additionally, studies have rarely considered ways in which to reduce the risk of these problems in children of incarcerated parents.
A handful of studies have explored a link between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, but findings have been mixed (Murray, 2005). Researchers have proposed a theory that contact and visitation may be beneficial to children of incarcerated parents by allowing them to maintain and strengthen parent-child relationships, or attachment relationships, essential for the development of cognitive and social skills (Makariev and Shaver, 2010; Murray & Murray, 2010; Poehlman et al., 2010). Unfortunately, empirical studies have not explored any underlying mechanisms, including parent-child relationships, linking contact and visitation to social, behavioral, or mental health outcomes. Additionally, few studies have considered children’s views of contact and visitation. This study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by further examining the relationship between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, by exploring the parent-child relationship as a mediating mechanism between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and by using children’s views of contact and visitation to explore their impact on frequency of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

**Statement of the Problem**

Past research clearly indicates that children of incarcerated parents need special consideration and care due to their risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems, yet research on best practices for supporting children of prisoners is scarce. While experts in the field theorize that contact and visitation is essential for the healthy development of children of incarcerated parents (Makariev and Shaver, 2010; Murray & Murray, 2010;
Poehlman et al., 2010), and a small body of research suggests contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent may be especially important in preventing social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Murray, 2005; Twice & Brewster, 2004), the current body of applicable research is limited both in quantity and in scope, some findings are contradictory, and none of the current research explores mechanisms linking contact and visitation to social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Furthermore, statistics show that the majority of children are unable to contact and visit regularly due to insensitive policies and practices (Bouchet, 2008; Reed & Reed, 1997). These widespread, inconsiderate policies and practices are an immense hindrance to contact and visitation, despite children’s rights to contact and visit their incarcerated parent.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides special protections for children separated from one or both of their parents. Article 9.3 reads, “States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests (UN General Assembly, 1989).” Incongruously, children of incarcerated parents encounter many barriers to contact and visitation, like vast distances between children’s homes and prisons, high costs of phone calls, and intimidating and uncomfortable visitation policies and practices (Bouchet, 2008; Reed & Reed, 1997). Significantly, the current body of research is unclear concerning if and when contact and visitation is in the best interest of children of incarcerated parents, the mechanism through which contact and visitation may be beneficial to children of incarcerated parents, and the possible impact of children’s perceptions and experiences
on the benefits of contact and visitation. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult for stakeholders to advocate for new policies and practices regarding contact and visitation.

For this reason, research on the relationships among contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation are essential. In other words, in order to protect children’s rights to contact and visit their incarcerated parent and to work to adequately support the needs of children of incarcerated parents, it is crucial to understand whether or not contact and visitation reduces the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems, to recognize the mechanisms by which contact and visitation work to reduce the risk of problem behaviors, and to identify the effects of children’s perceptions and experiences on all of these factors. These insights will allow stakeholders to create policies and practices that effectively support children of incarcerated parents.

**Significance of the Study**

Children of incarcerated parents need policies and practices that reduce their risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems and protect their rights to maintain direct contact with their incarcerated parents. This study will inform policy and practice related to these aims in four key ways.

First, understanding the impact of contact and visitation on social, emotional, and behavioral problems will allow stakeholders to more effectively determine the best interests of children regarding the right to maintain direct and regular contact with an incarcerated parent. This is central to protecting the rights of children to remain
connected with their incarcerated parents. In turn, it could affect parent and caregiver choices about contact and visitation, as well as policy-makers’ choices about change related to a host of feasibility and quality issues, including inmate sentencing location, location of new facilities, costs of phone calls, contact and visitation frequency and duration, and prison contact and visitation environments.

Second, recognizing the mechanisms by which contact and visitation work to reduce the risk of problem behaviors will allow stakeholders to focus policy change on strategies that will address those mechanisms. More specifically, if the parent-child relationship proves to be a linking mechanism between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems then policy changes should emphasize practices that enhance the parent-child relationship. These practices might include extending the length of parent-child contact and visitation, creating child-friendly spaces for visitation, and offering parenting classes for inmates.

Third, identifying the links between children’s perceptions and experiences on contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems will highlight other focus areas for policy change. For instance, children’s views of contact and visitation may bring to light specific problems like children’s fear of guards or children’s reluctance to talk to caregivers about their desire to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. These problems can then be addressed within new policies and practices.

Fourth, overall knowledge gained from the study will provide stakeholders with insights into effectively supporting children of incarcerated parents. Research on reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of
incarcerated parents is scarce. Studies addressing this issue are desperately needed in order to arm practitioners with ideas for creating programs and services that address children’s needs and to arm advocates with the knowledge needed to persuade policymakers to change policies.

**Definition of Terms**

*Children of incarcerated parents* is used broadly to classify individuals who experienced parental arrest, incarceration, or probation during their childhood (Poehlmann & Eddy, 2013). Definitions for the term children of incarcerated parents have varied slightly from study to study. For instance, researchers have defined childhood differently, resulting in samples of children with age ranges anywhere from 0-20 years old (Murray and Farrington, 2005; Twice & Brewster, 2004). Also, some researchers have included children who have parents in prison, as well as in local jails, while others have excluded children who have parents in jails. For the purpose of this study, children of incarcerated parents refers to children 8-18 years old who currently have a parent in prison or jail.

The term *incarcerated parent* or *parent* is used to characterize a child’s mother or father who is currently in prison or jail while the term *caregiver* is used to characterize the current legal guardian of a child with an incarcerated parent. Often, the caregiver is the non-incarcerated mother or the non-incarcerated father of the child. It is also common for caregivers to be grandparents, other family members, friends, or foster care guardians.
Contact and visitation refers to interpersonal interactions between the child and parent that take place during the incarceration. Contact and visitation look different at every institution due to wide-ranging policies on timing, duration, and environment. This can make defining contact and visitation difficult. Very basic definitions of contact and visitation were used for this study. Contact is the act of exchanging physical mail or talking on the phone. Visitation includes an interaction at the incarceration facility, during which the parent and the child are able to see and hear one other.

Generally, the parent-child relationship consists of a combination of behaviors, feelings, and expectations that are unique to a particular parent and a particular child (Arthasarathy, 2013). The popular concept of attachment is contained under the parent-child relationship umbrella term. Attachment theory is based on the idea that relationships with familiar caregivers lead to a child’s sense of security and productive exploration that are essential in developing cognitive and social skills (Makariev & Shaver, 2010). Overall, parent-child relationships and attachment relationships are considered crucial determinants of child development (Rintoul et al, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the parent-child relationship refers to the extent of closeness between the child and incarcerated parent, but does not assume that an attachment relationship exists.

Social, emotional, and behavioral problems is a very broad term used to describe a wide-range of problems associated with poor health and mental health outcomes. In the literature, researchers often categorize social, emotional, and behavioral problems into two major groups named internalizing problems and externalizing problems. Internalizing
problems are defined as an over-control of emotions and include social withdrawal, demand for attention, feelings of worthless or inferiority, dependency, and depression (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1978; McCulloch, Wiggins, Joshi, & Sachdev, 2000). Externalizing problems are defined as an under-control of emotions and include rule-breaking, irritability, and trouble with interpersonal relationships (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1978; Hinshaw, 1992). In this study, the term social, emotional, and behavioral problems refers to internalizing and externalizing problems.

Children’s perspectives of contact and visitation consists of children’s opinions on the purpose and experience of contacting and visiting an incarcerated parent. A vast array of topics could be included in this all-encompassing definition. This study focused on children’s perspectives about caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Obvious gaps in the relevant empirical literature suggested the following research questions:

1. To what extent does type and frequency of contact and visitation affect social, emotional, and behavioral problems in children of incarcerated parents?
2. To what extent does the parent-child relationship mediate the relationship between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems in children of incarcerated parents?

3. To what extent do children’s perspectives of contact and visitation affect frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems?

**Hypotheses for Research Question 1**

The first research question explored the relationship between type and frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This question led to the following hypotheses:

**H1.** Higher scores on frequency of receiving mail from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H2.** Higher scores on frequency of receiving phone calls from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H3.** Higher scores on frequency of visitation with an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H4.** Higher scores on overall frequency of contact and visitation will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.
Hypothesis for Research Question 2

The second research question examined the parent-child relationship as a mediator between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This question led to the following hypothesis.

**H5.** The parent-child relationship will significantly mediate the predictive relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Hypotheses for Research Question 3

The third research question explored the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on frequency of contact and visitation, and social, behavioral and mental health problems. Children’s perspectives of contact and visitation included caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. This question led to the following hypotheses.

**H6.** More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict more frequent contact and visitation.

**H7.** More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an
incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores for children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

This study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by further examining the relationship between contact and visitation and internalizing and externalizing problems, by exploring the parent-child relationship as a linking mechanism between contact and visitation and internalizing and externalizing problems, and by using children’s views of contact and visitation to explore their impact on frequency of contact and visitation and internalizing and externalizing problems (see Figure 1.1). As discussed previously, filling this gap in the literature is particularly important for furthering knowledge to adequately support children of incarcerated parents and to effectively protect the rights of children to maintain direct and regular contact with their incarcerated parents. This study is innovative in its attempt to test a mechanism linking contact and visitation to social, emotional, and mental health problems, and in its attempt to explore the impact of children’s perspectives on contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

The following chapter investigates the relevant literature, with a focus on the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents; the parent-child relationship as a linking mechanism between parental incarceration and social, emotional, and behavioral problems; the role of contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship in reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems; the current legal and physical reality of contact and visitation; and the
influence of children’s perspectives on contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, research protocol, sampling technique, measures, approach to analysis, and threats to validity. Chapter 4 presents the research findings, and Chapter 5 provides the discussion, implications, and directions for future research.
Figure 1.1. Overall model depicting the hypothesized relationships among children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and child internalizing and externalizing problems.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a detailed review of the literature relevant to the proposed research questions. It begins with an examination of the risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents. It then explores the parent-child relationship as a linking mechanism between parental incarceration and the risk for social, behavioral and mental health problems, and the role of contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship in reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents. The chapter continues with an investigation of the legal reality and the tangible reality of contact and visitation for children of incarcerated parents and with a consideration of the importance of exploring the impact of children’s views of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent. It ends with a summary of the key concepts used to frame the proposed research questions.

The Risk for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Problems

Mental health problems, antisocial behavior, and other negative outcomes for children of incarcerated parents are not uncommon. Children may suffer a range of problems during their parent’s incarceration. These include depression, hyperactivity, aggressiveness, regression, sleep problems, eating problems, truancy, and poor grades and behavior in school (Murray, 2005). Murray and colleagues (2009) reviewed 16 longitudinal studies of parental imprisonment and concluded that parental imprisonment
was a strong risk factor for antisocial behavior and poor mental health. A meta-analysis of these studies showed that prisoners’ children, ages 0-18, had twice the risk for antisocial outcomes and mental health problems compared with their peers (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009). Antisocial behavior included externalizing behaviors like persistent lying, arrests, convictions, and imprisonment of the child. Mental health problems included internalizing problems like depression and anxiety (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009). Beyond this meta-analysis, other studies showed that children of inmates were more often rated below average at school in social, psychological, and academic characteristics (Murray, 2005). In fact, Johnston (1995) found that 90% of the elementary school children identified by teachers as having the most severe behavioral and disciplinary problems at school had encountered parental crime, parental arrest, and parental incarceration. Interestingly, Dallaire and colleagues (2010) found that teachers admitted to lowering their expectations of children with incarcerated parents, which could exacerbate their problems in school. Multiple studies suggest that teacher academic expectations of students affect student academic performance (Babad, Inbar, & Rosenthal, 1982; Rosenthal, 2002; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966), especially for students who belong to a stigmatized group (Jussim & Harber, 2005).

While parental incarceration is associated with problem behaviors in children, the role of incarceration in the development of these problems is unclear. A collection of recent longitudinal studies reviewed by Murray and Murray (2010) provided mixed findings for whether or not parental incarceration is a causal risk factor. A London study
found that 48% of boys, ages 0-18, who were separated from a parent between birth and age ten due to parental imprisonment were convicted as an adult, compared to 25% of boys, ages 0-18, who were separated from a parent for other reasons (Murray & Farrington, 2005). A continuation of this study found that 55% of boys, ages 0-18, separated from a parent due to parental imprisonment showed chronic internalizing problems throughout their lives, compared with only 18% who were not separated from a parent. The final findings of the study suggested that parental incarceration was a causal risk factor because the effects of separation due to parental imprisonment remained after controlling for other childhood risk factors such as low IQ, parental criminality, family poverty, and poor parenting (Murray & Farrington, 2008).

Huebner and Gustafson’s (2007) longitudinal study in the United States also provided support for parental incarceration as a causal risk factor for problem behaviors. Their study found that 26% of children, ages 0-18, with incarcerated mothers were later convicted, compared with 10% of children without incarcerated mothers. After controlling for background risk variables including child, maternal, paternal, family, and peer risk factors, maternal incarceration significantly predicted adult convictions in children of incarcerated mothers (Huebner & Gustafson, 2007).

In Australia, 14-year-old adolescents whose mother’s partners had been incarcerated were more likely to have internalizing and externalizing problems than their peers, but after controlling for other parental and family risk factors, such as socioeconomic status, maternal mental health, substance use, parenting style, and family adjustment, the effect of incarceration was no longer significant (Kinner, Alati, Najman,
The authors concluded that incarceration was not a causal factor of problem behaviors.

Another longitudinal study in Sweden found that 25% of children of incarcerated parents, ages 0-19, offended as adults, in comparison to 12% of children whose parents did not experience incarceration (Murray, Janson, & Farrington, 2007). These findings were attributed to parental background of criminality and not the incarceration itself because no additional effects of parental incarceration were found after taking parental background of criminality into account. While these findings suggest that parental incarceration may not be a causal risk factor, Murray, Janson, and Farrington (2007) speculated that children in Sweden may have been less affected by parental incarceration than in England because of shorter prison sentences, more family-friendly prison policies, an extended social welfare system, and more sympathetic public attitudes towards prisoners (Murray & Murray, 2010).

The results of this last study bring to light the importance of exploring prison policies and other factors that may contribute to child internalizing and externalizing problems in the context of parental incarceration. More generally, conflicting findings among the four longitudinal studies suggest future research should consider possible mechanisms linking parental incarceration and poor child outcomes (Murray & Murray, 2010).
The Parent-Child Relationship as a Mediating Mechanism between Parental Incarceration and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Problems

There is a long history of research on attachment theory, which is based on the idea that relationships with familiar caregivers lead to a child’s sense of security and productive exploration that are essential in developing cognitive and social skills (Bowlby, 1969; Makariev & Shaver, 2010). Children with a secure attachment often feel safe, valued, and competent and are able to communicate about moods, emotions, and impulses, while children with insecure attachments are more likely to have difficulties with anxiety, anger, depression, aggression, and mental disorganization (Makariev & Shaver, 2010).

The relation between attachment insecurity and social, emotional, and behavioral problems is considered to be strongest for populations that experience a lot of stress. Insecure individuals are less competent in their coping abilities, and consequently more likely than secure individuals to develop mental health problems in the presence of stressors (Makariev & Shaver, 2010). In this way, attachment insecurity may be thought of as a risk factor for social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Coupled with other stressors like those associated with parental incarceration, an insecure attachment could be very detrimental to a child’s development and future outcomes.

Murray and Murray (2010) suggested attachment security in the presence of stressors may also act as a protective factor for the development of social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Altogether, this theory points out the importance of strong caregiver relationships in the development of healthy children; thus, it is incredibly important to
consider when further exploring children of incarcerated parents and their risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Importantly, children of incarcerated parents may or may not develop attachment relationships with their incarcerated parents because some children will live with their incarcerated parent up until incarceration while others will never live with or be regularly cared for by that parent. Therefore, it is important to expand the theory of attachment relationships beyond secure and insecure attachments because attachment relationships generally exist between children and primary caregivers (Makariev & Shaver, 2010).

The parent-child relationship is an important factor in establishing an attachment relationship, but the parent-child relationship does not assume an attachment relationship. There is no evidence that a poor parent-child relationship alone predicts social, emotional, and behavioral problems. However, family support, positive family communication, and adult relationships are considered developmental assets, or protective factors, reducing the risk of problem behaviors in children (Search Institute, 2007). Strong parent-child relationships for children of incarcerated parents may reduce the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems in the same manner as significant adult relationships in other at-risk youth. Overall, the importance of attachment relationships and significant adult relationships in reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems points to the necessity of investigating the role that contact and visitation might play in strengthening parent-child relationships and reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents.
The Role of Contact and Visitation and the Parent-Child Relationship in Reducing the Risk of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral problems

Researchers, social workers, and other service providers contend that communication and visitation are the best ways to enhance child adjustment, improve child mental health, and reduce child antisocial behavior among children with incarcerated parents. Resources for service providers suggest that contact visitation, in which the child has the ability to see and touch their parent, is the most effective form of communication between children and their incarcerated parents because it helps normalize the situation and benefits children emotionally and behaviorally (Child Protection Best Practices Bulletin, n.d.). Visitation and other contact allows children to express their emotional reactions to the separation from their parent, helps the child develop a more realistic understanding of their parent’s circumstances, allows parents to model appropriate interaction, allows children to know that their parent is safe, and helps children preserve important family connections (Child Protection Best Practices Bulletin, n.d.). Other literature concludes that maintaining contact with an incarcerated parent improves a child’s emotional response to the incarceration and supports parent-child attachment (Satyanathan, n.d.). In addition, children seem to like having contact with their incarcerated parent, and most adolescents report that this contact is very important to them (Murray, 2005). Sack and Seidler (1978) interviewed 22 children ages 5-15 who engaged in visitation with their incarcerated parent two to four times per month and found that every child looked forward to visits, felt sad to leave the visits, and provided no negative views of visitation.
Theoretically, contact and visitation may improve child adjustment by maintaining attachment relationships or strengthening the parent-child relationship. For instance, contact and visitation may work to maintain a secure attachment by increasing the availability of the attachment figure. Contact and visitation can increase availability by providing the parent and child with opportunities to communicate via phone and mail, opportunities for physical visitation at the prison, and opportunities for the parent to provide sensitive care during these communications and visitations. As Murray and Murray (2010) note,

According to attachment theory, a key influence on a child’s sense of security is availability of the attachment figure. Availability depends on children believing that there are open lines of communication with the attachment figure, that there is physical accessibility, and that the attachment figure will respond sensitively if called upon to help. (p. 296)

Thus, contact and visitation may be instrumental in maintaining a secure attachment and limiting the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for these children.

In the case of unattached or insecurely attached children dealing with parental incarceration, it is unlikely that contact and visitation would be sufficient to create an attachment relationship or modify an insecure attachment to a secure attachment, but it may be beneficial in strengthening the parent-child relationship. It is possible that the increasing availability of the parent through contact and visitation, which was previously discussed as an important factor contributing to the maintenance of attachment security, is also an important factor in strengthening a parent-child relationship. Dowty (2005)
found that significant adults acted as protective factors for at-risk youth. Significant adults were those who demonstrated a willingness to communicate, provided personal guidance through supportive approaches, and actively invested in youth by initiating and maintaining connections; therefore, contact and visitation may be instrumental in strengthening the parent-child relationship for children separated by parental incarceration. In turn, this may reduce their risk of developing social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Although there is a general consensus that parental contact and visitation is important for children of prisoners, and although there is an accompanying rationale concerning the parent-child relationship as the linking mechanism by which contact and visitation may reduce the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems, Murray (2005) reported that very few studies had examined the effects of parent-child contact on the adjustment of children of prisoners. Furthermore, the findings of these few existing studies were mixed.

The first study found that caregivers reported their children were less disruptive after making initial visits to see their fathers in jail (Sack & Seidler, 1978). These 22 children were 5-15 years old and visited their fathers two to four times per month. The study consisted of clinical interviews of the children and brief discussions with their parents. The study did not specifically aim to obtain information about disruptive behaviors, but observed that a majority of the parents noted a change in disruptive behaviors after regular visitation.
A second study found that visits lowered children’s anxiety about their incarcerated mother’s absence (Stanton, 1980). This study consisted of 54 interviews with incarcerated mothers, but did not include interviews with their children. Many questions within these interviews centered on how much information had been given to the children about their mother’s absence. Some children were not given truthful or complete information at the beginning of their mother’s incarceration and this was associated with anxiety problems. A majority of the mothers reported that their children were less anxious after visitation and the author concluded that satisfactory visits were associated with less child anxiety. Satisfactory visits were not clearly defined and anxiety levels were not measured.

A third study found that inmates who had more contact with their children reported their children experienced more problems than inmates who had little to no contact with their children (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981). Ninety-one inmates completed a measure of problem behaviors for each of their dependent children ages 1-17. Problem behaviors included discipline problems, school problems, drug and alcohol problems, aggressive and delinquent behavioral problems, and other problems like babyish behavior, withdrawal, and nightmares. Inmates with more contact with their children indicated more problem behaviors. For example, 73.5% of inmates who telephoned their children reported problem behaviors while 43.8% of those who had not telephoned reported problem behaviors. It was concluded that this finding may be due to the fact that these inmates were more aware of their children’s problems because of their contact with the children and caregivers.
A fourth study by Twice and Brewster (2004) found that adolescents ages 13-20 who had more frequent contact with their incarcerated mothers were less likely to be suspended or drop out of school. Contact, including visits, phone calls, and letters, was divided into three frequency categories: less than once a month, once a month, and weekly or more often. Adolescents who had contact with their incarcerated parent less than once a month were four times more likely to be suspended or drop out of high school than adolescents who had contacted weekly or more often.

A fifth study of 57 families experiencing parental incarceration included information on contact and visitation and internalizing and externalizing behaviors among 4 to 15 year olds over six months. Contact prior to or during the six-month study was not associated with internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010).

Lastly, three studies reported findings about the relationship between contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship. Poehlmann (2005) and Dallaire, Wilson, and Ciccone (2009) reported an association between contact and visitation and insecure attachment relationships in children ranging from 2.5 to 14 years of age. Shlafer and Poehlmann (2010) found that experiencing no contact with an incarcerated parent was associated with children’s feelings of alienation for 24 children ages nine and older. Contact and visitation was not linked to trust and communication in the parent-child relationship.

Undoubtedly, more research is needed to clarify the relationship among contact and visitation, parent-child relationships, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.
Notably, researchers have remarked that other kinds of data are needed to further explore these relationships (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009), such as, the legal and tangible realities of contact and visitation, which include frequency of contact and visitation, barriers to contact and visitation, and quality of contact and visitation.

**The Legal and Tangible Realities of Contact and Visitation**

The provisions of the CRC and other International Human Rights documents create a strong legal basis for contact and visitation for children with incarcerated parents (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). In fact, every country except for the United States and Somalia has ratified the CRC. Although the United States has not ratified the document, it is a signatory to the CRC and was heavily involved in its creation (Blanchfield, 2013). The CRC does not specifically mention children of incarcerated parents, except to guarantee them the right to information about their parent’s whereabouts, but other provisions make it clear that these children have other rights that should be guaranteed them during the length of parental incarceration (Boudin, 2011). For example, the CRC emphasizes the need to protect children from any discrimination or punishment based on their parents’ status or activities, the duty to consider each child’s best interests, and the right of all children to maintain relations with their parents (Rosenberg, 2009). Article 9.3 of the CRC specifically states, “States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.” This provision provides the right of children of incarcerated
parents to regular contact and visitation with their incarcerated parent, unless this contact or visitation is deemed harmful for the child. This also suggests that prison policies and practices that make contact and visitation difficult or impossible violate children’s rights set forth in Article 9 of the CRC (Boudin, 2011).

As well, the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union establishes in Article 24 that “every child shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both his or her parents, unless that is contrary to the child’s best interests” (European Union, 2000). The Council of Europe’s Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms provides the right to respect private and family life without the interference of a public authority (Council of Europe, 1950). If interference, like incarceration, is considered lawful, the conditions of interference must serve a legitimate purpose and be proportionate to this aim. It is possible to conclude that disproportionate restrictions on contact and visitation are in violation of this right to respect for private and family life (Boudin, 2011).

These international documents always include a reference to whether or not contact and visitation are in the best interests of the child. Further research on contact and visitation between children and their incarcerated parents should pay special attention to this clause and work to provide recommendations on when and under what conditions contact and visitation are in the best interests of children. It is important to reflect not only on whether or not contact and visitation is beneficial for children, but also on the underlying mechanisms linking contact and visitation to benefits for the child. This will allow stakeholders to understand how prison policies and practices might best facilitate
contact and visitation, aid the healthy development of children, and protect the rights of millions of children across the globe.

The current tangible reality of contact and visitation between incarcerated parents and their children does not at all align with the legal reality of contact and visitation. For example, children and youth of incarcerated parents have little or no voice about if or how they will be allowed to visit or communicate with their incarcerated parent (Reed & Reed, 1997). Rates of parental incarceration have increased in the United States for women, African Americans, and individuals of low socioeconomic status (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008; Poehlmann et al., 2010; Western & Wildeman, 2009). These groups are less likely to have the resources to facilitate contact and visitation between children and their incarcerated parents. Studies have found that frequency of contact and visitation has decreased while these groups have grown within the prison population (Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002; Schimer, Nellis, & Mauer, 2009). In addition, prison policies and practices make contact and visitation difficult or impossible for many children with incarcerated parents, and contact between imprisoned parents and their children is severely restricted, sometimes as a punishment for the parent (Bouchet, 2008).

In terms of frequency, phone calls and mail exchange between imprisoned parents and their children are infrequent, although more likely than visitation. A survey of state prison inmates revealed that 28% of mothers and 40% of fathers had never spoken to their children on the phone, and 21% of mothers and 32% of fathers had never sent or received any mail from their children (Reed & Reed, 1997). Visits are often considered a privilege for prisoners rather than a right for families (Murray, 2005), resulting in low
visitation rates that have even declined in recent years. A U.S. Department of Justice special report stated that 52% of mothers and 55% of fathers had never received a single visit from their children (USDJ, 1994).

A multitude of barriers, including prison location, prison policies, and children’s views of contact and visitation play a role in the lack of contact and visitation between incarcerated parents and their children. For instance, geographical distance and transportation costs to the prison location contribute to low visitation rates. Data from the National Institute of Corrections showed the distance from the child’s residence to the correctional facility accounted for 43% of the reasons cited by mothers for infrequent or no visits from their children (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993). In a study by Bloom and Steinhart (1993), 61.5% of children lived over 100 miles from the mother’s place of incarceration and only 9% lived within 20 miles of the facility. Prison location often determines the type and frequency of contact and visitation. Children who live farther from the prison may rely more heavily on phone calls and mail and may be less likely to visit than children who live closer to the prison (Mumola, 2000; Murray, 2005).

Prison policies and procedures regarding contact and visitation vary widely (Boudin, Stutz, & Littman, 2014). Visitation policies are often cited as reasons for low rates of visitation, as many family members encounter intimidating and uncomfortable conditions that deter future contact (Bouchet, 2008). For example, adolescents have reported mixed feelings about visitation because there was no time to talk individually, it involved unpleasant searches, and facilities were physically uncomfortable (Murray, 2005). Others have noted inconvenient visiting hours and long wait times as significant
barriers to visitation (Arditti, 2003; Loper, Carlson, Levitt, & Scheffel, 2009; Reed & Reed, 1997).

A large source of concern for families is the facility policy on contact visitation, which involves contact in which families visit with prisoners in the same room and are allowed to hug and kiss each other. Wives of prisoners reported that the alternative, closed visits where visitors talk to prisoners through a glass barrier, were horrific and their children experienced them with bewilderment and fear (Murray, 2005). Poehlmann et al. (2010) examined correctional facility policies of 10 states in different geographical areas of the United States. Federal prison facilities allowed handshakes, hugs, and kisses at the beginning and end of visits. State prison facilities varied in their opportunities for contact visitation by state and facility, with Massachusetts having the lowest percentage (82%) of prisons allowing contact visitation for general prisoners. One hundred percent of state prisons in seven out of ten states allowed contact visitation for general prisoners. On the other hand, five states prohibited contact visitation in all prisons for maximum security prisoners. While county, city, and regional jails were located closer to families, making it more likely for visitation to occur, these jails appeared least likely to offer opportunities for physical contact during visitation. Most of the jails surveyed used noncontact barriers for visitation purposes and a few used closed-circuit television transmission in which visitors were located in a separate area of the jail during visitation (Poehlmann et al., 2010). Policies and procedures like these often result in caregivers who do not want to allow contact and visitation between the child and incarcerated parent (Murray, 2005).
Importantly, policies regarding contact and visitation are often a major barrier to parent-child contact. Families in the Bronx estimated spending about 15% of their monthly income on contact with an incarcerated family member (Poehlmann et al., 2010). One major cost for these families is phone calls. Parents are only allowed to make collect calls out of prison, and the charges for these calls are much higher than a collect call made from another phone, making it difficult for caregivers to receive these collect calls (Murray & Murray, 2010).

There is some evidence that type and frequency of contact and visitation varies with the age of the child. Contact and visitation may be less likely to occur with younger children (Schlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). While data are not available on frequency of contact by age group, the literature does discuss additional barriers to contact for young children. For instance, infants and toddlers are less capable of using letters and phones to communicate with their parent. As well, caregivers often attempt to keep children from contact and visitation, but Schlafer and Poehlmann (2010) found that older children have found a way to engage in contact and visitation with their incarcerated parent without the knowledge of their caregiver. They noted that it would be much more difficult for a young child to make these arrangements. Schlafer and Poehlmann (2010) also noted that older children may have a better understanding of their parent’s incarceration and may be able to handle contact better than very young children.

Factors related to the legal and tangible reality of contact and visitation for children of incarcerated parents, like ideas about rights to contact and visit, and feelings about barriers, policies, and procedures, likely affect children’s views of contact and
visitation. Unfortunately, studies have rarely considered children’s perspectives on topics related to contact and visitation, thus, making it difficult to understand their contact and visitation experiences and to assess the impact of contact and visitation on social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

**Exploring Children’s Views of Contact and Visitation**

In terms of children’s feelings about contact and visitation, Shlafer and Poelhmann (2010) found that some children were unsure about whether or not they wanted to engage in contact and visitation with their incarcerated parent, and many children reported negative experiences of contact and visitation. For example, one child said, “My mom argued with my dad the whole time. I only got to talk to him for 10 seconds” (p. 405). On the other hand, Murray (2005) found that adolescents reported that contact and visitation was very important to them, and Sack and Seidler (1978) reported uniformly positive views of visitation from all 22 interviewed children ages 5-15 years.

It is important to note that most research examining parent-child contact has focused on the perceptions and attitudes of the incarcerated parents and has not focused on children’s perceptions and attitudes (Shlafer & Poelhmann, 2010). Pertinently, studies have not addressed children’s perspectives on most topics related to contact and visitation, including caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, emotional responses during contact and visitation, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of the contact and visitation experience, and contact and visitation as a right.
Theoretically, children’s views and experiences of visitation may affect the type of contact chosen, the frequency of contact and visitation, the extent to which contact and visitation enhances the parent-child relationship, and the extent to which contact and visitation reduces the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems. For instance, negative views of contact and visitation and minimal desire for a relationship with their parent may affect the quality of the parent-child interaction because the child may not feel interested or comfortable in interacting with the parent. Additionally, children’s views about their rights to contact and visit their incarcerated parent or about caregiver assistance with contact and visitation may affect their attitudes toward frequency of contact and visitation, barriers to contact and visitation, and quality of contact and visitation. The manner in which these views impact contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems has implications for decision-making regarding when and in which manner contact and visitation is in the best interests of children of incarcerated parents.

**Theoretical Framework**

In synthesizing the literature on children of incarcerated parents, a theoretical framework emerges regarding the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional and behavioral problems. Figure 1.1 depicts the relationships within this theoretical framework. The attachment relationship, or the parent-child relationship, is at the center of this framework. It is the key mechanism through which frequency of
contact and visitation, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and child social, emotional, and behavioral problems are related.

First, frequency of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent is related to social, emotional, and behavioral problems through the parent-child relationship. Children who contact and visit their incarcerated parent frequently will have more opportunities to develop a stronger sense of security. Their parent will be physically and emotionally available to establish open lines of communication and to respond sensitively if called upon to help. This availability is key to ensuring children maintain their attachment relationships or enhance their parent-child relationship (Murray & Murray, 2010). In turn, this stronger sense of security within the parent-child relationship will act as a protective factor for the development of social, emotional and behavioral problems (Murray & Murray, 2010). Conversely, children who do not contact and visit their parent, or do so rarely, will have few opportunities to develop a stronger sense of security within their parent-child relationship. The critical component of availability will not exist. As a result, the absence of a secure attachment relationship or a positive parent-child relationship will act as a risk factor for social, emotional, and behavioral problems in the face of stress associated with parental incarceration (Makariev & Shaver, 2010).

Second, the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems might differ based on the type of contact and visitation a child has with their incarcerated parent. For example, children who visit will experience more opportunities for their parent to be physically accessible than children who only receive phone calls or mail. Children who receive only
mail will have fewer opportunities to establish open lines of communication and respond sensitively to calls for help because of the lag time associated with communicating through mail. Therefore, the theory of attachment suggests that visitation will be the most beneficial in enhancing the parent-child relationship and in reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Third, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation play an important role in frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. For instance, children’s beliefs about contact and visitation will affect their frequency of contact and visitation. Children who do not have a desire to contact and visit their incarcerated parent or who do not believe their parents or caregivers want them to contact and visit will be less likely to do so. Also, children who perceive low quality parent-child interactions or low quality environment during contact and visitation will be less likely to perceive the accessibility of their parent. Consequently, these children will be less likely to maintain their secure attachments or enhance their parent-child relationship and will be more likely to develop social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

The theoretical framework presented here is supported by attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Makariev & Shaver, 2010) and some of the literature on children of incarcerated parents (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Stanton, 1980; Twice & Brewster, 2004), but many of the relationships have not been tested. Specifically, researchers have not tested the parent-child relationship as a mediator of the relation between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Researchers have
also not tested the relationship of children’s perspectives to frequency of contact and visitation or to social, emotional, and behavioral problems in the context of parental incarceration. This study aims to examine these relationships.

Summary

Children of incarcerated parents are at risk of experiencing an array of social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Contact and visitation and a strong parent-child relationship may act as protective factors for the development of these problems. More specifically, contact and visitation may reduce the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems by strengthening the parent-child relationship. While human rights conventions support contact and visitation for children of incarcerated parents, policies and procedures make contact and visitation difficult and most children do not contact and visit regularly. Research on the relationships among contact and visitation, parent-child relationships, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems is needed to better support children of incarcerated parents and to fully protect their right to contact and visit their parents. Additionally, this research needs to consider children’s perspectives of contact and visitation in an effort to understand how their views impact social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Altogether, this detailed review of the literature reveals the need to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent does type and frequency of contact and visitation affect social, emotional, and behavioral problems in children of incarcerated parents?
2. To what extent does the parent-child relationship mediate the relationship between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems in children of incarcerated parents?

3. To what extent do children’s perspectives of contact and visitation affect frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems?

Chapter 3 describes the specific methods used for the study, including the research methodology, study procedures, measures, approach to analysis, and threats to validity.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN – METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study employed a cross-sectional, correlational design. Survey data were collected from a convenience sample of 40 children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. This chapter details the data collection protocol, sample characteristics, research measures, approach to analysis, and threats to validity.

Data Collection Protocol

Human Subjects Concerns

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Clemson University Institutional Review Board. The research team followed all informed consent procedures with the children and caregivers. All data were stored in a locked filing cabinet at the University Center of Greenville, and will remain there for three years. Each child-caregiver dyad was assigned a unique identification number that was used for data management. All electronic data and identification files were maintained on personal computers and were password protected.

Recruitment

A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants. Potential participants were identified using the Building Dreams participant database (Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, 2013). See Appendix A for more details on Building Dreams. This database included names and contact information of children and guardians
who participated in the Building Dreams Mentoring Project in the upstate area of South Carolina. A database search was conducted to identify children, ages 8-18, marked as having an incarcerated parent at some point in time. Five participants were also recruited by word of mouth.

Legal guardians of children identified through the database search or through word of mouth were contacted by phone. Phone calls consisted of a few screening questions in order to ensure that the child had a parent who was currently incarcerated, and to ensure that the caregiver contacted had legal guardianship of the child. It was also imperative that the child knew their parent was incarcerated. Children were welcome to participate regardless of whether or not they had ever contacted or visited their incarcerated parent. After explaining the study purpose and process on the phone, a meeting was arranged at the University Center of Greenville or a public library near the participants’ home. In two cases, caregivers did not have transportation to either of these locations so the researcher conducted the caregiver survey and the child interview in the participant’s home.

Participant recruitment was very challenging. A majority of the phone numbers for eligible participants in the database were no longer connected. Only about 25% of the 327 phone numbers were still in service, and another 25% of the phone numbers still in service were no longer associated with the families identified from the database. Five families that the researchers were able to reach were not interested in participating and 31 families no longer met the eligibility requirements because their parent was no longer incarcerated. Due to challenges with recruiting from the database, the researchers
attempted multiple other techniques, including providing fliers and talking to families at community centers, publishing study information in newsletters, and using contacts in other communities to inform organizations and families about the study. As soon as a child and caregiver agreed to participate, the interview was scheduled and completed. Researchers spent a total of two years on participant recruitment.

**Caregiver Questionnaire and Child Interview**

At the meeting place, the researcher greeted caregivers and children with small talk about the weather, school, and plans for the weekend. This was specifically done with the intent of gaining trust and putting the participants at ease because the topic of the research was very sensitive. Then, the researcher reiterated all pertinent information about the research project and followed informed consent procedures with the caregiver (Appendix B). The caregiver was then asked to complete the short questionnaire while the child was interviewed in a separate room.

The caregiver questionnaire assessed demographic information of the caregiver, parent, and child, including information about the parent’s incarceration history and the extent to which the parent had ever provided care for the child (Appendix C). The questionnaire also assessed caregiver opinions on contact and visitation between the child and incarcerated parent, frequency of contact and visitation, caregiver perspectives of the caregiver-child relationship, and caregiver perspectives on internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors of the child. Caregivers completed a separate questionnaire for each of the participating children in their care. Caregivers usually completed each questionnaire in about 20 minutes.
Once the informed consent procedures were completed with the caregiver, the researcher and the child moved to a separate room. The child interview was conducted in a separate room from the location where the caregiver was completing the questionnaire to ensure the children could speak freely about their opinions and emotions. Informed assent procedures were then completed with the child (Appendix B). Children were given arts and crafts materials to play with during the interview. They were instructed that they could end the interview at any time and that they could ask to take breaks at any time. Three of the younger children chose to take a break during the interview, but none of the children asked to end the interview. All of the interview questions were read aloud by the researcher. Questions were repeated upon a child’s request. Children were given the option of responding to the questions by pointing at the response options on notecards set in front of them, or by saying the answers aloud. Children were asked to respond aloud to some open-ended questions.

The child interview assessed the parent-child relationship, children’s desire to contact and visit, frequency of contact and visitation, experiences of contact and visitation, emotions during and immediately following contact and visitation, perceptions of barriers related to contact and visitation, perceptions of prison policies, opinions on contact and visitation as a right, and children’s perspectives of their own internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors (Appendix D). On average, the child interview was administered in 45 minutes.

Upon completion of the interview, each child received a $20 VISA gift card. A grant was awarded from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)
to assist with the cost of incentives. Then, the researcher gave children and caregivers opportunities to ask questions about the research. Caregivers often wanted to talk about their unique struggles with the prison system. The researcher talked with the participants for 5-10 minutes after the child interview was completed with the intent of ensuring that the child and caregiver were not overly stressed by the interview and the questionnaire. A handout of applicable resources was then given to each family (Appendix E). The resource handout included brief descriptions and contact information for organizations that offer child mentoring, transportation for visitation at state prisons, and other services for children and families.

**Sample Characteristics**

An a priori power analysis indicated a sample of 38 children was needed to power the analyses planned for the study (Appendix F). First, effect sizes were located in the related literature for the same constructs that were to be measured in this study. Second, the effect sizes were converted to Delta (Δ), a statistical measure of effect size, using power calculations. Third, the Table of Effect Sizes (Kramer & Thiemann, 1987) was used to determine the sample size needed for each Delta. Lastly, the Deltas were averaged to determine the final sample size needed to power the proposed multiple regression analyses.

A total of 40 children and youth participated in the study. Fifty-five percent of the sample of children and youth was female. Children and youth ranged from 9-18 years old, and there were a similar number of participating children at each age. Nearly 68% of
the children had at least one other sibling participating in the study. Forty percent of the children identified as African American, 37.5% identified as Caucasian, 17.5% identified as mixed race or ethnicity, and 5% identified as Hispanic. Additionally, 29 (72.5%) children had a father currently incarcerated, 10 (25%) children had a mother currently incarcerated, and one (2.5%) child had both parents currently incarcerated. More than 75% of children had lived with their parent before incarceration, but more than 60% of children had been separated from their parent for the first time at the age of five or younger.

A total of 21 caregivers participated in the study. The majority of the caregivers (62%) were the mothers of the participating children, but other caregivers included grandmothers (19%), grandfathers (9%), sisters (5%), and friends (5%). Caregivers ranged from 22 to 81 years old. Thirty-eight percent of the caregivers identified as African American, 38% identified as Caucasian, 14% identified as Hispanic, and 10% identified as another minority. About 19% of caregivers indicated that their family income was less than $10,000, 43% indicated their family income was between $10,000 and $30,000, 29% of caregivers indicated their family income was between $30,001 and $50,000, and 9% of caregivers indicated their family income was more than $50,001.

Children and caregivers provided information about 22 incarcerated parents. Fifty percent of the incarcerated parents were African American, 41% were Caucasian, and 9% were Hispanic. Reasons for incarceration included selling drugs, theft, robbery, forgery, felony DUI, criminal sexual conduct, child endangerment and abuse, bank robbery, and
murder. Over 72% of incarcerated parents had been incarcerated previously, and all of the incarcerated parents had current sentences of at least two years.

**Research Measures**

Well-established measures of the parent-child relationship and child internalizing and externalizing problems were used in this study, but many of the other measures used for the caregiver questionnaire and child interview were created for this study. Researchers in this field had relied on open-ended questions and had collected little quantitative data about contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent. Scale construction began by generating a large number of items that were considered important in measuring the construct. This included generating items that were worded differently, but were measuring the same indicator of the construct. After consulting with colleagues, items were slowly eliminated based on word choice and overall relation to the construct. The items that remained were considered essential to measuring the construct based on the literature. These items were scanned by a system which provided an estimate of the reading level of each item. Items were reworded as needed to ensure a second grade reading level. These items were used in four child interviews to further ensure the comprehension of items by young children. Those items that were difficult to understand were again reworded (see unpublished manuscript Hedge, 2015).

**Tests of Reliability and Validity**

A detailed review of reliability and validity analyses for the scales used in this study can be found in Hedge’s (2015) unpublished manuscript. The purpose of the
analyses was to explore the reliability and validity of the measures used in the study in order to make decisions about their use in further analyses. Analyses began with data cleaning. Descriptive statistics were assessed for each variable of interest, and variables were recoded as necessary. Missing data, outliers, skewness, and kurtosis were explored for each of the measures. Appropriate transformations were completed. In some cases, missing data were imputed using expectation maximization (EM).

Validation of each measure began by exploring correlations among items thought to form scales. Items that did not correlate or were too strongly correlated with another item were removed from further analyses. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the hypothesized factor structure of each measure. A nonsignificant chi-square statistic (Barrett, 2007), a comparative fit index (CFI) above .90 (McDonald & Ho, 1990), and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) below .06 indicated a good fit for the data (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). In the event that CFA was unsuccessful or a measure did not have a hypothesized structure, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring with oblimin rotation and Kaiser Normalization was used to explore the factor structure of the items. A minimum eigenvalue of 1.00 was used to retain extracted factors. A statistically significant value for Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic above .60, and factor loadings above .40 were used to assess the accuracy of the EFA (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2014).

Internal consistency reliability and split-half reliability analyses were used to test the overall reliability of the scales and their subscales. Coefficients above .7 were considered good, but coefficients above .55 were considered acceptable (Kline, 2000).
Once scales were computed based on results from the CFA or EFA and the reliability analyses, convergent and discriminant validity were tested to ensure that the scales were related to other theoretically related constructs, but were not related to other constructs without a theoretical basis for association. Correlation analyses were used to test the associations between the constructs. Convergent validity was established if the correlation analyses between the scale and other measures of related constructs were statistically significant. Discriminant validity was established if the correlation analyses between the scale and other measures of non-related constructs were statistically nonsignificant. Finally, the results of all the reliability and validity analyses for each measure were considered together to determine whether or not the measure should be used for further analyses of the data.

Further discussion of the measures will not include reliability and validity statistics as the complete results of the reliability and validity analyses are available in *Children’s Perspectives of Contact and Visitation with an Incarcerated Parent: Psychometric Properties of Study Measures* (Hedge, 2015). Table 3.1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach’s alpha for each of the scales used in the study.

**Type and Frequency of Contact and Visitation**

Type and frequency of contact and visitation was assessed using three questions. These items were constructed for use in this study. Children and caregivers were asked to report the frequency of receiving mail from their incarcerated parent, the frequency of receiving phone calls from their incarcerated parent, and the frequency of going to the
prison to visit their parent. Response options included never, a few times a year, monthly, and weekly or more often. Cross-informant agreement on these items was excellent.

Table 3.1. Summary of scales in the current sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Brief Problem Checklist (BPC)</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Brief Problem Checklist (BPC)</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA-R)</td>
<td>68.38</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>24.55</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions about mail</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions about phone calls</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions about visitation</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver assistance</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations of the responses from children and the responses of caregivers on frequency of mail, frequency of phone calls, and frequency of visitation were significant and strong at .73, .96, and .73, respectively. The majority of children (45%) and caregivers (53%) reported that children receive mail from their parent a few times a year. Many children
(38%) and caregivers (35%) reported receiving phone calls weekly, yet nearly as many children (30%) and caregivers (33%) reported never receiving phone calls. Additionally, a large proportion of children (43%) and caregivers (45%) reported never visiting the prison.

Social, emotional, and behavioral problems

The Brief Problem Checklist (BPC) was selected for this study because of its demonstrated reliability and validity with children as young as seven years old. Chorpita et al. (2010) developed the 12-item measure by applying item response theory and factor analysis to the Youth Self-Report (YSR) and the Child Behavior Check List (CBCL) in a sample of 2,332 youth. The BPC was then tested with 184 children entering clinical treatment and their caregivers. Children and caregivers were administered the checklist over the phone at several time points. Psychometric properties of the scale for children and caregivers were very strong, and factor analysis indicated a two-factor solution in support of an internalizing and an externalizing subscale.

Items of the BPC were measured on a three-point Likert-type scale from not true to very true. Children responded to these items about themselves while caregivers responded to these items about their children. A total scale, an internalizing subscale, and an externalizing subscale were computed by summing scores on the relevant items. Previous internal consistency reliability statistics for the child BPC were $\alpha_{\text{Total}} = .76$, $\alpha_{\text{Internalizing}} = .72$ and $\alpha_{\text{Externalizing}} = .70$. Caregiver BPC internal reliability statistics were $\alpha_{\text{Total}} = .82$, $\alpha_{\text{Internalizing}} = .83$ and $\alpha_{\text{Externalizing}} = .81$ (Chorpita et al., 2010).
After administering this scale to four young children who participated in this study, three items on the child BPC were altered to ensure comprehension of all items. Item 4 was changed from “I feel too guilty” to “I feel like I have done something wrong.” Item 5 was changed from “I feel worthless or inferior” to “I feel like I am not as good as other people.” Lastly, item 8 was changed from “I have a hot temper” to “I get mad easily.” The reliability and validity of this measure needed to be reestablished given the unique sample of this study, the small word changes made to the child items, and the changes in administration of the measure.

It is important to note here that the child BPC and the caregiver BPC were not significantly correlated with one another, $r = -.07, n = 40, p = .674$. Previous research demonstrated that overall cross-informant agreement was low, but agreement on the externalizing subscale was higher (Chorpita et al., 2010). This remained true for the current sample with a strong positive correlation between the child and caregiver externalizing subscales, $r = .44, n = 40, p = .005$.

**Parent-Child Relationship**

The Revised Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA-R) measure was selected to measure the parent-child relationship from the perspective of the child due to sound psychometric properties in previous samples with youth ages 9 to 15 years (Gullone & Robinson, 2005). Only the parent attachment section of the inventory was used in this study because it was important to isolate the relationship between the child and the incarcerated parent in order to test its relationship to contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Items of the IPPA-R were measured on a
three-point Likert-type scale from never true to always true. Scores were computed by summing responses on each item. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) used principal components analysis to cluster items of the original version into three subscales: trust, communication, and alienation. Gullone and Robinson (2005) scored the revised version in accordance with these three subscales and reported good reliability and validity statistics with their two samples. The authors reported good internal consistency reliability coefficients of the trust, communication, and alienation subscales, $\alpha = .78$, $\alpha = .82$, $\alpha = .79$, respectively.

After conducting four interviews, it was determined that the negatively worded items were difficult for young children, and five items were rephrased for clarity. For example, item 5 was reworded from “I can’t depend on my parent to help me solve a problem” to “I can depend on my parent to help me solve a problem.” Other items included, “My parent is a good parent,” and “I tell my parent about my problems and troubles.”

**Extent of Emotions about Contact and Visitation**

A total of 34 items were constructed for the survey to measure children’s positive and negative emotions about contact and visitation. The items were designed to form three separate scales: children’s emotional response about receiving mail, children’s emotional response about receiving phone calls, and children’s emotional response about visitation. It was important to design three separate scales because it was expected that many children would have experienced some form of contact and visitation, but would not have experienced all forms of contact and visitation. For example, some children
experienced receiving mail from their incarcerated parent, but had never experienced phone calls or visitation. All of the items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Receiving mail.** Ten of the items were used to measure children’s emotions about receiving mail and about reading mail from their incarcerated parent. The emotions measured included happiness, sadness, excitement, anger, and nervousness. For example, items included, “I feel happy when I get mail from my parent” and “I feel sad when I read a letter from my parent.” Six of the children had never received mail from their incarcerated parent and did not complete these questions during the interview. A total scale, a positive emotion sub-scale, and a negative emotion sub-scale were computed for use in the study.

**Receiving phone calls.** Eight items were used to measure children’s emotions during and after receiving phone calls from their incarcerated parent. Emotions measured included happiness, sadness, excitement, anger, and nervousness. Items on this scale included, “I feel excited when I talk to my parent on the phone” and “I feel sad right after I get off of the phone with my parent.” Twelve children had never received a phone call from their incarcerated parent and did not complete these questions during the interview. A total scale and a negative sub-scale were computed for use in the study. Due to issues of internal structure validity, it was not possible to create a positive emotion subscale with this sample. A single item should be considered for use when exploring positive emotions about phone calls. In particular, “I feel happy when I talk to my parent on the phone” was considered for use in further analyses.
Visitation. Sixteen items were used to measure children’s emotions before, during, and after visitation with their incarcerated parent. Emotions measured included happiness, sadness, excitement, anger, nervousness, and fear. Scale items included, “I feel nervous on my way to the prison to visit my parent” and “I feel scared while I am visiting my parent at the prison.” Seventeen children had never visited their parent at the prison. A total scale, positive subscale, and negative subscale were computed for use in this study.

Children’s Feelings about Caregivers’ Assistance with Contact and Visitation

Six items were constructed for the child interview to measure children’s feelings about using their caregivers to help them contact and visit their incarcerated parent. Three items gauged the extent to which children felt comfortable asking their caregiver to help them send letters, receive phone calls, and visit the prison. For instance, “I feel comfortable asking my caregiver to take me to the prison to visit my parent.” Another three items gauged the extent to which children attempted to contact and visit their incarcerated parent without their caregiver knowing. For example, “I have tried to visit my parent without my caregiver knowing.” The items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The total scale, an involve subscale and an avoid subscale were computed for use in the study.

Desire for a Relationship with an Incarcerated Parent

A section of the child interview focused on children’s opinions about having a relationship with their incarcerated parent, and on children’s perceptions of their parents’ and caregivers’, opinions about having a relationship with the incarcerated parent. For
instance, five items in the interview were interested in the extent to which children desired a relationship with their parent, the extent to which children felt a relationship with their parent was important, and the extent to which children wanted to receive mail, receive phone calls, and visit the prison. Example items included, “I want to have a relationship with my parent” and “I feel it is important to have a relationship with my parent.” The same five items were then used to gauge children’s perceptions of their caregiver’s opinions. Example items included, “My caregiver wants me to have a relationship with my parent” and “My caregiver wants me to go to the prison to visit my parent.” Lastly, the same five items were used to gauge children’s perceptions of their parent’s opinions. Example items included, “My parent feels it is important to have a relationship with me” and “My parent wants to call me on the phone.”

In addition, a section of the caregiver questionnaire focused on caregiver’s opinions about a relationship between their child and the incarcerated parent. The items used on the child interview were reworded for the caregiver questionnaire. Example items included, “I want my child to have a relationship with their parent” and “I want my child to receive letters from their parent.”

All of these items were constructed for the survey. They were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It was hypothesized that these items would form four scales: the extent to which children desire a relationship with their parent, the extent to which children perceive their caregivers to desire a relationship for them and their incarcerated parent, the extent to which children perceive their parent
to desire a relationship with them, and the extent to which caregivers desire their child to have a relationship with the incarcerated parent.

Correlation analyses were conducted separately for each five-item cluster in order to evaluate the degree to which items would form the hypothesized scales. Each correlation analysis showed that the five items were very strongly correlated with each other above .80. It was concluded that the five items were measuring the same indicator of the relationship desire construct. Instead of forming scales, one item from each of the four proposed scales was used in this study. More specifically, the following four items were used: I want to have a relationship with my incarcerated parent, my caregiver wants me to have a relationship with my incarcerated parent, my incarcerated parent wants to have a relationship with me, and I want my child to have a relationship with their incarcerated parent. Descriptive statistics for the single items measuring relationship desire are provided in Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Desires Relationship</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Perceives Caregiver Desires Relationship</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Perceives Parent Desires Relationship</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver Desires Relationship</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feasibility of Contact and Visitation**

A set of ten items was constructed for the survey to measure children’s perceptions of the feasibility of contact and visitation. The first five items were specifically about barriers to contact and visitation, including the cost of phone calls, the
cost of visitation, and the distance of the prison from their home. The next five items were about the overall ease of contact and visitation. For example, “It is easy for my parent to call me” and “It is easy for me to get phone calls from my parent.” The items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A total scale, a perceptions of barriers subscale, and an ease of contact and visitation subscale were computed for use in the study.

**Quality of Contact and Visitation**

A section of the survey attempted to measure quality of phone calls and quality of visitation for children who had experienced contact and visitation. Eight items were constructed for the survey to measure quality of phone calls and ten items were constructed for the survey to measure quality of visitation. The quality of phone call items covered a wide range of quality issues from opportunities for children to talk about topics important to them, to perceptions of the length of time children were allowed to talk to their incarcerated parents. The items constructed to measure quality of visitation also covered an array of quality issues including friendly prison staff, long wait times, and length of visitation. All of the quality items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Correlations among the quality of phone call items were not strong. The majority of the correlations among items were nonsignificant. Correlations among the items about quality of visitation were also weak and largely nonsignificant. Results from the correlation analyses did not suggest that the items might form a scale; thus, it was
decided to terminate further reliability and validity analyses. Instead, the 18 items were considered for use as single items only.

**Children’s Perceptions of Contact and Visitation as a Right**

A set of items was constructed for the survey to measure children’s perceptions of contact and visitation as a right. Items included “I should be able to have a say in decisions made about contacting and visiting my parent” and “I feel I have a right to contact and visit my parent.” The items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A total scale was computed for use in this study.

**Approach to Analysis**

The data were entered and analyzed using IBM SPSS statistics software version 22 (IBM Corporation, 2013). Data analysis began with data cleaning and data preparation. Then, each of the hypotheses was analyzed using multivariate linear modeling. This section describes the techniques used for data cleaning and data preparation. It then describes the specific approach to analysis for each of the study hypotheses.

**Data Cleaning**

Data cleaning was a vital part of the analysis because it helped ensure the accuracy of the data. Frequency analyses were used to determine if there were any outliers or missing values. Outliers were corrected by fixing data entry mistakes. Missing value analyses were conducted to determine if the data were missing completely at random. Expectation Maximization (EM) was used to replace missing values when
necessary. (See Hedge’s (2015) unpublished manuscript for more details on missing values.) Some variables were collapsed based on the distribution of scores from the frequency table.

**Data preparation**

Data preparation was an essential component of the approach to analysis because it helped ensure the accuracy of the multiple regression models used to test the study hypotheses. Data preparation began with correlation analyses, exploratory factor analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, reliability analyses, and convergent and discriminant validity analyses. These analyses were described in detail in *Children’s Perspectives of Contact and Visitation with an Incarcerated Parent: Psychometric Properties of Study Measures* (Hedge, 2015).

Further data preparation included assessing univariate normality and multicollinearity for the variables of interest. Assessing univariate normality was important because one of the underlying assumptions of multiple regression is a normal distribution of values. Univariate normality was assessed by checking for extreme values, skewness, and kurtosis. Extreme values were identified using box plots and adjusted through winsorizing, a technique in which an extreme value is recoded to the nearest acceptable value. Skewness and kurtosis were assessed using descriptive statistics. A skewness statistic greater than .80 or less than -.80 indicated a nonnormal distribution. Skewed variables were transformed using either a square root transformation, a natural log transformation, or an inverse transformation.
It was important to test for multicollinearity because it suggests that two or more variables are measuring the same construct. This would be problematic in the planned multiple regression analyses. Bivariate correlations were used to identify variables that were highly co-linear. Variables with a correlation above .60 were used cautiously. If a variable had a correlation with another variable above .80, only one of the variables was used in further analyses. Multicollinearity was also evaluated by using the collinearity statistics and diagnostics generated with the multiple regression analyses.

**Bivariate Analyses**

Bivariate analyses, including Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and descriptive statistics, were used to explore patterns and associations in the sample. More specifically, the analyses explored whether or not children and youth differed significantly on frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation by demographic and parental incarceration related variables. The demographic and parental incarceration related variables included gender of the child, ethnicity of the child, age of the caregiver, ethnicity of the caregiver, ethnicity of the parent, the gender of the incarcerated parent, family income, the age the child was first separated from the parent due to incarceration, whether or not the parent had been incarcerated previously, and whether or not the child lived with the parent before incarceration.
Testing Hypotheses 1-4

The following four hypotheses suggested the need to test the relationship between type and frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H1.** Higher scores on frequency of receiving mail from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H2.** Higher scores on frequency of receiving phone calls from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H3.** Higher scores on frequency of visitation with an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H4.** Higher scores on overall frequency of contact and visitation will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Four separate multiple regressions were used to test the four hypotheses. Each multiple regression included four dependent variables and one independent variable. For instance, Hypothesis 1 was tested using a multiple regression with the dependent variables of children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of their child’s externalizing problems.
problems. The independent variable was children’s perceptions of the frequency of receiving mail from their incarcerated parent. Multiple regression was chosen to test these hypotheses because it is used to predict the values of criterion variables based on the values of the explanatory variables. It also determines the overall fit of the model, or variance explained, and the relative contribution of each of the predictors to the total explained variance.

There are two pertinent details to note about variables used in these analyses. First, data on children’s perceptions of frequency of contact and visitation and data on caregivers’ perceptions of frequency of contact and visitation were both collected, but the two variables had high cross-informant agreement. Therefore, children’s perceptions of frequency of contact and visitation were randomly chosen for use in the analyses. Second, the fourth hypothesis required a variable measuring overall frequency of contact and visitation. This composite variable was created by summing the child and youth reported scores on the individual frequency items. This variable was used in all of the hypotheses which require an overall measure of frequency of contact and visitation.

The multiple regression analyses for hypotheses 1-4 were evaluated by examining the model summary table, the ANOVA table, and the coefficients table from the SPSS output. Adjusted R-Square provided the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that was explained by the independent variables that affected the dependent variable. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table was also used to determine the overall fit of the model. In particular, the significance level of the F-ratio was used to determine if the independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variables. A statistically significant F-ratio
had a p-value less than .05. The coefficients table was used to examine the significance level of the predictor variables and to examine the standardized beta coefficients of the predictors. A significance level less than .05 was used to determine if the predictor variable significantly affected the dependent variable. The standardized beta coefficient represented the change in the dependent variable for every one standard deviation change in the predictor variable. The standardized beta weights were used to evaluate the strength of the predictor variables by examining their magnitude and direction.

**Testing Hypothesis 5**

The fifth hypothesis suggested the need to test the mediational role of the parent-child relationship on the relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**H5.** The parent-child relationship will significantly mediate the predictive relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

First, a correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship. Then, hierarchical multiple regression was used to test the relationship between the parent-child relationship and internalizing and externalizing problems, and the mediation of the parent-child relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems. The dependent variables were children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of
their child’s internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of their child’s externalizing problems. The independent variables were overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions of the parent-child relationship.

The multiple regression analysis output from testing hypothesis four was used to determine the significance level and the standardized beta coefficient for the predictor variable measuring overall frequency of contact and visitation. These values were essential in understanding whether or not the addition of the variable measuring the parent-child relationship affected the explanatory power of overall frequency of contact and visitation when the hierarchical multiple regression was conducted.

Multiple hierarchical regression was conducted by inserting the parent-child relationship variable into block 1 of the model and by inserting overall frequency of contact and visitation into the second block of the model. The hypothesis was examined by assessing the amount of explained variance accounted for by the parent-child relationship and by assessing the change in the standardized beta weights for overall frequency of contact and visitation. A considerable change in the standardized beta weight for overall frequency of contact and visitation in the multiple regression used to test hypothesis 4 and the standardized beta weight for overall frequency of contact and visitation in the multiple hierarchical regression would provide evidence that the parent-child relationship mediated the relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems.
Testing Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis suggested the need to test the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on overall frequency of contact and visitation. These perspectives included, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent.

H6. More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict more frequent contact and visitation.

A multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis. To begin, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to determine which of the possible predictor variables were significantly correlated with overall frequency of contact and visitation. The magnitude and direction of the correlations were examined to assess how scores on the possible predictor variables affected frequency of contact and visitation. Then, the five predictors that were most strongly correlated with overall frequency of contact and visitation were chosen for use in the multiple regression. This was a critical step in the analysis because it was expected that the small sample size would only sufficiently power a multiple regression with a small number of predictor variables. These five predictor variables were used in the multiple regression model with overall frequency of contact and visitation as the criterion variable.
The multiple regression analysis for hypothesis 6 was evaluated by examining the model summary table, the ANOVA table, and the coefficients table from the SPSS output. Adjusted R-Square provided the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that was explained by the independent variables with an effect on the dependent variable. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table was also used to determine the overall fit of the model. In particular, the significance level of the F-ratio was used to determine if the five independent variables significantly predicted overall frequency of contact and visitation. A statistically significant F-ratio had a p-value less than .05. The coefficients table was used to examine the significance level of each of the predictor variables and to examine the standardized beta coefficients of the predictor variables. A significance level less than .05 was used to determine if a predictor variable significantly affected the dependent variable. The standardized beta coefficients represented the change in the dependent variable for every one standard deviation change in the predictor variable. The standardized beta weights were used to evaluate the strength of the predictor variables by examining their magnitude and direction. They were also compared to one another to determine which predictor variables had the largest impact on frequency of contact and visitation.

**Testing Hypothesis 7**

The seventh hypothesis suggested the need to test the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems. These perspectives included, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an
incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent.

**H7.** More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores for children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

A multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis. To begin, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to determine which of the possible predictor variables were significantly correlated with the four variables measuring child internalizing and externalizing problems. The magnitude and direction of the correlations were examined to assess how scores on the possible predictor variables affected frequency of contact and visitation. Then, the five predictors that were most strongly correlated with child internalizing and externalizing problems were chosen for use in the multiple regression. This was a critical step in the analysis because it was expected that the small sample size would only sufficiently power a multiple regression with a small number of predictor variables. These five predictor variables were used in the multiple regression model with children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of their child’s externalizing problems as the criterion variables.
The multiple regression analysis for hypothesis 7 was evaluated by examining the model summary table, the ANOVA table, and the coefficients table from the SPSS output. Adjusted R-Square provided the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that was explained by the independent variables with an effect on the dependent variable. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table was also used to determine the overall fit of the model. In particular, the significance level of the F-ratio was used to determine if the five independent variables significantly predicted child internalizing and externalizing problems. A statistically significant F-ratio had a p-value less than .05. The coefficients table was used to examine the significance level of each of the predictor variables and to examine the standardized beta coefficients of the predictor variables. A significance level less than .05 was used to determine if a predictor variable significantly affected the dependent variable. The standardized beta coefficients represented the change in the dependent variable for every one standard deviation change in the predictor variable. The standardized beta weights were used to evaluate the strength of the predictor variables by examining their magnitude and direction. They were also compared to one another to determine which predictor variables had the largest impact on child internalizing and externalizing problems.

**Threats to Validity**

Several features of this study threatened its validity, including convenience sampling, a small sample size, and newly created self-report measures. Convenience sampling is a serious limitation of the study because it may have led to a sample that is
not representative of the population. Specifically, the majority of the children were recruited from the Building Dreams Mentoring Project’s participant database. Involvement in this project may have affected their attitudes, actions, and behaviors. Additionally, it may be true that certain attitudes, actions, and behaviors characterize the children and families that sought out participation in the Building Dreams Mentoring Project. Although other sampling techniques would have reduced the effect of this limitation, time and resources did not allow for a different sampling technique. Importantly, similar studies in the field have also used convenience sampling because it is difficult to locate children of incarcerated parents without help from an organization or institution that has a relationship with them.

The size of the sample and the number of siblings in the study are also major limitations of the study. Although the a priori power analysis suggested that 38 participants would power the analyses planned for the study, a larger sample size is always beneficial in sufficiently powering analyses and detecting patterns in the data. Challenges associated with participant recruitment prevented the researchers from obtaining a larger sample size. Again, it is important to note that similar studies in the field have had small sample sizes due to similar challenges. Poehlmann (2013) wrote

Scholars have known for a long time that working with families of individuals in the corrections system can be challenging for many reasons…For example, it is difficult to achieve adequate sample sizes for studies focusing on children of incarcerated parents, and thus many studies in the literature have relied on small convenience samples (pg. 101).
Lastly, the measures used in the study and some of the methods used to collect the data may have threatened its validity. Much of the child interview and caregiver questionnaire was created for this study. Measures did not previously exist for the many of the constructs of interest. This means that the reliability and validity of the measures had not been tested with any other sample. Fortunately, the tests of reliability and validity with this sample were good for the majority of the measures (See Hedge’s unpublished manuscript). Some of the measures should be improved before use in future studies. The measures used in this study were all self-report. Bias from self-report could affect the veracity of the results, but self-report measures are often the most efficient tools for data collection. Additionally, providing children with arts and crafts materials to play with during the interview could have reduced children’s attention to the questions. Lastly, bias was introduced into the study when caregivers were asked to complete the survey multiple times because more than one of their children was participating in the research project. These caregivers were more familiar with the items when completing the survey for a second child than caregivers who were only asked to complete the survey for one child.

Overall, many threats to validity were avoided by adhering strictly to the data collection protocol and properly cleaning and preparing the data for analysis. These procedures helped to ensure accurate results. The researchers were unable to avoid using a convenience sampling technique, a small sample size, and newly created self-report measures. These limitation may affect the accuracy of the results and generalizability of the findings.
In summary, this study used a cross-sectional, correlational design with a convenience sample of 40 children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers. The study raised three research questions about the relationships between type and frequency of contact and visitation, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. A total of seven hypotheses were tested using multivariate linear modeling. The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

A total of 40 child-caregiver dyads participated in the study. The study measures assessed frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and children’s social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The following chapter details the analyses and results for the seven study hypotheses.

Data Cleaning and Preparation

Frequency analyses were used to identify variables with outliers or missing values. No outliers were detected. Missing values were identified on the caregiver BPC, and a missing value analysis was performed. Only 2.5% of data were missing, and Little’s MCAR test (Little, 1988) showed data were missing completely at random, \( \chi^2(22) = 24.62, p = .315 \). Due to the small sample size, missing data were imputed using Expectation Maximization (EM). Box plots were used to search for extreme values, but none were identified.

Descriptive statistics were used to assess skewness and kurtosis on all variables of interest. A skewness statistic greater than .80 or less than -.80 indicated a nonnormal distribution. A total of six variables of interest were skewed, including the child internalizing subscale of the BPC, the caregiver internalizing subscale of the BPC, the avoidance subscale of the perceptions of caregiver assistance scale, the extent of
emotions about visitation scale, and two single items assessing the quality of phone calls and the quality of visitation. The single items were, “I have felt uncomfortable before when talking to my parent on the phone,” and “I have felt uncomfortable before when visiting my parent at the prison.” Skewed variables were transformed using either a square root transformation, a natural log transformation, or an inverse transformation.

One composite variable was created for use in the study. Frequency of contact and visitation was measured using three items which assessed the degree to which children received mail from their parent, received phone calls from their parent, and visited their parent at the prison. In order to test study hypotheses regarding overall frequency of contact and visitation, a composite variable was created by summing the three single items. Scores ranged from 3 to 11. The mean was 6.75 and the standard deviation was 2.60.

A number of variables were collapsed for use in bivariate analyses assessing whether or not children with various demographic or parental incarceration characteristics differed on overall frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. The variables that were collapsed included child age, caregiver age, age of first separation from parent due to incarceration, and family income. These variables were collapsed in order to eliminate groups with small counts.

The child age variable ranged from 9 to 18 years old. A total of 11 children were categorized into the ‘9 to 11 years’ age group, 19 children were categorized into the ‘12 to 14 years’ age group, and 10 children were categorized into the ‘15 to 18 years’ age

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The caregiver age variable ranged from 22 to 81 years old. Of the 19 unique caregivers in the study, 9 were categorized into the ‘younger than 50 years old’ age group and 10 were categorized into the ‘50 and older’ age group. Responses on the age of first separation variable ranged from under one year old to 14 years old. Twenty six children were categorized into the ‘separated at the age of five or younger’ group and 14 children were categorized into the ‘separated at the age of 6 or older’ group. Finally, the family income variable was collapsed from six categories to four categories. Of the 19 unique family income responses, 5 were categorized as ‘$10,000 and under per year’, 10 responses were categorized as ‘$10,001 to $50,000 per year’, and 4 responses were categorized as ‘above $50,000 per year’.

**Bivariate Analyses**

A number of demographic and parental incarceration variables were used to explore group differences on several constructs of interest, including overall frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. The demographic and parental incarceration variables included gender of the child, ethnicity of the child, age of the child, age of the caregiver, ethnicity of the caregiver, ethnicity of the parent, the gender of the incarcerated parent, family income, the age the child was first separated from the parent due to incarceration, whether or not the parent had been incarcerated previously, and whether or not the child lived with the parent before incarceration. As a note, only the unique caregiver responses were used in analyses regarding the ethnicity of
the caregiver, the age of the caregiver, and the family income. Likewise, only the unique parents were used in analyses regarding the ethnicity of the parent.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and descriptive statistics revealed several group differences on the constructs of interest by child gender, family income, the age the child was first separated from the parent due to incarceration, whether or not the parent had been incarcerated previously, and whether or not the child lived with the parent before the current incarceration. Importantly, there were no statistically significant group differences on the constructs of interest by ethnicity of the child, age of the child, age of the caregiver, ethnicity of the caregiver, ethnicity of the parent, or gender of the incarcerated parent.

In terms of child gender, girls reported more internalizing problems (M = 10.63, SD = 3.29) than boys (M = 8.28, SD = 1.71), [F(1, 38) = 7.56, p < 0.01]. There were no other child gender differences on the constructs of interest.

Analyses regarding family income revealed group differences for caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, frequency of contact and visitation, and the extent of emotions children report about receiving mail. Caregivers with family incomes above $50,000 reported higher perceptions of their children’s internalizing problems (M = 13.25, SD = 1.89) than caregivers with incomes of $10,001 to $50,000 per year (M = 6.60, SD = 0.70) and caregivers with incomes of $10,000 and under per year (M = 7.40, SD = 1.52), [F(2, 16) = 42.98, p < 0.001]. Children with family incomes above $50,000 reported more frequent contact and visitation (M = 9.75, SD = 1.50) than children with family incomes of $10,001 to $50,000 per year (M = 6.10, SD = 1.85), [F(2, 16) = 3.65, p
Lastly, children with family incomes of $10,000 and under per year reported significantly lower scores on the extent of positive emotions about receiving mail ($M = 3.60, SD = 0.71$) than children with family incomes of $10,001 to $50,000 per year ($M = 4.37, SD = 0.16$) and children with family incomes above $50,000 ($M = 5.00, SD = 0.00$), $[F(2, 14) = 8.51, p < 0.01]$. Children and youth who were separated from their parent by incarceration at the age of five or younger reported significantly different perceptions of trust, communication, and alienation on the parent-child relationship measure than children and youth who were separated after age five. More specifically, children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly lower perceptions of trust in their parent-child relationship ($M = 25.21, SD = 5.53$) than children separated after the age of five ($M = 28.86, SD = 1.70$), $[F(2, 37) = 3.91, p < 0.05]$. Children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly lower perceptions of communication in their parent-child relationship ($M = 22.91, SD = 5.50$) than children separated after the age of five ($M = 27.00, SD = 3.04$), $[F(2, 37) = 3.44, p < 0.05]$. Additionally, children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly lower scores on perceptions of alienation in their parent-child relationship ($M = 16.17, SD = 3.17$) than children separated after the age of five ($M = 18.57, SD = 2.31$), $[F(2, 37) = 3.12, p < 0.05]$. Lower scores on the alienation subscale reflect more feelings of alienation. Finally, children separated from their parent by incarceration at the age of five or younger also reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contacting and visiting an
incarcerated parent (M = 3.87, SD = 0.99) than children separated after the age of five (M = 4.67, SD = 0.52), [F(2, 37) = 3.91, p < .05].

Numerous group differences distinguished children and youth with a parent who had been incarcerated more than once from children and youth with a parent that had only been incarcerated one time. Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported less frequent contact and visitation (M = 6.03, SD = 2.41) than children with a parent that had only been incarcerated one time (M = 8.63, SD = 2.16), [F(1, 38) = 9.79, p < 0.01]. Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported lower perceptions of trust in the parent-child relationship (M = 25.83, SD = 5.11) than children with a parent that had only been incarcerated one time (M = 29.18, SD = 1.25), [F(1, 38) = 4.56, p < 0.05]. Further, children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting an incarcerated parent (M = 3.90, SD = 0.90) than children with a parent that had only been incarcerated one time (M = 4.88, SD = 0.40), [F(1, 38) = 12.14, p < 0.01]. Lastly, children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported significantly lower scores on extent of positive emotions about mail (M = 4.19, SD = 0.57) than children with a parent who had only been incarcerated one time (M = 4.67, SD = 0.41), [F(1, 32) = 6.44, p < 0.05], and reported significantly lower scores on extent of positive emotions about phone calls (M = 3.72, SD = 0.75) than children with a parent who had only been incarcerated one time (M = 4.35, SD = 0.52), [F(1, 26) = 5.98, p < 0.05].
Children and youth who lived with their parent before their parent’s current incarceration differed from children and youth who did not live with their parent before their parent’s current incarceration on overall frequency of contact and visitation, trust in the parent-child relationship, communication in the parent-child relationship, willingness to ask their caregiver for assistance in contacting and visiting, and children’s perceptions of their rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. Children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported more frequent contact and visitation (M = 7.29, SD = 2.45) than children who did not live with their parent before incarceration (M = 4.89, SD = 2.32), [F(1, 38) = 6.85, p < 0.05]. Children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported higher perceptions of trust in the parent-child relationship (M = 27.81, SD = 2.83) than children who did not live with their parent before incarceration (M = 23.11, SD = 7.44), [F(1, 38) = 8.55, p < 0.01], and reported higher perceptions of communication in the parent-child relationship (M = 25.45, SD = 4.07) than children who did not live with their parent before incarceration (M = 21.44, SD = 6.54), [F(1, 38) = 5.07, p < 0.05]. Further, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling significantly more comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting (M = 4.40, SD = 0.66) than children who did not live with their parent before incarceration (M = 3.37, SD = 1.20), [F(1, 38) = 11.46, p < 0.01]. Lastly, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling more strongly about their ability to exercise their rights to contact and visitation (M = 4.42, SD = 0.59) than children who did not live with their parent before incarceration (M = 3.71, SD = 1.31), [F(1, 38) = 5.53, p < 0.05].
Research Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1-4

The first research question explored the relationship between type and frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This question led to four hypotheses. The analyses and results are described below for each hypothesis in turn.

H1. Higher scores on frequency of receiving mail from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Hypothesis 1 was tested using a multiple regression with the dependent variables of children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. The independent variable was children’s perceptions of the frequency of receiving mail from their incarcerated parent. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.

Frequency of receiving mail from an incarcerated parent did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 2.02, p = 0.164], children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 1.02, p = 0.319], caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.01, p = 0.937], or caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.45, p = 0.506]. Hypothesis 1 was not supported.
**H2.** Higher scores on frequency of receiving phone calls from an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using a multiple regression with the dependent variables of children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. The independent variable was children’s perceptions of the frequency of receiving phone calls from their incarcerated parent. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.

Frequency of receiving phone calls from an incarcerated parent did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.74, p = 0.396], children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.01, p = 0.935], caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 2.26, p = 0.141], or caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.84, p = 0.365]. Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

**H3.** Higher scores on frequency of visitation with an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using a multiple regression with the dependent variables of children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. The independent variable
was children’s perceptions of the frequency of visitation with their incarcerated parent. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.

Frequency of visitation with an incarcerated parent did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 1.03, p = 0.317 \), children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 0.21, p = 0.650 \), caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 1.36, p = 0.250 \), or caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 0.03, p = 0.867 \). Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

**H4.** Higher scores on overall frequency of contact and visitation will significantly predict lower scores on children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Hypothesis 4 was tested using a multiple regression with the dependent variables of children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. The independent variable was children’s perceptions of overall contact and visitation with their incarcerated parent. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.

Overall frequency of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 1.68, p = 0.203 \), children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 0.33, p = 0.568 \), caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, \( F(1, 38) = 
1.23, p = 0.275], or caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.05, p = 0.819]. Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

**Follow-up analyses.** Follow-up analyses were conducted for hypotheses 1-4 to further explore the relationship between frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems. Spearman’s rho correlation and regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between visiting frequently versus visiting infrequently and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. For these analyses, frequency of visitation was collapsed into two categories. Thirty-two children had visited rarely or almost never and eight children had visited monthly. Spearman’s rho correlation between the collapsed frequency of visitation variable and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems was -.32. This correlation was significant at p < 0.05. A regression analysis confirmed that visiting monthly as compared to never or rarely predicted lower scores on caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 4.98, p < 0.05]. The standardized beta weight for frequency of visitation was -0.34. Frequency of visitation explained 9.3% of the variance in caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems. The results from the follow-up analyses provide some support for hypothesis 3.

**Hypothesis 5**

The second research question examined the parent-child relationship as a mediator between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.
**H5.** The parent-child relationship will significantly mediate the predictive relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression were used to test this hypothesis. The correlation tested the relationship between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions of the parent-child relationship. The dependent variables in the hierarchical multiple regression were children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. The independent variables were overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions of the parent-child relationship. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.

The correlation between overall frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perceptions of the parent-child relationship was significant, strong, and positive with a coefficient of 0.63. This relationship suggested that more frequent contact and visitation was associated with more positive perceptions of the parent-child relationship.

Multiple hierarchical regression was conducted by inserting the parent-child relationship variable into block 1 of the model and by inserting overall frequency of contact and visitation into the second block of the model. The hierarchical multiple regression analyses were nonsignificant. The parent-child relationship did not significantly predict caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, [F(1, 38) = 0.40, p = 0.532]. The addition of frequency of contact and visitation into the second block
did not significantly improve the model, \[F(2, 37) = 0.60, p = 0.55\]. None of the beta coefficients were significant.

The parent-child relationship did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, \[F(1, 38) = 0.05, p = 0.827\]. The addition of frequency of contact and visitation into the second block did not significantly improve the model, \[F(2, 37) = 1.76, p = 0.187\]. None of the beta coefficients were significant.

The parent-child relationship did not significantly predict caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems, \[F(1, 38) = 0.78, p = 0.384\]. The addition of frequency of contact and visitation into the second block did not significantly improve the model, \[F(2, 37) = 0.89, p = 0.418\]. None of the beta coefficients were significant.

The parent-child relationship did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, but the model was approaching significance \[F(1, 38) = 3.74, p = 0.61\]. The addition of frequency of contact and visitation into the second block did not significantly improve the model, \[F(2, 37) = 2.16, p = 0.130\]. The beta coefficient for the parent-child relationship was approaching significance (\(p = .054\)) in both blocks of the model. The beta coefficient was -0.30 in the first block of the model and -0.40 in the second block of the model. This suggested a negative relationship between the parent-child relationship and children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. In other words, stronger parent-child relationships predicted fewer externalizing problems.

Overall, these findings suggested a significant and positive relationship between frequency of contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship, and a possible
negative relationship between the parent-child relationship and children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. Due to the fact that the hierarchical multiple regression analyses were nonsignificant and the standardized beta weights for frequency of contact and visitation remained nonsignificant, the findings do not provide support for the parent-child relationship as a mediator of overall frequency of contact and visitation and internalizing and externalizing problems. Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

**Follow-up Analyses**

Follow-up analyses were conducted in order to further explore the relationships among overall frequency of contact and visitation, children’s perceptions of the parent-child relationship, and internalizing and externalizing problems. First, the parent-child relationship was tested as a mediator in the significant model from the follow-up analyses of Hypotheses 1-4. In the previous model, visiting monthly as compared to never or rarely was associated with lower scores on caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. In the mediation model, the parent-child relationship did not significantly predict caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems \([F(1,38) = 0.40, p = 0.532]\). The addition of the visitation variable did not significantly improve the model \([F(2, 37) = 2.11, p = 0.136]\).

Second, a correlation analysis was conducted to better understand the relationships among overall frequency of contact and visitation, the subscales of the parent-child relationship measure, and the subscales of the internalizing and externalizing problems measures. The correlations among all of the variables are presented in Table 4.1. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.
Findings showed that frequency of contact and visitation was significantly related to the trust and communication subscales of the parent-child relationship, but was not significantly related to any of the internalizing and externalizing problem subscales. As noted previously, more frequent contact and visitation was associated with better perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Findings also showed that the alienation subscale of the parent-child relationship was significantly related to children’s perceptions of their own internalizing and externalizing problems. Higher scores on the alienation subscale reflect fewer feelings of alienation. Fewer feelings of alienation were associated with fewer internalizing and externalizing problems.

These follow-up analyses provided support for significant associations among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and child internalizing and externalizing problems. However, the analyses did not provide any support for the mediation effect of the parent-child relationship on the relation between frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems. Hypothesis 5 was not supported.
Table 4.1. Correlations among overall frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and child internalizing and externalizing problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Frequency</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Alienation</th>
<th>Internalizing (caregiver perceptions)</th>
<th>Externalizing (caregiver perceptions)</th>
<th>Internalizing (child perceptions)</th>
<th>Externalizing (child perceptions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.62**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0.69**</td>
<td>0.91**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.60**</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing (caregiver perceptions)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing (caregiver perceptions)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing (child perceptions)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.35*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing (child perceptions)</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>-0.45**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Hypotheses 6-7

The third research question explored the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on frequency of contact and visitation, and social, behavioral and mental health problems. Children’s perspectives of contact and visitation included caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. The analyses and results are described below for each hypothesis in turn.

**H6.** More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict more frequent contact and visitation.

Correlation analyses were conducted to determine which of the possible predictor variables measuring children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were significantly correlated with overall frequency of contact and visitation. The magnitude and direction of the correlations were examined to assess how scores on the possible predictor variables affected frequency of contact and visitation. Then, the five predictors that were most strongly correlated with overall frequency of contact and visitation were chosen for use in the multiple regression. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples.
Overall frequency of contact and visitation was significantly correlated with 10 variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. The correlation table is displayed in Table 4.2. The five variables with the strongest correlations to overall frequency of contact and visitation were chosen for use in the multiple regression. These variables included parental desire for a relationship, ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation, knowing when an incarcerated parent will call, feeling like there are things to talk about on the phone, and friendliness of prison staff. More frequent contact and visitation was associated with higher scores on parental desire for a relationship, ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation, knowing when your incarcerated parent will call, and feeling like there are things to talk to your parent about on the phone. More frequent contact and visitation was also associated with lower scores on perceptions of friendly prison staff.

The correlation analysis showed ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation was very highly correlated with parental desire for a relationship and with feeling there are things to talk about on the phone. Ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation was removed from further analyses. Results from the initial multiple regression analysis suggested a possible multicollinearity problem. Only two of the predictors were significant despite strong correlations between the predictors and the criterion. Collinearity diagnostics did not suggest a collinearity problem so predictor variables were entered in different combinations in an attempt to identify a multicollinearity problem. The addition of the item measuring feelings that there are things to talk about during phone calls changed the significance of the item that measured knowing when an
incarcerated parent will call. The item measuring feeling like there are things to talk about during phone calls was removed from the model.

The new iteration of the model was significant, [F(3, 19) = 10.38, p < 0.001]. Note the sample size (n = 23) for the multiple regression analysis. Children who had never visited their incarcerated parent (n = 17) were excluded from the analysis because they were not asked to respond to the measure assessing friendliness of prison staff. A post-hoc power test was conducted using G*Power 3.0.10 because three predictors were used in the model and the sample size was small. This test suggested the analysis was slightly underpowered at 76% power (Portney & Watkins, 2000). The model should be interpreted with caution.

The predictor variables explained 56% of the variance in overall frequency of contact and visitation. Frequency of contact and visitation significantly increased by 0.43 for every one unit increase in parental desire for a relationship. Frequency of contact and visitation also significantly increased by 0.34 for every one unit increase in knowing when an incarcerated parent will call. Lastly, frequency of contact and visitation significantly decreased by 0.60 for every one unit increase in friendliness of prison staff.
Table 4.2. Significant correlations between frequency of contact and visitation and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Frequency</th>
<th>Involve caregiver with assistance</th>
<th>Avoid caregiver assistance</th>
<th>Relationship desire (child)</th>
<th>Relationship desire (parent)</th>
<th>Relationship desire (caregiver)</th>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Things to talk about on phone</th>
<th>Know when calls</th>
<th>Prison staff friendly</th>
<th>Enough time to talk during visitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve caregiver with assistance</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid caregiver assistance</td>
<td>-0.38*</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship desire (child)</td>
<td>0.47**</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship desire (parent)</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.78**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship desire (caregiver)</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.58**</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things to talk about on phone</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.44*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know when calls</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison staff friendly</td>
<td>-0.54**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough time to talk during visitation</td>
<td>-0.47*</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
These results provided some support for hypothesis 6. More positive scores on parental desire for a relationship and knowing when an incarcerated parent will call significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. On the other hand, less positive scores on friendliness of prison staff significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. Also, more positive scores on feeling comfortable asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation, children’s desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, caregivers’ desire for a relationship between children and an incarcerated parent, ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation, feeling like there are things to talk about during phone calls, and feeling unlikely to avoid asking a caregiver for assistance in contact and visitation were significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. Unexpectedly, less positive scores on feeling like there is enough time to talk during visitation was significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. Additionally, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation and feasibility of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with overall frequency of contact and visitation.

**H7.** More positive scores on caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of positive emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent will significantly predict lower scores for children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of internalizing and externalizing behaviors.
A correlation analysis was conducted to determine which of the possible predictor variables were significantly correlated with the four variables measuring child internalizing and externalizing problems. The magnitude and direction of the correlations were examined to assess how scores on the possible predictor variables affected frequency of contact and visitation. Then, the five predictors that were most strongly correlated with child internalizing and externalizing problems were chosen for use in the multiple regression. These five predictor variables were used in the multiple regression model with children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems, children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, and caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems as the criterion variables. Bootstrapping was performed with 1000 bootstrap samples. Results are presented for each criterion variable in turn.

**Children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems.** The subscale measuring children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems was correlated with eight variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, including extent of emotions about mail, extent of emotions about phone calls, extent of emotions about visitation, feeling uncomfortable while on the phone with an incarcerated parent, feeling upset after talking on the phone with an incarcerated parent, extent of availability to talk when an incarcerated parent calls, feeling uncomfortable when visiting the prison, and feeling upset after visiting the prison. The correlation table is displayed in Table 4.3.

Extent of emotions about phone calls was very strongly correlated with extent of emotions about visitation and extent of emotions about mail; thus, it was excluded from
the multiple regression analysis. Feeling upset after phone calls and feeling upset after visitation were very strongly correlated with extent of emotions about visitation. Those two items were excluded for use in the multiple regression analysis. Finally, feeling uncomfortable during phone calls was very strongly correlated with extent of emotions about visitation and was excluded from the multiple regression.

Multiple regression was conducted with children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems as the criterion variable. The four predictors were extent of emotions about mail, extent of emotions about visitation, extent of availability to talk when an incarcerated parent calls, and feeling uncomfortable while visiting the prison. The overall model was significant, \[ F(4, 18) = 10.16, p < 0.001 \]. Note the sample size (n = 23) for the multiple regression analysis. Children who had never visited their incarcerated parent (n = 17) were excluded from the analysis because they were not asked to respond to the measures assessing extent of emotions about visitation or feeling uncomfortable while visiting the prison. A post-hoc power test was conducted using G*Power 3.0.10 because four predictors were used in the model and the sample size was small. This test suggested the analysis was just slightly underpowered at 77% power (Portney & Watkins, 2000). The model should be interpreted with caution.
Table 4.3. Significant correlations between children's perceptions of their own internalizing and externalizing problems and children's perspectives of contact and visitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intern</th>
<th>Extern</th>
<th>Emotions (mail)</th>
<th>Emotions (phone)</th>
<th>Emotions (visit)</th>
<th>Uncomfortable (phone)</th>
<th>Upset after (phone)</th>
<th>Available (phone)</th>
<th>Uncomfortable (visit)</th>
<th>Upset after (visit)</th>
<th>Know what will happen (visit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extern</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (mail)</td>
<td>-0.49*</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (phone)</td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (visit)</td>
<td>-0.65**</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable (phone)</td>
<td>-0.62**</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>0.68**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset after (phone)</td>
<td>-0.45*</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.57**</td>
<td>0.68**</td>
<td>0.69**</td>
<td>0.68**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available (phone)</td>
<td>-0.64**</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable (visit)</td>
<td>-0.52*</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>0.50*</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset after (visit)</td>
<td>-0.44*</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.44*</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>0.59**</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what will happen (visit)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.41*</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.44*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
The predictor variables explained 62.5% of the variance in children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems. Two of the four predictor variables were significant within the model. Children’s internalizing problems decreased by 0.41 with every one unit increase in feelings of positive emotions about visitation. Children’s internalizing problems also decreased by 0.50 with every one unit increase in availability for phone calls from an incarcerated parent.

Extent of emotions about mail and feeling uncomfortable during visitation were not significant predictors in the overall model despite their strong correlations with children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems. Collinearity diagnostics did not suggest a collinearity problem. Perhaps multicollinearity was present in the model. Variables were entered in multiple combinations in an attempt to identify multicollinearity, but this strategy was unsuccessful.

In sum, hypothesis 7 was partially supported by these analyses. More positive scores on extent of positive emotions about visitation and extent of availability when an incarcerated parent calls significantly predicted lower scores for children’s perceptions of internalizing behaviors. Additionally, more positive scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and phone calls, fewer feelings of being upset after phone calls and visitation, and fewer feelings of being uncomfortable during phone calls and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems. On the other hand, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an
incarcerated parent were not significantly associated with children’s perceptions of their own internalizing behaviors.

**Children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems.** The subscale measuring children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems had a correlation of 0.41 with knowing what will happen during visitation. This was the only significant correlation between children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems and the variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation (see Table 4.3).

A simple regression was conducted to determine the predictive nature of knowing what will happen during visitation on children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. The model was significant, [F(1, 21) = 4.34, p < 0.05]. Note the sample size (n = 23) for the multiple regression analysis. Children who had never visited their incarcerated parent (n = 17) were excluded from the analysis because they were not asked to respond to the item about knowing what will happen during visitation. Knowing what will happen during visitation explained 13.2% of the variance in children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. Children’s externalizing problems increased by 0.41 for every one unit increase in knowing what will happen during visitation.

Hypothesis 7 was not supported by these analyses. Knowing what will happen during visitation did predict children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, but higher scores predicted more externalizing problems. In addition, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an
incarcerated parent were not significantly associated with children’s perceptions of their own externalizing behaviors.

**Caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems.** The subscale measuring caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems was significantly correlated with five variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, including avoidance of asking a caregiver to assist with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about mail, extent of emotions about phone calls, feeling like there are things to talk about on the phone with an incarcerated parent, and feeling like there are things to do while waiting to visit an incarcerated parent at the prison. The correlation table is displayed in Table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intern</th>
<th>Extern</th>
<th>Emotions (mail)</th>
<th>Emotions (phone)</th>
<th>Things to talk about (phone)</th>
<th>Things to do while waiting (visit)</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extern</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (mail)</td>
<td>-0.52*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (phone)</td>
<td>-0.47*</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.70**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions (visit)</td>
<td>-0.45*</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable (phone)</td>
<td>0.49*</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset after (phone)</td>
<td>0.48*</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Extent of emotions about phone calls was very strongly correlated with extent of emotions about mail; thus, extent of emotions about phone calls was excluded from use in the multiple regression. The multiple regression was conducted with caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems as the criterion variable. The four predictor variables were avoidance of asking a caregiver to assist with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about mail, having things to talk about on the phone with an incarcerated parent, and having things to do while waiting to visit an incarcerated parent at the prison.

Results from this analysis suggested a possible multicollinearity problem. Only two of the predictors were significant despite strong correlations between the predictors and the criterion. Collinearity diagnostics did not suggest a collinearity problem so predictor variables were entered in different combinations in an attempt to identify a multicollinearity problem. The addition of the subscale measuring avoidance of asking a caregiver to assist with contact and visitation changed the significance of the item measuring perceptions of things to do while waiting to visit an incarcerated parent at the prison. The subscale measuring avoidance of asking a caregiver to assist with contact and visitation was removed from the model.

The new iteration of the model was significant, \( F(3, 19) = 7.37, p < 0.01 \). Note the sample size \( n = 23 \) for the multiple regression analysis. Children who had never visited their incarcerated parent \( n = 17 \) were excluded from the analysis because they were not asked to respond to the measure assessing things to do while waiting to visit an incarcerated parent at the prison. A post-hoc power test was conducted using G*Power.
3.0.10 because three predictors were used in the model and the sample size was small. This test suggested the analysis was underpowered at 70% power (Portney & Watkins, 2000). The model should be interpreted with caution.

Extent of emotions about mail, having things to talk about on the phone, and having things to do while waiting to visit explained 46.5% of the variance in caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems. Child internalizing problems decreased by 0.40 with every one unit increase in positive emotions about mail. Child internalizing problems also decreased by 0.35 for every one unit increase in having things to talk about on the phone. Finally, child internalizing problems increased by 0.35 for every one unit increase in having things to do while waiting to visit at the prison.

Hypothesis 7 was partially supported by these analyses. More positive scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and having things to talk about on the phone significantly predicted lower scores on caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems. Perceptions of having things to do while waiting to visit also significantly predicted caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems, but higher scores predicted more internalizing problems. Additionally, more positive scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and fewer feelings of avoidance in asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. On the other hand, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent were not significantly associated with caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems.
Caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. None of the variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were significantly correlated with caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s externalizing problems (see Table 4.4). A regression analysis was not conducted. Hypothesis 7 was not supported by this analysis because children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems.

Summary of Results

Three research questions regarding the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and child social, emotional, and behavioral problems were proposed for this study. Seven hypotheses were proposed and tested. The results partially supported three of the seven hypotheses. Four of the hypotheses were not supported. A summary of the overall findings are detailed below.

Findings from bivariate analyses suggested some group differences on frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. For instance, analyses regarding family income revealed group differences for caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, frequency of contact and visitation, and the extent of emotions children report about receiving mail. Caregivers with higher family incomes reported higher perceptions of their children’s internalizing problems. Children with higher family incomes reported more frequent contact and visitation. Lastly, children with lower family
incomes reported significantly lower scores on the extent of positive emotions about receiving mail.

Children and youth who were separated from their parent by incarceration at the age of five or younger reported significantly different perceptions of the parent-child relationship than children and youth who were separated after age five. More specifically, children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly lower perceptions of trust and communication in their parent-child relationship. Additionally, children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly more alienation in their parent-child relationship. Finally, children separated from their parent by incarceration at the age of five or younger also reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contacting and visiting an incarcerated parent.

Numerous group differences distinguished children and youth with a parent who had been incarcerated more than once from children and youth with a parent that had only been incarcerated one time. Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported less frequent contact and visitation and lower perceptions of trust in the parent-child relationship. Further, children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting an incarcerated parent. Lastly, children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported significantly lower scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and phone calls.

Children and youth who lived with their parent before their parent’s current incarceration differed from children and youth who did not live with their parent before
their parent’s current incarceration on overall frequency of contact and visitation, trust in the parent-child relationship, communication in the parent-child relationship, willingness to ask their caregiver for assistance in contacting and visiting, and children’s perceptions of their rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. Children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported more frequent contact and visitation. Children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported higher perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Further, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling significantly more comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting. Lastly, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling more strongly about their ability to exercise their rights to contact and visitation.

No group differences existed on perceptions of child externalizing problems. However, caregivers with higher family incomes reported more child internalizing problems. Also, girls reported more internalizing problems than boys. Importantly, there were no statistically significant group differences on any of the constructs of interest by ethnicity of the child, age of the child, age of the caregiver, ethnicity of the caregiver, ethnicity of the parent, or gender of the incarcerated parent.

Results did not support Hypothesis 1 or Hypothesis 2. Frequency of receiving mail and frequency of receiving phone calls did not significantly predict child and caregiver perceptions of internalizing and externalizing problems. Results from follow-up analyses supported Hypothesis 3. Frequent contact and visitation significantly predicted caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. However, frequent contact and
visitation did not significantly predict children’s perceptions of their own internalizing and externalizing problems or caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. Results did not support Hypothesis 4. Overall frequency of contact and visitation did not significantly predict child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Results did not support Hypothesis 5. There was no evidence to suggest that the parent-child relationship mediated the relation between overall frequency of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems. However, results from follow-up analyses did support significant relationships among overall frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and child internalizing and externalizing problems. More frequent contact and visitation was significantly associated with more positive perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Also, fewer feelings of alienation in the parent-child relationship were significantly associated with fewer child internalizing and externalizing problems.

Results partially supported Hypothesis 6. More positive scores on parental desire for a relationship and knowing when an incarcerated parent will call significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. On the other hand, less positive scores on friendliness of prison staff significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. Also, more positive scores on feeling comfortable asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation, children’s desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, caregivers’ desire for a relationship between children and an incarcerated parent, ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation, feeling like there are things to talk about during phone calls, and feeling unlikely to avoid asking a caregiver for assistance in
contact and visitation were significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. Unexpectedly, less positive scores on feeling like there is enough time to talk during visitation was significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. Additionally, extent of emotions about contact and visitation and feasibility of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with overall frequency of contact and visitation.

Finally, results partially supported Hypothesis 7. Many perspectives of contact and visitation did significantly predict children’s perceptions and caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems and children’s perceptions of child externalizing problems. These perspectives included caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, and quality of contact and visitation. Some of the significant relationships between children’s perspectives of contact and visitation and child internalizing and externalizing problems were not in the expected direction. Also, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation did not significantly predict caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems. Moreover, perspectives regarding desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, and rights to contact and visitation were not significantly associated with child internalizing and externalizing problems.

More positive scores on extent of positive emotions about visitation and extent of availability when an incarcerated parent calls significantly predicted lowers scores for children’s perceptions of internalizing behaviors. Additionally, more positive scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and phone calls, fewer feelings of being upset
after phone calls and visitation, and fewer feelings of being uncomfortable during phone calls and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems.

More positive scores on extent of positive emotions about mail and having things to talk about on the phone significantly predicted lower scores on caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems. Perceptions of having things to do while waiting to visit also significantly predicted caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems, but higher scores predicted more internalizing problems. Additionally, more positive scores on extent of positive emotions about phone calls and fewer feelings of avoidance in asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems.

Knowing what will happen during visitation significantly predicted children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems, but higher scores predicted more externalizing problems. Children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems.

Overall, findings suggest significant relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and child internalizing and externalizing problems. More frequent contact and visitation was related to better perceptions of the parent-child relationship and to some positive and some negative perspectives of contact and visitation. Fewer internalizing and externalizing problems were related to better perceptions of the parent-child relationship.
and to some positive and some negative perspectives of contact and visitation. Findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Previous research clearly indicates that children of incarcerated parents need special consideration and care due to their risk for social, emotional, and behavioral problems, yet research on best practices for supporting children of prisoners is scarce. A small body of research suggests contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent may be especially important in preventing social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Murray, 2005; Twice & Brewster, 2004), but the current body of applicable research is limited both in quantity and in scope, some findings are contradictory, and none of the previous research explored mechanisms linking contact and visitation to social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Furthermore, inconsiderate policies and practices are an immense hindrance to contact and visitation, despite children’s rights to contact and visit their incarcerated parent as specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC outlines that children must be allowed to maintain direct contact with a separated parent when it is in the best interest of the child. Significantly, the current body of research is unclear concerning if and when contact and visitation is in the best interest of children of incarcerated parents, the mechanism through which contact and visitation may be beneficial to children of incarcerated parents, and the possible impact of children’s perceptions and experiences on the benefits of contact and visitation. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult for stakeholders to advocate for new policies and practices.
regarding contact and visitation. For this reason, research on the relationships between contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and children’s perspectives of contact and visitation are essential.

In other words, in order to protect children’s rights to contact and visit their incarcerated parent and to work to adequately support the needs of children of incarcerated parents, it is crucial to understand whether or not contact and visitation reduces the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems, to recognize the mechanisms by which contact and visitation work to reduce the risk of problem behaviors, and to identify the effects of children’s perceptions and experiences on all of these factors. Insights will allow stakeholders to create policies and practices that effectively support children of incarcerated parents.

The current study responded to this need by further examining the relationship among contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, by exploring the parent-child relationship as a mediating mechanism between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and by using children’s views of contact and visitation to explore their impact on frequency of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This study was especially innovative in its attempt to test a mechanism linking contact and visitation to social, emotional, and behavioral problems, and in its attempt to explore the impact of children’s perspectives on contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

The findings of this study of 40 children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers revealed significant relationships among frequency of contact and visitation,
the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Moreover, children’s perspectives were important predictors of frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. This chapter outlines key findings, discusses practical implications, recognizes limitations, and recommends further research.

Key Findings

Group Differences by Demographic Information

It is important to acknowledge that standard explorations of group differences by demographic information revealed significant differences that should be considered when interpreting study results. The relationships tested in this study may not work in the same manner for every child. While this study did not specifically consider this issue, group differences ought to be acknowledged, discussed, and included in further research.

Gender. Only one finding emerged by gender. Girls reported more internalizing problems than boys. This relationship is often reported in the literature. For instance, a meta-analytic review on gender differences in emotion expression with 555 effect sizes from 166 studies and a total of 21,709 participants found that girls report significantly more internalizing problems than boys (Chaplin and Aldao, 2013). In terms of understanding the relationships tested in this study, it is important to consider that girls might be at a higher risk of developing internalizing problems when their parent is incarcerated.
**Family Income.** Several group differences were identified by family income. Caregivers with higher family incomes reported more child internalizing problems. This finding conflicts with current theory and research that children with lower family incomes are at increased risk of adjustment problems in the face of parental incarceration and should be researched further (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012).

Children with higher family incomes reported more frequent contact and visitation. Previous studies have reported that contact and visitation is extraordinarily expensive. Families in the Bronx estimated spending about 15% of their monthly income on contact with an incarcerated family member (Poehlmann et al., 2010). Children with higher family incomes might find contact and visitation less of a financial burden than children with lower family incomes.

Lastly, children with lower family incomes reported significantly fewer positive emotions about receiving mail. Perhaps this finding is related to the fact that children with lower incomes contact and visit less frequently. For example, receiving mail may bring up more emotions of sadness and frustration for children who contact and visit less frequently. More research is needed to clarify this finding.

**Age of separation.** Two findings emerged for children who were separated from their incarcerated parent by the age of five or younger. Children separated at the age of five or younger reported significantly lower perceptions of trust and communication in their parent-child relationship and reported significantly more alienation in their parent-child relationship. Young children may still be forming their attachment relationships
with their parents (Bowlby, 1969). Disrupting attachment formation may have significant consequences for developing parent-child relationships over time.

Children separated from their parent at the age of five or younger also reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contacting and visiting an incarcerated parent. Although this finding has not been reported before, perhaps caregivers of children who were separated from their parent at five or younger are less supportive of establishing or maintaining connections between the child and incarcerated parent. These findings should be considered in future research.

Parent incarcerated previously. Several findings emerged for children with a parent who had been incarcerated previously. Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported less frequent contact and visitation. Previous studies have noted that frequency of contact and visitation decreases as length of incarceration increases (Poehlmann et al., 2010). The cumulative length of incarceration might make contact and visitation less likely. Additionally, families may have been unhappy with past contact and visitation experiences, and relationships may have become more tenuous through subsequent arrest, sentencing, incarceration, and separation.

Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported lower perceptions of trust in the parent-child relationship. Attachment and the parent-child relationship are related to the availability of the attachment figure (Murray & Murray, 2010). Children with parents who have been incarcerated before have experienced more separation and less availability of their incarcerated parent. This may result in fewer feelings of trust in the parent-child relationship.
Children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported feeling significantly less comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting an incarcerated parent. Similarly to the discussion above regarding children separated from their parent at the age of five or younger, perhaps caregivers of children with parents who have been incarcerated before are less supportive of establishing or maintaining connections between the child and parent.

Lastly, children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time reported significantly fewer positive emotions about mail and phone calls. This finding is unclear, but perhaps it is related to the fact that children with a parent who had been incarcerated at least one other time experience less frequent contact and visitation. Receiving mail and phone calls may bring about more feelings of sadness and frustration for children who contact and visit less frequently. Altogether, more research is needed to clarify these findings.

**Child lived with parent.** Children who lived with their parent before their parent’s current incarceration reported more frequent contact and visitation. Although previous studies have not reported this finding, Murray and Murray (2010) discussed that children who do not live with their parents before incarceration may be less likely to form attachment relationships with those parents. The lack of an attachment relationship might make the child and caregiver less likely to try and facilitate contact and visitation. Also, it is possible that the parent was never present in the child’s life and the parent did not have a strong relationship with the child’s caregiver. This might also make the child, parent, and caregiver less likely to desire or facilitate contact and visitation.
Children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported higher perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Children who lived with their parent before incarceration may be more likely to develop attachment relationships. This might result in higher perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Additionally, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling significantly more comfortable asking their caregiver for assistance in contact and visiting. Children who have invested in maintaining relationships with their parent in the past might have caregivers more interested in helping them to maintain those relationships during the period of incarceration.

Lastly, children who lived with their parent before incarceration reported feeling more strongly about their ability to exercise their rights to contact and visitation. While this finding is unclear, it might relate to feelings of comfort in asking caregivers to assist in contacting and visiting. Perhaps a better climate exists for these children to express themselves about the importance of contact and visitation. Also, children who lived with their parent before incarceration may have formed a stronger bond with their incarcerated parent, and thus may have a stronger motivation to assert opinions on contact and visitation in order to stay connected with their incarcerated parent. Future research should further consider these findings.

**Nonsignificant findings.** No statistically significant group differences were found on any of the constructs of interest by ethnicity of the child, age of the child, age of the caregiver, ethnicity of the caregiver, ethnicity of the parent, or gender of the incarcerated parent. The small sample size may have made it difficult for significant findings to
emerge. Additionally, nonsignificant results by age may be due to the manner in which the age variable was collapsed for use in the study. More specifically, a total of 11 children were categorized into the ‘9 to 11 years’ age group, 19 children were categorized into the ‘12 to 14 years’ age group, and 10 children were categorized into the ‘15 to 18 years’ age group. Future research should still continue to consider these characteristics because other studies have revealed significant differences, especially for age of the child and gender of the incarcerated parent. For instance, caregivers often function as gatekeepers of children’s contact for young children (Enos, 2001). Some caregivers of young children support the parent–child relationship by fostering contact while other caregivers limit contact. Older children may contact their incarcerated parents without their caregivers’ knowledge (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). Also, imprisoned mothers reported more frequent contact by mail and phone calls than imprisoned fathers (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008).

Overall, these findings suggest that the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems may not work in the same manner for all children. Future research should control for background factors or use person-oriented approaches which focus on homogenous subgroups of individuals to understand how relationships might work differently for various subgroups of children of incarcerated parents. In terms of this study, findings suggest that increasing frequency of contact and visitation, enhancing the parent-child relationship, and reducing internalizing and externalizing problems may be more difficult for some children, including those that
were separated from their parent at the age of five or younger, children with lower family incomes, children with parents who have been incarcerated at least one other time, and children who did not live with their parent before incarceration.

**Contact and Visitation and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Problems**

The first research question of this study explored the relationship between type and frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Previous studies reported mixed results regarding the impact of contact and visitation on social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Sack & Seidler, 1978; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010; Stanton, 1980; Twice & Brewster, 2004), and failed to consider the impact of mail, phone calls, and visitation separately (Murray, Farrington, Sekol, & Olsen, 2009).

Contrary to expectations, frequency of mail, phone calls, and overall frequency of contact and visitation did not significantly predict caregivers’ or children’s perceptions of social, emotional, and behavioral problems in this study. However, more frequent visitation significantly predicted fewer child internalizing problems. This finding was significant for caregivers’ perceptions of internalizing problems, but not for children’s perceptions of internalizing problems. This finding significantly adds to the literature on the relationship between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Although one previous study found that more frequent contact and visitation was related to fewer externalizing problems (Twice & Brewster, 2004), none of the previous studies found support for the relationship between increased visitation and reduced internalizing problems. While it is not possible to determine causality, the
The theoretical framework of the study supports the idea that more frequent visitation reduces internalizing problems; however, it is possible that children with fewer internalizing problems are more frequent visitors.

A few possible explanations exist for the lack of significant results regarding frequency of mail, phone calls, and overall frequency of contact and visitation. For example, the small sample size of the study may have made it difficult for significant findings to emerge. Also, frequency of mail and phone calls may have no impact on internalizing and externalizing problems. The theoretical framework of this study suggests that frequency of contact and visitation will impact internalizing and externalizing problems through the parent-child relationship. Perhaps receiving mail and receiving phone calls do not sufficiently increase the availability of the attachment figure in a way that would enhance the parent-child relationship and reduce social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Additionally, it is possible that the current environment is not suitable for high quality contact that would result in reduced social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Several studies have discussed barriers that reduce the quality of contact and visitation in a manner that might also reduce the effectiveness of contact and visitation (Arditti, 2003; Dallaire, Wilson, & Ciccone, 2009; Loper, Carlson, Levitt, & Scheffel, 2009). Future research should attempt to compare various prison environments for contact and visitation in relation to social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

**The Mediating Role of the Parent-Child Relationship**

The second research question examined the parent-child relationship as a mediator between frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and
behavioral problems. Although studies had tested the relationship between frequency of contact and visitation and the parent-child relationship (Dallaire, Wilson, & Ciccone, 2009; Poehlmann, 2005; Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010) and researchers had often cited the attachment relationship as the underlying mechanism linking frequency of contact and visitation to reduced social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Child Protection Best Practices Bulletin, n.d.; Satyanathan, n.d.), none of the previous studies had tested the mediating role of the parent-child relationship.

Contrary to expectations, the parent-child relationship did not act as a mediator in this sample. However, significant relationships emerged between frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. First, more frequent contact and visitation was significantly related to higher perceptions of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. These relationships were very strong with correlations above 0.60. This finding significantly adds to the literature. Two previous studies found that visits were associated with insecure attachment relationships (Dallaire, Wilson, & Ciccone, 2009; Poehlmann, 2005), and one previous study found no significant relationship between contact and trust and communication in the parent-child relationship (Shlafer & Poehlmann, 2010). The theoretical framework of this study supports this finding as increased availability of the attachment figure through contact and visitation should strengthen the parent-child relationship. Alternatively, children with stronger parent-child relationships might contact and visit more frequently.
Second, fewer feelings of alienation in the parent-child relationship were related to reduced internalizing and externalizing problems. These relationships were moderate at -0.35 for internalizing problems and -0.45 for externalizing problems. This is a significant contribution to the literature as studies have not connected fewer feelings of alienation in the parent-child relationship with reduced social, emotional, and behavioral problems specifically for children of incarcerated parents. The theoretical framework of the study supports this finding in that stronger parent-child relationships should act as protective factors for the development of social, emotional, and behavioral problems in children of incarcerated parents (Murray & Murray, 2010). Alternatively, children with fewer internalizing and externalizing problems might perceive the parent-child relationship more positively.

A couple of explanations exist for the lack of significant findings to support the mediating role of the parent-child relationship in the relation between contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The sample size of this study was only 40. This may have been too small for significant results to emerge. In addition, reducing alienation in the parent-child relationship may be key to reducing internalizing and externalizing problems for children of incarcerated parents. The current environment of contact and visitation may not be appropriate for reducing alienation in that relationship, or contact and visitation may not be sufficient to reduce feelings of alienation over periods of separation. If contact and visitation does not reduce alienation, it may not reduce social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Additionally, the parent-child relationship might not act as a mediating mechanism between contact and visitation.
and social, emotional, and behavioral problems or it may act in tandem with other factors which influence internalizing and externalizing problems. Further, the parent-child relationship might only act as a mediator for specific subgroups of children of incarcerated parents. Perhaps this relationship only exists for children who were securely attached to their parents before incarceration. Future research should consider comparing various prison environments in relation to alienation in the parent-child relationship, testing other mediating and moderating factors, and using person-centered approaches to examining the mediating role of the parent-child relationship.

**Children’s Perspectives of Contact and Visitation**

The third research question explored the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on frequency of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Children’s perspectives of contact and visitation included caregiver assistance with contact and visitation, extent of emotions about contact and visitation, desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, feasibility of contact and visitation, quality of contact and visitation, and children’s rights to contact and visit an incarcerated parent. The following findings are a significant contribution to the field. Previous studies had not tested the effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on frequency of contact and visitation or internalizing and externalizing problems.

**Frequency of contact and visitation.** Parental desire for a relationship, knowing when an incarcerated parent will call, and friendliness of prison staff significantly predicted frequency of contact and visitation. These variables explained 56% of the variance in overall frequency of contact and visitation. The sample size was very small
and the analysis was slightly underpowered so results should be interpreted with some caution.

Expectedly, stronger perceptions of parental desire for a relationship and knowing when an incarcerated parent will call significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. Intuitively, positive perceptions of relationship desire and quality of contact might make children, caregivers, and parents more interested in facilitating contact and visitation. Additionally, it is possible that children who contact and visit their parents more frequently have stronger perceptions of parental desire for a relationship and know more about when their parent will call.

Unexpectedly, perceiving prison staff to be unfriendly significantly predicted more frequent contact and visitation. Friendliness of prison staff was the strongest predictor of overall frequency of contact and visitation. This finding is less intuitive; however, children with more experiences interacting with prison staff may have recognized over time that prison staff are not friendly. Although causality cannot be assumed, it seems less likely that unfriendly prison staff facilitates contact and visitation.

Due to small sample sizes and collinearity issues, the regression analysis could not be tested with all of the variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, but various other significant relationships emerged through correlation analysis. Expectedly, feeling more comfortable asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation, stronger desire for a relationship with an incarcerated parent, stronger perceptions of caregivers’ desire for a relationship between children and an incarcerated parent, feeling able to exercise rights to contact and visitation, feeling like
there are things to talk about during phone calls, and feeling less likely to avoid asking a caregiver for assistance in contact and visitation were significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. The theoretical framework of this study supports these findings. It suggests that positive feelings about contact and visitation will facilitate contact and visitation, but it is also possible that more frequent contact and visitation results in more positive feelings about contact and visitation.

Unexpectedly, feeling like there is not enough time to talk during visitation was significantly associated with more frequent contact and visitation. Similarly to findings about friendliness of prison staff, perhaps children who contact and visit more often recognize the limited amount of time they have to talk to their parent during visitation. This interpretation seems more likely than feelings of not having enough time to talk facilitating more frequent contact and visitation. Additionally, it is possible that children who visit less often feel they have less to talk about with their incarcerated parent. These children might feel the amount of time to talk is sufficient.

Additionally, extent of emotions about contact and visitation and feasibility of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with overall frequency of contact and visitation. A number of possible explanations exist for these nonsignificant findings. It is possible that significant results did not emerge because of the small sample size. The measures assessing extent of emotions about contact and visitation and feasibility were created for this study. They may need to be re-assessed and revised. It would be important to ask children of incarcerated parents if the measures captured their emotions and their feasibility issues.
The literature suggests that feasibility is a very important issue in facilitating contact and visitation. This is the first study that has considered children’s views of feasibility issues. It is not clear why it was not significantly associated with frequency of contact and visitation in this study. One possibility is that children do not perceive feasibility as a real issue.

The theoretical framework suggests that more positive emotions associated with contact and visitation will promote frequency of contact and visitation, yet extent of emotions was not significantly associated with contact and visitation. It is possible that children, caregivers, and parents make decisions about contact and visitation regardless of the emotions associated with contact and visitation. It is also possible that contact and visitation brings on vastly different emotions for different children. This would make finding a pattern or association more difficult. Future research could benefit from qualitative analyses that would provide some context for the significant and nonsignificant findings related to children’s perceptions of contact and visitation and frequency of contact and visitation.

**Child internalizing problems.** The effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on internalizing problems was explored. Extent of emotions about visitation and extent of availability when an incarcerated parent calls significantly predicted children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems. These variables explained 62.5% of the variance in internalizing problems. Extent of availability for phone calls was the strongest predictor in the model. The sample size was small and the analysis was slightly underpowered. Findings should be interpreted with some caution.
Expectedly, feeling positive emotions about visitation and being available when an incarcerated parent calls significantly predicted lowers scores for children’s perceptions of internalizing behaviors.

Due to small the sample size and collinearity issues, the regression analysis could not be tested with all of the variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, but various other significant relationships emerged through correlation analysis. Experiencing positive emotions about mail and phone calls, feeling less upset after phone calls and visitation, and feeling less uncomfortable during phone calls and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on children’s perceptions of their own internalizing problems. These relationships were all in the expected direction.

In terms of caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems, extent of emotions about mail, feeling there are things to talk about on the phone with an incarcerated parent, and feeling that there are things to do while waiting to visit the prison significantly predicted child internalizing problems. The predictors explained 46.5% of the variance in caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. The sample size was small and the analysis was only 70% powered. The findings should be interpreted with caution.

Expectedly, experiencing positive emotions about mail and feeling like there are things to talk about on the phone significantly predicted lower scores on caregiver’s perceptions of their child’s internalizing problems. Unexpectedly, feeling like there are things to do while waiting to visit significantly predicted more internalizing problems.
Due to small sample sizes and collinearity issues, the regression analysis could not be tested with all of the variables assessing children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, but various other significant relationships emerged through correlation analysis. Experiencing positive emotions about phone calls and feeling less likely to avoid asking a caregiver for assistance with contact and visitation were significantly associated with lower scores on caregivers’ perceptions of child internalizing problems. These relationships were in the expected direction.

The theoretical framework of this study suggests that more positive feelings about contact and visitation will reduce internalizing and externalizing problems through the parent-child relationship. Interestingly, previous findings of this study did not support a mediating role of the parent-child relationship; therefore, it is unclear how children’s positive perspectives might work to reduce internalizing problems. It is possible that the parent-child relationship does act as a mediator, but the sample size of this study was too small for significant findings to emerge. On the other hand, perhaps a more positive outlook on circumstances works as a protective factor for developing internalizing problems. Also, it is possible that the lack of internalizing problems promotes positive perceptions of contact and visitation. On the other hand, it is unclear how more positive perceptions of having things to do while waiting is associated with more internalizing problems. Further research is needed to understand this relationship.

Children’s perspectives about desire for a relationship, feasibility, and extent of ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation were not related to internalizing problems. It is possible that significant results did not emerge because of the small
sample size. Also, the measures assessing these constructs were created for this study. They may need to be re-assessed and revised. It may be important to ask children of incarcerated parents if the measures captured desire for a relationship, feasibility, and extent of ability to exercise rights to contact and visitation. It is also possible that these perspectives do not have any role in child internalizing problems. This is the first study to test the relationship between children’s perspectives and internalizing problems. Further research could benefit from a qualitative approach that would provide some context for significant and nonsignificant findings related to children’s perspectives of contact and visitation and child internalizing problems.

**Child externalizing problems.** The effect of children’s perspectives of contact and visitation on externalizing problems was explored. Knowing what will happen during visitation significantly predicted children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. It explained 13.2% of the variance in externalizing problems. Unexpectedly, higher scores predicted more externalizing problems. No other perspectives were associated with children’s perceptions of their own externalizing problems. Additionally, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were not significantly associated with caregivers’ perceptions of child externalizing problems.

Unexpectedly, more positive scores on children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were not associated with lower scores on externalizing problems. It is possible that the sample size was too small to adequately assess these relationships. It is also possible that the majority of children’s perspectives on contact and visitation are not related to externalizing problems. Additionally, the measures may not adequately assess
children’s perspectives of contact and visitation or externalizing problems for this population.

Also unexpectedly, knowing what will happen during visitation predicted more externalizing problems. It is possible that knowing what will happen during visitation is upsetting for children because they perceive negative events. This might be associated with acting out or expressing externalizing problems. It is also possible that children with externalizing problems feel that they know what will happen during visitation more so than children without externalizing problems. Further research could benefit from a qualitative approach that would provide some context for significant and nonsignificant findings related to children’s perspectives of contact and visitation and child externalizing problems.

Overall, findings suggested significant relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and child internalizing and externalizing problems. More frequent contact and visitation was related to better perceptions of the parent-child relationship and to some positive and some negative perspectives of contact and visitation. Fewer internalizing and externalizing problems were related to better perceptions of the parent-child relationship and to some positive and some negative perspectives of contact and visitation. Implications of these findings are discussed in the next section.
Practical Implications

This study is a significant contribution to the field of children of incarcerated parents. Significant relationships emerged among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Also, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation significantly predicted frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. It is critical to revisit the purpose and significance of this research while outlining the implications of the study findings.

Best Interests of Children

Understanding the impact of contact and visitation on social, behavioral, and mental health problems will allow stakeholders to more effectively discuss the best interests of children regarding the right to maintain direct and regular contact with an incarcerated parent. This is central to protecting the rights of children to remain connected with their incarcerated parents.

Findings from this study suggest that contact and visitation may be in the best interests of children of incarcerated parents. More frequent visitation was associated with fewer internalizing problems, and more frequent contact and visitation was associated with more feelings of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Findings also suggest that the current contact and visitation environment may not be sufficient to reduce feelings of alienation in the parent-child relationship. These feelings of alienation may be an important risk factor for the development of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents. Lastly, standard explorations of
demographic differences in this study revealed several groups differences on frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Findings suggest that increasing frequency of contact and visitation, enhancing the parent-child relationship, and reducing internalizing and externalizing problems may be more difficult for some children, including those that were separated from their parent by the age of five or younger, children with lower family incomes, children with parents who have been incarcerated at least one other time, and children who did not live with their parent before incarceration. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to examine causality, but findings suggest many implications.

Parents, caregivers, social service organizations, and other stakeholders should consider the associations among contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems when making choices about contact and visitation for children in their care. They might also consider encouraging visitation over mail and phone calls because findings suggest that visitation may be more beneficial in reducing social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Additionally, policy-makers need to examine policies related to a host of feasibility and quality issues, including inmate sentencing location, location of new facilities, costs of phone calls, contact and visitation frequency and duration, and prison contact and visitation environments. Research has shown that policies, including those regarding the costs of phone calls, the placement of prisoners far from their home communities, and the short duration of phone calls and visitation, reduce frequency and quality of contact and visitation for children of incarcerated parents; thus, these policies
are hindering children from realizing their right to contact and visit their incarcerated parent.

In addition to modifying existing policies, new policies are needed to enhance quality to ensure that children are able to reap the benefits associated with contact and visitation. New policies might include child friendly spaces for visiting and available social workers and psychologists who can help children work through their feelings and emotions during and immediately following contact and visitation. Finally, these policies, practices, and services should give special attention to children separated from their parents by the age of five or younger, children with lower family incomes, children with parents who have been incarcerated at least one other time, and children who did not live with their parents before incarceration since findings suggest that increasing frequency of contact and visitation, enhancing the parent-child relationship, and reducing internalizing and externalizing problems may be more difficult for these children.

**Addressing Mechanisms**

Recognizing the mechanisms by which contact and visitation work to reduce the risk of problem behaviors will allow stakeholders to focus policy change on strategies that will address those mechanisms. For instance, if the parent-child relationship is a linking mechanism between contact and visitation and social, behavioral, and mental health problems then policy changes should emphasize practices that enhance the parent-child relationship.

Findings from this study did not support the parent-child relationship as the mechanism linking contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.
However, contact and visitation was linked to trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Also, alienation in the parent-child relationship was linked to more internalizing and externalizing problem. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to examine causality, but these finding suggest many implications.

Previous research on parent-child attachment suggests that children with stronger parent-child relationships often feel safe, valued, and competent and are able to communicate about moods, emotions, and impulses (Makariev & Shaver, 2010). Therefore, policy change should emphasize practices that enhance the parent-child relationship. In addition, policies and practices related to contact and visitation should work to reduce alienation in the parent-child relationship. Overall, these practices might include extending the length of parent-child contact and visitation, creating child-friendly spaces for visitation, and offering parenting classes for inmates.

**Identifying Other Focus Areas**

Identifying the effects of children’s perceptions and experiences on contact and visitation, and social, behavioral, and mental health problems might highlight other focus areas for policy change. It is evident from this study that children’s perspectives are important in understanding the relationships among contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. It is also clear that children’s perspectives are essential in understanding when and in what manner contact and visitation is in the best interests of children.

Findings showed that positive perceptions of contact and visitation and of parental and caregiver attitudes toward contact and visitation are related to more frequent contact
and visitation and fewer social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Some perceptions may be more important than others, including children’s perceptions of parental desire for a relationship, emotions during and immediately after contact and visitation, and quality of contact and visitation. Findings also suggest that children who visited more often recognized that prison staff were unfriendly and that they do not have enough time to talk to their parent during visitation. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to examine causality, but they suggest many implications.

Policies, practices, and programming aimed at enhancing positive perceptions of children of incarcerated parents may be important in ensuring that contact and visitation is in the best interests of children. Specifically, supports that help children communicate with their parent about relationship desire, supports that help children process their emotions about contact and visitation, and policies that enhance quality of parent-child interactions during contact and visitation may help to enhance children’s perceptions of contact and visitation and reduce internalizing and externalizing problems. Also, encouraging families to contact and visit more often and reducing other risk factors for children of incarcerated parents may allow children to have more positive perceptions of contact and visitation. Lastly, policies should address negative perceptions of children of incarcerated parents, including visitation length and training for guards on interacting with children and families.

**Effectively Supporting Children**

Research on reducing the risk of social, emotional, and behavioral problems for children of incarcerated parents is scarce. Studies addressing this issue are desperately
needed in order to arm practitioners with ideas for creating programs and services that address children’s needs and to arm advocates with the knowledge needed to persuade policymakers to change policies that are contrary to children’s best interests. New information will provide stakeholders with insights into effectively supporting children of incarcerated parents.

Findings from this study on the relationships among contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems indicate the need for policies that reduce barriers to contact and visitation and enhance quality of contact and visitation. Specifically, critical supports for children might include those that enhance the availability of their incarcerated parents. These policies are essential to protecting the rights of children to maintain relationships with their incarcerated parents. Findings from this study also suggest that children’s perspectives of contact and visitation are useful in understanding the relationships among contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems and in understanding when and in what manner contact and visitation is in the best interests of children.

Finally, findings and implications of this study are a significant contribution to the field; however, several limitations compromise the strength of the findings and the implications. Moreover, much more research is needed to effectively support children of incarcerated parents. Limitations and future research are addressed in the following two sections.
Limitations

This study significantly contributed to the understanding of the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems, but several limitations compromised the strength of the findings. More specifically, two major limitations and several other minor limitations were identified.

The study employed a very small sample of 40 child-caregiver dyads. Six children had never received mail from their parent, 12 children had never received phone calls from their parent, and 17 children had never visited their parent. This resulted in an even smaller sample size for some analyses utilizing perceptions of contact and visitation. The small sample size resulted in some analyses that were not sufficiently powered. Furthermore, nonsignificant results may have been due to Type 2 error, or a failure to reject a false null hypothesis. In addition, the magnitude of significant results may have been over estimated (Button et al., 2013). Finally, 68% of the children had at least one other sibling who participated in the study. Shared variance among siblings and their caregivers in the study may have affected the results. It would not have been reasonable to exclude sibling-caregiver dyads because of the already small sample size.

The study also employed a convenience sample recruited from a mentoring project for children of incarcerated parents. This introduced selection bias into the sample. It is possible that children and families who participated in the mentoring project were significantly different from children and families who did not participate in the mentoring project. Also, children and families from the mentoring project who agreed to
participate in the research may have been significantly different from children and families in the mentoring project who chose not to participate in the research. Perhaps children and families who agreed to participate were more interested in facilitating contact and visitation or were more comfortable talking about incarceration related issues than those who did not agree to participate. Therefore, the results of the study may not be generalizable to other groups of children of incarcerated parents. Although these two major limitations are concerning for the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings, most of the previous research on children of incarcerated parents have also employed small, convenience samples and researchers have discussed the difficulties of recruiting large, random samples of children of incarcerated parents (Poehlmann, 2013).

Several other limitations reduce the strength of the study findings. Multicollinearity was an issue with several of the regression analyses. Multicollinearity can create inaccurate estimates of the regression coefficients, inflate the standard errors of the regression coefficients, deflate the partial t-tests for the regression coefficients, give false, nonsignificant, pvalues, and degrade the predictability of the model (National Council for the Social Studies, 2015). While this is a concern for the validity of the findings, steps were taken to reduce multicollinearity within the regression analyses.

All of the measures used in the study to capture children’s perspectives of contact and visitation were created for use in this study. Although the reliability and validity of these measures were good in this sample, the psychometric properties have not been tested with any other samples. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the quality and feasibility scales were not good, and had to be used as single items only.
Notably, the measures of child internalizing and externalizing problems were only correlated with a few scales and items in the entire study. This measure had good reliability and validity in a previous study with children as young as 7 years old and in this study with children ages 9-18. It was used previously with children and caregivers over the phone and was administered by clinicians. It was chosen for this study due to its brevity. Some of the items were reworded for this study to improve children’s comprehension. It is possible that these measures were not the most appropriate measures for capturing internalizing and externalizing problems of children of incarcerated parents. It is also possible that the short measures were unable to capture the variability among different children’s responses in this sample. Only one previous study had reported psychometric properties of this measure (Chorpita, et al., 2010). The sample was 184 children participating in outpatient treatment for anxiety, depression, or disruptive behavior. Future research would benefit from further validation of the measure with other populations of children.

This study cannot assume causality in the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The study’s theoretical framework defined some causal relationships, but these could not be tested using a cross-sectional, correlational design. Many of the implications of this study were discussed in a manner that might indicate causality because of the overall theoretical framework of the study, but it should be cautioned that this study cannot confirm the directionality of the relationships.
Although several limitations were identified, this study was innovative in its design. Previous studies had not tested the mediating role of the parent-child relationship, differentiated the effect of each type of contact and visitation, or considered children’s perspectives on frequency of contact and visitation or social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Additionally, this study used new measures to capture children’s perspectives of contact and visitation. The study is a significant contribution to the field, but more research is needed to arm stakeholders with the information needed to effectively support and advocate for children of incarcerated parents.

**Future Research**

The key issue for future research is recruitment of a large, random sample of children with incarcerated parents and their caregivers. One possible approach is to recruit participants through jails and prisons. Researchers might be able to gain access to contact information of families through the jail or prison system. Researchers might also consider relaxing the protocol of excluding children who no longer have a parent in prison. This would allow for larger sample sizes and provide researchers with opportunities to explore past contact and visitation with subsequent parent-child relationships and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Additionally, researchers should account for that fact that some children will not have experienced contact and visitation when calculating a priori power analyses.

Future research should continue to examine the reliability and validity of the measures used in this study to capture children’s perspectives of contact and visitation.
Researchers might examine literature on the most appropriate number of response options for children when further exploring the reliability and validity of these scales. Researchers might also consider asking children of incarcerated parents to provide opinions about how the measures might be lacking. Researchers should also work to create valid and reliable scales pertaining to feasibility and quality of contact and visitation. Also, future research should experiment with other valid and reliable measures of internalizing and externalizing problems.

Due to multicollinearity issues, researchers might consider other data analysis techniques. For instance, ridge regression is used for analyzing multiple regression data that suffer from multicollinearity. Ridge regression adds a degree of bias to the regression estimates, reduces the standard errors, and results in estimates that are more reliable (National Council for the Social Studies, 2015).

Future research should consider longitudinal studies and analyses in order to tease out causality in the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Admittedly, this will be difficult to achieve because of barriers related to recruiting large, random samples of children of incarcerated parents. One option may be to use large existing sources of data that have asked children and families about parental incarceration, the parent-child relationship, and social, emotional and behavioral problems. An example of this kind of existing data is the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health.
Findings from this study suggest additional research on the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. For instance, nonsignificant results of the mediating mechanism of the parent-child relationship might represent that the parent-child relationship acts in tandem with other mediating or moderating factors. Perhaps the parent-child relationship only works as a mediator for children who were securely attached to their parents before incarceration. Future research should test other mediating and moderating factors. Also, findings from standard explorations of demographic variables revealed group differences on frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Future research should account for these differences within analyses. Researchers might consider person-oriented approaches which focus on how the relationships among frequency of contact, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems work for various subgroups of children of incarcerated parents.

Future research would benefit from qualitative research with children of incarcerated parents. Several findings related to children’s perspectives of contact and visitation in this study are unclear. For instance, more positive perceptions of having things to do while waiting was associated with more internalizing problems, and children’s perceptions of feasibility of contact and visitation were not related to frequency of contact and visitation. Also, many perspectives of contact and visitation
were not related to frequency of contact and visitation or social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Qualitative research would provide more context for these quantitative findings.

Qualitative research should focus on understanding the experiences and emotions of contacting and visiting from children’s own perspectives. Researchers might ask children to describe a time when they received mail, received a phone call, or went to visit their parent at the prison. They might also ask children what they like best, what they like least, and what they would change about receiving mail, receiving phone calls, and visiting their parent at the prison. Additionally, researchers might ask children to describe whether it is easy or difficult to contact and visit their parent, whether or not they feel they should have a say in contact and visitation, and whether or not they would like to contact and visit more often. Providing opportunities for children to express their opinions and experiences of contact and visitation will allow stakeholders to better understand the context of contact and visitation through the lens of children with incarcerated parents. This perspective is essential to understanding when and in which manner contact and visitation is in the best interests of children with incarcerated parents.

**Conclusion**

The current study contributed to the understanding of the relationships among frequency of contact and visitation, the parent-child relationship, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Two critical findings resulted from this study. First, contact and visitation may be in the best interests
of children of incarcerated parents because of the associations between frequent visitation and reduced internalizing problems and between frequent contact and visitation and stronger feelings of trust and communication in the parent-child relationship. Second, children’s perspectives of contact and visitation are essential in understanding frequency of contact and visitation and social, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Past research clearly indicates that children of incarcerated parents need special consideration and care due to their risk for social, behavioral, and mental health problems, yet research on best practices for supporting children of prisoners is scarce. While continued research is crucial, findings from this study have many implications for supporting children of prisoners and protecting their rights to maintain relationships with their parents.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Building Dreams Brochure

One out of every 32 adults nationwide is under some form of supervision—house arrest, probation or imprisonment—because of a criminal conviction. Although this statistic is startling, even more unsettling is the number of families and children affected by incarceration.

Building Dreams is a mentoring program for children who have an incarcerated parent. Funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the goal of Building Dreams is to develop close, supportive relationships between volunteer mentors and children of prisoners.

Building Dreams is a collaboration of Clemson University’s Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Angel Tree Ministries and community partners.

“When pondering how we could ever manage the addition of eight children to our family, I was not sure how we could provide the amount of individual time each child needed. Building Dreams was a direct answer to prayer. The children have their own devoted mentors…who carve out time from their schedules and are an extra ear and heart for the kids to lean on…”

Mary, caregiver

Contact:
Building Dreams
Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life
Clemson University
138 Poole Agricultural Center
Clemson, SC 29634

For More Information:
Call: (864) 245-2730
Email: buildingdreams-l@clemson.edu
Or visit: www.clemson.edu/d dreams
Click on the Building Dreams link under Projects and Grants in the left column.
Building Dreams is making a difference in lives...

How can you help?
The Building Dreams mentoring program offers you the opportunity to become a mentor. Mentors are positive adult role models who provide young people with safe and trusting relationships. Mentoring has been shown to improve a young person’s commitment to school and self-esteem. It also decreases the likelihood of young drugs or alcohol.

Mentors and mentees do simple things together—playing sports, seeing movies, cooking, going over schoolwork, visiting museums, taking a walk in the park, volunteering in the community or just hanging out.

Anybody 10 years or older can apply to be a mentor. Just use the contact information on the back of this brochure to find out more about the program and apply to be a mentor.

How do I sign my child up to be a mentee?
Children that meet the following criteria may be eligible for the program: age 4–17, have a parent in prison or jail, are able to obtain parent/guardian permission, agree to a one-year commitment to the program and fill out a mentor application form.

To obtain a form or find out more information, use the contact information on the back of this brochure.

“I’ve learned so much. I was never interested in photography or art. Now I love taking photos and I’ve enjoyed going to museums, something I’ve never done before. And nature…I look at trees and clouds and mountains and see them with new eyes. We’ve been to the mountains and we’ve hiked. I mean, who hikes? It’s so powerful and quiet in the mountains. I feel like we were meant to be.”

Charline, mentee

“I appreciate the opportunity to work with the Building Dreams Mentoring Program. I feel it is a well-structured method by which I can help to make a positive difference in some young lives.”

Deneen Johnson, site coordinator

“Building Dreams is about building relationships. My mentor and I have enjoyed a wide range of activities including checking out books at the library, picnicking…visiting the zoo…This has given us many opportunities to get to know each other and to laugh and have fun together.”

Eliza Mohler, mentee
Appendix B

Caregiver Consent & Child Assent

GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

Children’s Perspectives on Contact and Visitation with an Incarcerated Parent

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Susan P. Limber, PhD and Jasmine Hedge are inviting your child to take part in a research study. Dr. Susan Limber is a Professor in the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University. Jasmine Hedge is a student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Limber. The purpose of this research is to explore the opinions, experiences, and emotions of children about contacting and visiting an incarcerated parent.

Your part in the study will be to answer a short list of basic questions about your child and your family.

It will take you about 20 minutes to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts

The only risk or discomfort that we foresee for you in this research study is that you may feel uncomfortable while answering some of our questions. No one but the research team will see any of your answers and you can choose not to answer any of the questions.

Possible Benefits

We do not know of any way you would benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, this research may help us to understand children’s views of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent. Ultimately, the information gathered from this study may help us to better protect and support children of incarcerated parents.
Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. All data gathered during this study will be protected under lock and key in the offices of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at the University Center of Greenville. The data will be destroyed upon conclusion of the research project.

If you share any information with us about child abuse and neglect, or about hurting yourself or someone else, we intend to tell someone who can help.

We might be required to share the information we collect from you with the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance and the federal Office for Human Research Protections. If this happens, the information would only be used to find out if we ran this study properly and protected your rights in the study.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

If you choose to stop taking part in this study, the information you have already provided will be used in a confidential manner.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Susan Limber at Clemson University at 864-656-6320.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.
Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

A copy of this form will be given to you.
CHILD ASSENT

Child/Minor Agreement to Be in a Research Study
Clemson University

Children’s Perspectives of Contact and Visitation with an Incarcerated Parent

You are being invited to be in a research study. Below you will find answers to some of the questions that you may have.

Who Are We?
  • Dr. Susan Limber is a professor at Clemson University and Jasmine Hedge is a student at Clemson University.

What Is It For?
  • We want to learn how children feel about contacting and visiting their parent who is in prison.

Why You?
  • We are asking you to participate because you have a parent who is in prison.

What Will You Have to Do?
  • We will ask you to answer questions about your opinions about contacting and visiting your parent. This interview will last about 1 hour.
  • Your parent/guardian will not be in the room while you answer our questions.

What Are the Good Things and Bad Things that May Happen to You If You Are in the Study?
  • You may feel uncomfortable answering some of our questions. Also, some of our questions may make you feel many different emotions.
  • In the future, your answers may help us to make it more comfortable for children to contact or visit a parent in prison.

What If You Want to Stop? Will You Get in Trouble?
  • You can choose to not answer our questions at any time. You can decide to quit answering our questions at any time. You can also decide that you do not want to answer a question that makes you feel uncomfortable.
  • No one else will know what answers you have given us. Your answers will not be used to get you in trouble.
• If you share any information about child abuse and neglect or about hurting yourself or someone else, we will share this information with someone who can help.

**Do You Have Any Questions?**

• You can ask questions at any time. You can ask them now. You can ask later. You can talk to me or you can talk to someone else at any time during the study. Here is the telephone number to reach us 864-656-6320. Susan Limber, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University.

By signing below, I am saying that I have read this form and have asked any questions that I may have. All of my questions have been answered and I understand what I am being asked to do. I am willing and would like to be in this study.

________________________________________
Signature of Child/Minor Date

A copy of this form will be given to you.
Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

Children’s Perspectives on Contact and Visitation with an Incarcerated Parent

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Susan P. Limber, PhD and Jasmine Hedge are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Susan Limber is a Professor in the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University. Jasmine Hedge is a student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Limber. The purpose of this research is to explore the opinions, experiences, and emotions of children about the issue of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent.

Your part in the study will be to answer questions about your experiences with and opinions about contacting and visiting with your parent who is in prison.

It will take you about 1 to 1.5 hours to be in this study.

Risks and Discomforts

There are certain risks or discomforts that you might experience if you take part in this research. They include discomfort when answering some questions and feeling emotional about memories or topics brought up during the interview. You can choose not to answer any of the questions throughout the interview.

Possible Benefits

It is possible that you will feel good by being allowed to express opinions, feelings, and concerns about an issue that affects your life. Most likely, this research may help us to understand children’s views of contact and visitation with an incarcerated parent. Ultimately, the information gathered from this study may help us to better protect and support children of incarcerated parents.

Incentives

A $20 VISA Gift Card will be given to you at the end of the interview.
Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. All information gathered during this study will be stored in locked file cabinets and on a password protected computer in the offices of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at the University Center of Greenville. The information will be destroyed once we finish our research.

If you share any information with us about child abuse and neglect, or about hurting yourself or someone else, we intend to tell someone who can help.

We might be required to share the information we collect from you with the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance and the federal Office for Human Research Protections. If this happens, the information would only be used to find out if we ran this study properly and protected your rights in the study.

Audio Recording

We do plan to audio record the interview. We will only use this recording as a way to more accurately record the information you provide. Only members of the research team will listen to the audio recording. The audio files will be stored on a computer and password protected. These will be destroyed when the project is completed.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this research study. You may tell us at any time that you do not want to be in the study anymore. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study.

If you choose to stop taking part in this study, the information you have already provided will be used in a confidential manner.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Susan Limber at Clemson University at 864-656-6320.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact David Taylor. David Taylor is not affiliated with the research project except to act as an advocate for the children and families participating. David Taylor has worked with children and families of prisoners with the Building Dreams program at Clemson University.
If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

A copy of this form will be given to you.
Appendix C

Caregiver Questionnaire

The following questions will ask about you, your family, and your child. “Your child” means the child that is in your care and is completing the interview with us. Please select only one answer for each question unless the question states otherwise.

1. What is your age? __________________

2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

3. What is your race? Please circle all that apply.
   - a. American Indian or Native Alaskan
   - b. Asian American
   - c. Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
   - d. Hispanic or Latino
   - e. White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   - f. Other: Specify________________________________

4. What’s your family income from all sources? Please circle one response only.
   - a. Less than $10,000
   - b. $10,001 to $20,000
   - c. $20,001 to $30,000
   - d. $30,001 to $40,000
   - e. $40,001 to $50,000
   - f. $50,001 to $70,000
   - g. $70,001 to $90,000
   - h. More than $90,000

5. Is your child’s mother or father incarcerated?
   - Mother
   - Father
   - Both
6. What is the incarcerated parent’s race? **Please circle all that apply.**

   a. American Indian or Native Alaskan
   b. Asian American
   c. Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   f. Other: Specify__________________________________________

7. Why is the parent incarcerated?

   ________________________________________________________________

    _____

8. Did your child live with the parent before incarceration? For how long?

   Yes  No  ___________________________ years

9. In the 6 months before incarceration, how often was the parent involved in caring for
your child?

   Daily  Weekly  Monthly  A Few Times a Year  Not At All

10. In the 6 months before incarceration, how often did your child spend time with their
parent?

    Daily  Weekly  Monthly  A Few Times a Year  Not At All

11. In the 6 months before incarceration, how often did your child have contact through
phone or email with the parent?

    Daily  Weekly  Monthly  A Few Times a Year  Not At All

12. Has this parent been incarcerated before?
Yes  No

How many times total? _________________

How many years total has this parent spent in prison? _________________

13. How long has the parent been incarcerated this time?
   a. Less than one month
   b. 1-6 months
   c. 7-12 months
   d. More than a year  How many years? __________________

14. What is the total length of this sentence?
   a. Less than one month
   b. 1-6 months
   c. 7-12 months
   d. More than a year  How many years? __________________

15. How old was your child when this parent was incarcerated for the first time?
    ________ Years Old

16. What is your relationship to the incarcerated parent?
    ________________________________

17. How do you feel about your child contacting and visiting their parent?
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________

   In the questions below, “my child” or “your child” means the child that is in your care and is completing the interview with us. Please circle one answer for each question.

18. I want my child to have a relationship with their parent.
    Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Not Sure    Agree    Strongly Agree
19. I feel it is important for my child to have a relationship with their parent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. I want my child to receive letters from their parent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

21. I want my child to receive phone calls from their parent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22. I want my child to visit their parent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

23. How often does your child receive mail from their parent?

   | Weekly or More Often | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |

24. How often does your child talk with their parent on the phone?

   | Weekly or More Often | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |

25. To what extent are YOU involved in helping your child contact their parent by phone or mail?

   a. Always Involved
   b. Usually Involved
   c. Involved about Half of the Time
   d. Rarely Involved
   e. Never Involved
26. How often does your child go to the prison to visit their parent?

Weekly or More Often   Monthly   A Few Times a Year   Never

27. To what extent are YOU involved in helping the child visit their parent at the prison?

a. Always Involved
b. Usually Involved
c. Involved about Half of the Time
d. Rarely Involved
e. Never Involved

28. How far do you live from the prison/jail where the child’s parent is housed?

________________________miles

29. I get frustrated with my child.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

30. I am constantly yelling and fighting with my child.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

31. My child trusts my judgment.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

32. I trust my child.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

33. My child respects my feelings.
34. I feel angry with my child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. I get upset easily around my child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. My child understands me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. My child cares about my point of view.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. I don’t like being around my child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39. When I am angry my child often understands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40. I don’t get much attention or credit from my child.

   | Never True | Rarely True | Sometimes True | Often True | Always True |
41. I feel my child is good.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

42. My child accepts me as I am.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

43. My child expects too much of me.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

44. I wish I had a different child.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

45. I talk to my child about my difficulties.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

46. If my child knows something is bothering me they ask me about it.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

47. I tell my child about my problems.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True

48. I can count on my child when I need to get something off my chest.

Never True  Rarely True  Sometimes True  Often True
Always True
49. My child can tell when I’m upset about something.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

50. I like to get my child’s point of view on things I am concerned about.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

51. I get upset a lot more than my child knows about.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

52. When I feel sad and lonely I spend time with my child.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

53. My child helps me understand myself better.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

54. I don’t like my child to touch me.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

55. Talking over my problems with my child makes me feel ashamed or foolish.

   Never True   Rarely True   Sometimes True   Often True
   Always True

158
56. I feel it is no use letting my feelings show around my child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57. My child has their own problems so I don’t bother them with my problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58. My child doesn’t understand what I am going through these days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never True</th>
<th>Rarely True</th>
<th>Sometimes True</th>
<th>Often True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always True</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now I’m going to read you a list of items that describe children in general. For each item, please circle how true you think it is of your child in the last week, either “very true,” “somewhat true,” or “not true.” And remember, we are just asking about how things have been this week.

59. Argues a lot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

60. Destroys things belonging to his/her family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

61. Disobedient at home or at school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not true</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

62. Feels too guilty
63. Feels worthless or inferior
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
64. Self-conscious or easily embarrassed
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
65. Stubborn, sullen, or irritable
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
66. Temper tantrums or hot temper
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
67. Threatens people
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
68. Too fearful or anxious
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
69. Unhappy, sad, depressed
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
70. Worries
    Not true  Somewhat True  Very True
Appendix D

Child Interview

Interview with Child

(Interviewer should personalize information where [ ] appear.)

Part A. I am going to start by asking some questions about you. Remember that you can choose to skip any question that you do not want to answer or you can tell me at any time that you need a break or would like to stop.

71. How old are you? ______________

72. Circle gender

   Male          Female

73. What is your race? You can choose more than one of these answers.

   a. American Indian or Native Alaskan
   b. Asian American
   c. Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
   d. Hispanic or Latino
   e. White or Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   f. Other: Specify________________________________

Part B. What do you call your parent who is in prison? Okay, any time I say _____ I will be talking about your parent who is in prison.

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your parent who is in prison and how you feel about contacting and visiting them. These are the choices that will help you to answer the questions. (Interviewer explains options using the cards)

74. I want to have a relationship with my [parent]. (Another way to say this might be…I want to feel close to my [parent].)

   Strongly Disagree    Disagree    In the Middle    Agree    Strongly Agree

161
75. I feel it is important to have a relationship with my [parent].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

76. My [parent] wants to have a relationship with me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

77. My [parent] feels it is important to have a relationship with me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

78. I want to receive letters from my [parent].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

79. I want to receive phone calls from my [parent].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

80. I want to visit my [parent] at the prison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

81. My [parent] wants to call me on the phone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

82. My [parent] wants to send me letters in the mail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
83. My [parent] wants me to visit him/her at the prison.

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     In the Middle     Agree     Strongly Agree

I am going to ask you some more questions about your [parent], but this time you can choose to answer using these three options: always true, sometimes true, never true.

84. My [parent] respects my feelings.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

85. My [parent] is a good parent.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

86. I wish I had a different [parent].

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

87. My [parent] accepts me as I am.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

88. I can depend on my [parent] to help me solve a problem.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

89. I like to get my [parent’s] view on things I’m worried about.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True

90. It helps to show my feelings when I am upset.

Always True     Sometimes True     Never True
91. My [parent] can tell when I’m upset about something.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

92. I feel silly or ashamed when I talk about my problems with my [parent].

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

93. My [parent] expects too much from me.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

94. I easily get upset at home.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

95. I get upset a lot more than my [parent] knows about.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

96. When I talk about things with my [parent] they listen to what I think.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

97. My [parent] listens to my opinions.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

98. My [parent] has [their] own problems, so I don’t bother [them] with mine.

   Always True    Sometimes True    Never True

99. My [parent] helps me to understand myself better.
100. I tell my [parent] about my problems and troubles.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

101. I feel angry with my [parent].
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

102. I get a lot of attention at home.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

103. My [parent] supports me to talk about my worries.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

104. My [parent] understands me.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

105. I know who I can depend on.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

106. When I am angry about something, my [parent] tries to understand.
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

107. I trust my [parent].
   Always True  Sometimes True  Never True

109. I can count on my [parent] when I need to talk about a problem.

Always True          Sometimes True          Never True

110. No one understands me.

Always True          Sometimes True          Never True

111. If my [parent] knows that I am upset about something, [they] asks me about it.

Always True          Sometimes True          Never True

**Part C. Now I am going to ask you some questions about getting mail from your [parent] who is in prison. Remember that you can choose to skip any question that you do not want to answer or you can tell me at any time that you need a break or would like to stop.**

112. How often do you get mail from your [parent]?

Weekly or More Often     Monthly     A Few Times a Year     Never

*If Never, Skip to Question #57*

113. Can you tell me about a time when you received mail from your [parent]?

*(Use questions below as probes)*

Did you know that the letter was coming?
How did you find out that you had a letter?
How did you feel when you found out that you got a letter?
Was the letter addressed to you?
Who opened the letter? Who read the letter?
Did anyone else read the letter?
What kinds of things did the letter say?
How did you feel while you were reading or being read the letter?
Did you send a letter back? Why or why not?
How did you feel after you read the letter?
114. What do you like best about getting mail from your [parent]?

115. What do you like least about getting mail from your [parent]?

116. Is there anything you wish you could change about getting mail from your [parent]?

**Remember these choices. We will use them again.** *(Interviewer points to cards and reads again)*

117. I feel happy when I get mail from my [parent].

   [Strongly Disagree] [Disagree] [In the Middle] [Agree] [Strongly Agree]

118. I feel sad when I get mail from my [parent].

   [Strongly Disagree] [Disagree] [In the Middle] [Agree] [Strongly Agree]

119. I feel excited when I get mail from my [parent].

   [Strongly Disagree] [Disagree] [In the Middle] [Agree] [Strongly Agree]

120. I feel mad when I get mail from my [parent].

   [Strongly Disagree] [Disagree] [In the Middle] [Agree] [Strongly Agree]

121. I feel nervous when I get mail from my [parent].

   [Strongly Disagree] [Disagree] [In the Middle] [Agree] [Strongly Agree]

122. I feel happy when I read a letter from my [parent].
123. I feel sad when I read a letter from my [parent].

124. I feel excited when I read a letter my [parent] sent me.

125. I feel mad when I read a letter from my [parent].

126. I feel nervous when I read a letter from my [parent].

Part D. Now I am going to ask you some questions about talking on the phone with your [parent] who is in prison. Remember that you can choose to skip any question that you do not want to answer or you can tell me at any time that you need a break or would like to stop.

127. How often do you talk on the phone with your [parent]?

   Weekly or More Often       Monthly       A Few Times a Year       Never
   
   If Never, Skip to Question #78

128. Can you tell me about a time when you received a phone call from your [parent]?

   (Use questions below as probes.)

   Did you know you were going to get the phone call from your [parent]?
   What time of day was the call? What day of the week was the call?
   Do you often get phone calls from your [parent] at this time?
   How much time did you have to talk?
What kinds of things did you talk about?
How did you feel while you were on the phone?
How did you feel right after you got off of the phone?

129. What do you like best about getting a phone call from your [parent]?

130. What do you like least about getting a phone call from your [parent]?

131. Is there anything you wish you could change about getting a phone call from your [parent]?

Here are the choices that will help you answer the next set of questions. (Interviewer explains the choices using the cards)

132. I feel happy when I talk to my [parent] on the phone.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

133. I feel sad when I talk to my [parent] on the phone.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

134. I feel excited when I talk to my [parent] on the phone.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

135. I feel mad when I talk to my [parent] on the phone.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
136. I feel nervous when I talk to my [parent] on the phone.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

137. I feel happy right after I get off the phone with my [parent].

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

138. I feel sad right after I get off the phone with my [parent].

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

139. I feel mad right after I get off the phone with my [parent].

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

140. Sometimes I do not want to talk to my [parent] on the phone because I have felt uncomfortable before.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

141. Sometimes I do not feel like I want to talk on the phone with my [parent] because I know I will be upset afterwards.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

142. My [parent] and I have things we want to talk about when we are on the phone.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree

143. When I talk to my [parent], we talk about things that I want to talk about.
144. I know ahead of time when my [parent] is going to call me.

145. My [parent] usually calls at a time that I am available to talk with him/her.

146. When my [parent] calls, we have enough time to talk on the phone.

147. I feel like I know what’s going to happen when my [parent] calls me on the phone.

Part E. Now I am going to ask you some questions about visiting your [parent] at the prison. Remember that you can choose to skip any question that you do not want to answer or you can tell me at any time that you need a break or would like to stop.

148. How often do you go to the prison to visit your [parent]?

Weekly or More Often     Monthly       A Few Times a Year     Never

If Never, Skip to Question #109

149. Can you tell me about a time when you went to visit your [parent]? 
(Use questions below as probes.)

What time of the day did you leave to go to the prison?
How long did it take to get there? (1 to 2 hours, 2 to 3 hours, more than that)
How did you get there?
Who went with you to the prison?
How did you feel while you were on the way to the prison?
What did you do when you got to the prison? Did you go through security? What was that like? Did you go into a waiting room? What was the waiting area like? Was it nice? How long did you have to wait? What did you do while you were waiting? How did you feel while you were waiting?
What was it like when you got to see your parent? Were you allowed to hug your parent? What was the visitation setting like (behind glass, across a table)? Did you play with your parent? What kinds of things did you talk about? How long did you get to visit with your parent?
How did you feel after you visited?

150. What do you like the best about visiting your [parent]?

151. What did you like least about visiting your [parent]?

152. Is there anything you wish you could change about visiting your [parent]?

---

Here are the choices that will help you answer the next set of questions.

(Interviewer reads the choices using the cards)

153. I feel happy on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].

   Strongly Disagree Disagree In the Middle Agree Strongly Agree

154. I feel sad on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].
155. I feel excited on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].

156. I feel mad on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].

157. I feel nervous on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].

158. I feel scared on my way to the prison to visit my [parent].

159. I feel happy while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.

160. I feel sad while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.

161. I feel excited while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.
162. I feel mad while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
163. I feel nervous while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
164. I feel scared while I am visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
165. I feel happy right after visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
166. I feel sad right after visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
167. I feel excited right after visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
168. I feel mad right after visiting my [parent] at the prison.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
169. Sometimes I do not want to visit the prison because I have felt uncomfortable there before.
   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   In the Middle   Agree   Strongly Agree
170. Sometimes I do not feel like I want to visit my parent because I know I will be upset afterwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

171. My [parent] and I have things we want to talk about when we are visiting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

172. I usually have to wait a long time at the prison before I am allowed to see my [parent].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

173. The people who work in the prison are friendly to me and my family while we are at the prison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

174. There are things for me to do while I am waiting to see my parent at the prison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

175. There are things for me and my [parent] to do while we are visiting at the prison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

176. I have enough time to talk with my [parent] during visitation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>In the Middle</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

177. I feel like I know what’s going to happen when I go to the prison to visit my [parent].
178. If I want to, I am allowed to hug and kiss my [parent] when I go to visit with him/her.

179. My [caregiver] wants me to have a relationship with my [parent]. (Another way to say this might be…My [caregiver] wants me to feel close to my [parent].)

180. My [caregiver] feels it is important for me to have a relationship with my [parent].

181. My [caregiver] wants me to get letters from my [parent].

182. My [caregiver] wants me to get phone calls from my [parent].

183. My [caregiver] wants me to visit my [parent].
184. I feel comfortable asking my [caregiver] to help me send a letter to my [parent].

185. I feel comfortable asking my [caregiver] to help me set up a phone call with my [parent].

186. I feel comfortable asking my [caregiver] to take me to the prison to visit my [parent].

187. I have tried to send my [parent] a letter without my [caregiver] knowing.

188. I have tried to visit my [parent] without my [caregiver] knowing.

189. I have gotten a phone call from my [parent] without my [caregiver] knowing.

Part G. Now I would like to ask you some questions about how it might be easy or hard for you to get mail from your [parent], to get phone calls from your [parent], or to go visit your [parent].

You can use the same choices that we have been using to answer these questions.

(Interviewer points to the cards)
190. I cannot go to visit my [parent] because I do not have someone to go with me.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

191. I cannot go to visit my [parent] because we have no way to get there.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

192. I cannot go to visit my [parent] because it is too far away.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

193. I cannot go to visit my [parent] at the prison because it costs a lot of money.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

194. I cannot get phone calls from my [parent] because it costs a lot of money.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

195. It is easy for me to send a letter to my [parent].

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

196. It is easy for my [parent] to send a letter to me.

   Strongly Disagree        Disagree        In the Middle        Agree        Strongly Agree

197. It is easy for my [parent] to call me.

178
198. It is easy for me to get phone calls from my [parent].

199. It is easy for me to visit my [parent] at the prison.

200. Do you ever think it is hard to contact your [parent] using mail and the phone? Why?

201. Do you ever think it is hard to visit your [parent] at the prison? Why?

202. Have you ever had a bad experience while you were contacting or visiting your [parent] since he/she has been in prison? Can you tell me about that?

Part H. I would like to ask you a few questions about people you talk to about your [parent]. We will use the same choices as before to answer the questions. (Interviewer points to cards)

203. Sometimes I talk to an adult in my family about my [parent].

204. Sometimes I talk to an adult who is not in my family about my [parent].
205. Sometimes I talk to a friend my age about my [parent].

Agree

206. It helps to have someone to talk to about my [parent].

Agree

207. Sometimes I wish I had someone to talk to about my [parent].

Agree

ONLy ask the following Questions if the child has contacted or visited their parent in prison. You should know this from Questions asked previously in the interview.

208. I have someone I can talk to about how I feel after I talk or visit with my [parent].

Agree

209. I wish I had someone to talk to about how I feel after I talk to or visit my [parent].

Agree

Part I. Now I am going to ask some questions about you having a say in decisions about contacting and visiting your [parent].
We will use the same choices as before to answer the questions. (Interviewer points to cards)

210. Adults should ask me what I think is important when it comes to contacting and visiting my [parent].
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>211.</th>
<th>Adults should ask me what I want when it comes to contacting and visiting my [parent].</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212.</td>
<td>I should be allowed to have more contact with my [parent] by phone or mail.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213.</td>
<td>I want to have more contact by phone or mail with my [parent].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214.</td>
<td>I should be allowed to have more visits with my [parent].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215.</td>
<td>I want to have more visits with my [parent].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216.</td>
<td>I feel I have a right to contact and visit my [parent].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217.</td>
<td>I am able to give my opinion in decisions that are made about contacting and visiting with my [parent].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
218. I should be able to have more say in decisions made about contacting and visiting with my [parent]. ("have a say" might mean to say what you think or give your opinion)

219. Is it important for children to have a say in decisions made about contact and visitation with a parent in prison? Why? ("have a say" might mean to say what you think or give your opinion)

220. How old should a child be when s/he is able to have a say about decisions to contact and visit a parent in prison?

221. Should you be allowed to have contact and visitation with your [parent]? Why?

222. How much contact and visitation do you think you should have with your [parent]?
   A. About the same as now
   B. More than you have now
   C. Less than you have now

How much more/much less contact and visitation would you like to have?
Part. J Now I’m going to read you a list of items that describe kids. For each item, I just need you to tell me how true you think it is of you in the last week, either “very true,” “somewhat true,” or “not true.” And remember, I am just asking about how things have been this week. OK?

223. I argue a lot.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

224. I destroy things belonging to others.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

225. I disobey my parents or people at school.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

226. I feel like I have done something wrong.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

227. I feel like I am not as good as other people.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

228. I am easily embarrassed.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

229. I am stubborn.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True

230. I get mad easily.

Not True  Somewhat True  Very True
231. I threaten to hurt people.

Not True    Somewhat True    Very True

232. I am too fearful.

Not True    Somewhat True    Very True

233. I am unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Not True    Somewhat True    Very True

234. I worry a lot.

Not True    Somewhat True    Very True
Appendix E

Community Resources

Community Resources

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Upstate**

*Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest, largest and most effective youth mentoring organization in the United States.* This organization has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for more than a century, developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of young people. Big Brothers Big Sisters serves children, ages 6 through 18, in communities across the country - including yours.

**Greenville** (864) 242-0676  
**Spartanburg** (864) 542-9328  
**Anderson** (864) 965-0505

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

This organization transports family and friends to the Broad River Complex in Columbia (Manning Correctional Institution) or the Department of Juvenile Justice in Columbia during inmate visiting hours. Please call for more information (864) 232-2424 extension 150.

**Alston Wilkes Society**

The vision of this organization is to provide offenders, former offenders, the homeless, at-risk youth, veterans, and their families the tools they need to become productive citizens. AWS helps clients make a successful transition back into society through: clothing, food, education assistance, employment training & placement, housing assistance, substance abuse & therapeutic counseling referrals, transportation, workshops in the jails and prisons throughout S.C. prior to release. They also offer many youth services.

Check out their website for a complete list of tools and resources:  
http://www.alstonwilkessociety.org/programs.html

Or call (803) 799-2490
**Building Dreams Bike Clubs**

The Building Dreams Bike Clubs are a project of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life at Clemson University. This organization works with local partners to provide group mentoring to youth who are affected by incarceration at home or in their neighborhood. Applications are accepted for youth in middle school and high school at the beginning of January.

For more information, contact David Taylor at: dtaylor@clemson.edu or (864) 250-4667

**South Carolina Department of Mental Health**

The S.C. Department of Mental Health gives priority to adults, children, and their families affected by serious mental illnesses and significant emotional disorders. They are committed to eliminating stigma and promoting the philosophy of recovery, to achieving our goals in collaboration with all stakeholders, and to assuring the highest quality of culturally competent services possible.

(803) 898 – 8581

**Foothills Family Resources**

This organization connects families to community resources including mental health resources, job training, day care, food banks, and educational training.

(864) 836-1100

**United Way of Greenville County**

The United Way’s mission is to provide leadership in uniting our community to improve people’s lives and build a vital and caring community. This organization has compiled an exhaustive list of resources for the Greenville County Area. These include child care, children’s development, clothing, education, emergency shelter, employment, financial assistance, mental and physical health, housing, personal and family life, recreation, transportation, and welfare related services.

See their Community Resource Guide at:

Or call (864) 467-3333
## Appendix F

### Summary of Power Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors/Year</th>
<th>Variables of Interest</th>
<th>Pertinent Information</th>
<th>Effect size from Literature</th>
<th>Power Formula</th>
<th>$\Delta$</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Twice &amp; Brewster (2004)</td>
<td>Frequency of contact and visitation Externalizing problems – suspended from school</td>
<td>47 adolescents (13-20 years old) were used in the analysis about contact and visitation, children of incarcerated parents, outcome variables included arrests, suspensions, drop out, failing grades</td>
<td>$X^2 = 7.94$, $p &lt; .02$ 75% of those with contact less than once/month had been suspended from school</td>
<td>Proportions</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Simsek et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Regular Contact with parents and relatives Externalizing problems</td>
<td>Children in foster care - institutional setting, measure was the teacher report form</td>
<td>No Contact (n=143) $M = 9.7$, $SD = 10.3$ Regular Contact (n=164) $M = 7.8$, $SD = 10.0$ Pooled SD = 10.09 $N = 461$</td>
<td>Two sample t-test (Mean Difference)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Buist et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Parent-child relationship Internalizing and Externalizing</td>
<td>Internalizing and externalizing problems measured by $r = -.29$ (internalizing) $r = -.29$ (externalizing) $r_0 = .05$</td>
<td>Pearson’s r</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | Tambelli et al. (2012) | Parent-child relationship measured by the IPPA, adolescents 11-15 | Internalizing and Externalizing problems measured by youth self-report, Parent-child relationship measured by IPPA, adolescents 11-19 years old | $R^2 = .19$ (internalizing) $\rightarrow r = .44$
$R^2 = .21$ (externalizing) $\rightarrow r = .46$
$\rho_0 = .10$ | Pearson’s r | 0.36 | 45 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|   |   |   |   |   | FINAL SAMPLE SIZE | 38 |
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