



Children of Incarcerated Parents – An Idaho Perspective

The Facts

- Children of offenders are five times more likely than their peers to end up in prison*
- One in 10 will be incarcerated before reaching adulthood*
- The number of women incarcerated has increased threefold in the last 10 years – convicted in large part for non-violent drug crimes*

**Annie E Casey Foundation – “Family to Family, Tools for Rebuilding Foster Care”, 2008*

The Facts

- About 1.5 million children nationwide have parents behind bars on any one day*
- An estimated 10 million more have parents who have been imprisoned at some point during the child's life*
- 75 percent of women in prison are mothers, typically of two or three children*

**Annie E Casey Foundation – “Family to Family, Tools for Rebuilding Foster Care”, 2008*

America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline

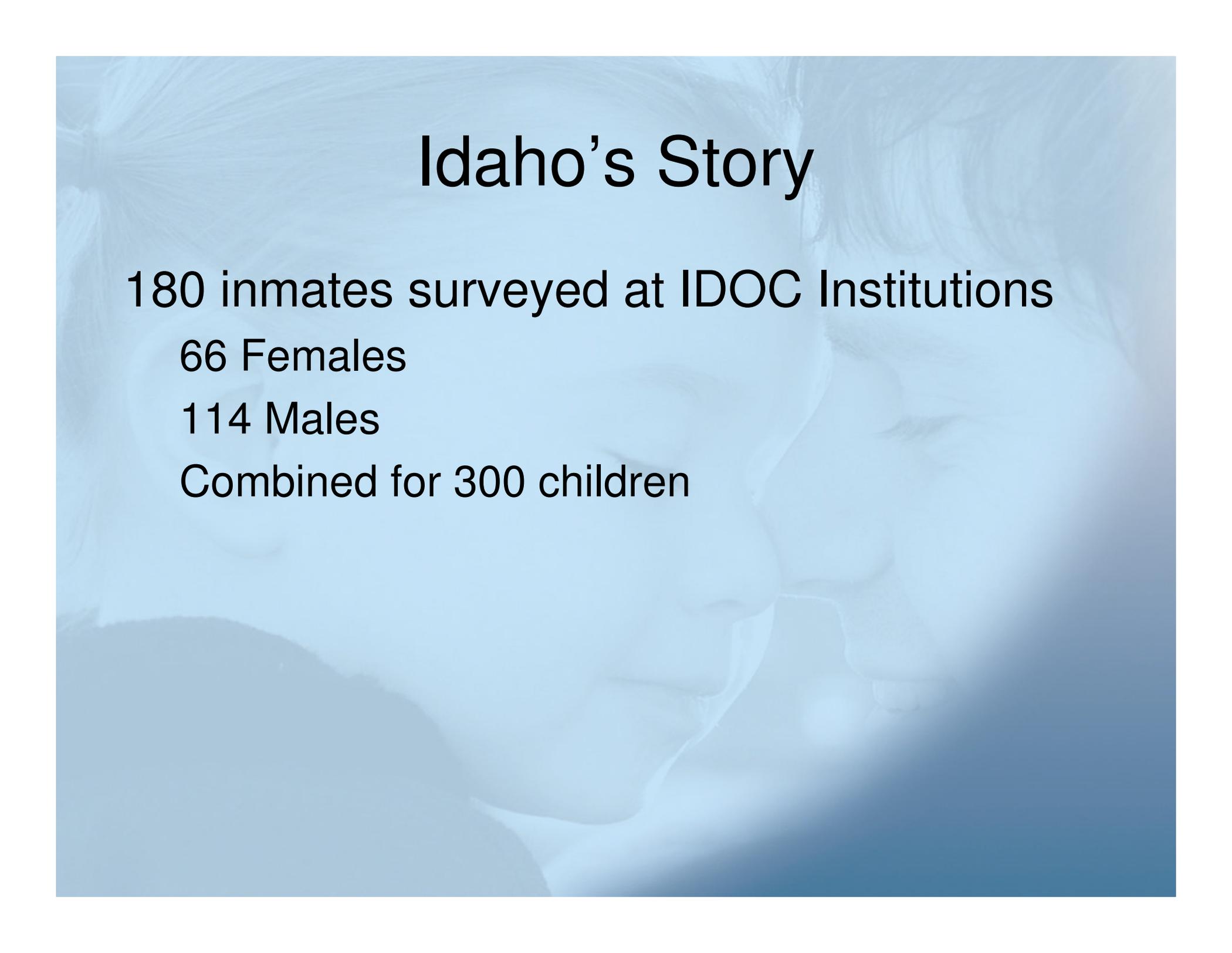
The Cradle to Prison Pipeline is:

- A loud siren of alarm and wake up call to action to every parent, faith community, public policy, political and cultural leader, child and family serving agency and citizen
- An urgent national crisis at the intersection of poverty and race with tens of thousands of children and teens sucked into the Pipeline each year
- Not an act of God or inevitable; it is a series of human choices at each stage of our children's development

The Foundation of Our Work

According to the Children's Defense Fund, children are ten times more apt to commit a violent crime if there are six or more of the following risk factors:

- Poverty
- Family Structure
- Lack of Health Care
- Lack of Timely and Quality Mental Health Services
- Low Birth Weight
- Abuse/Neglect
- Foster Care Placement
- Poor School Quality/Low Achievement
- Juvenile Justice System Involvement
- Children of Color



Idaho's Story

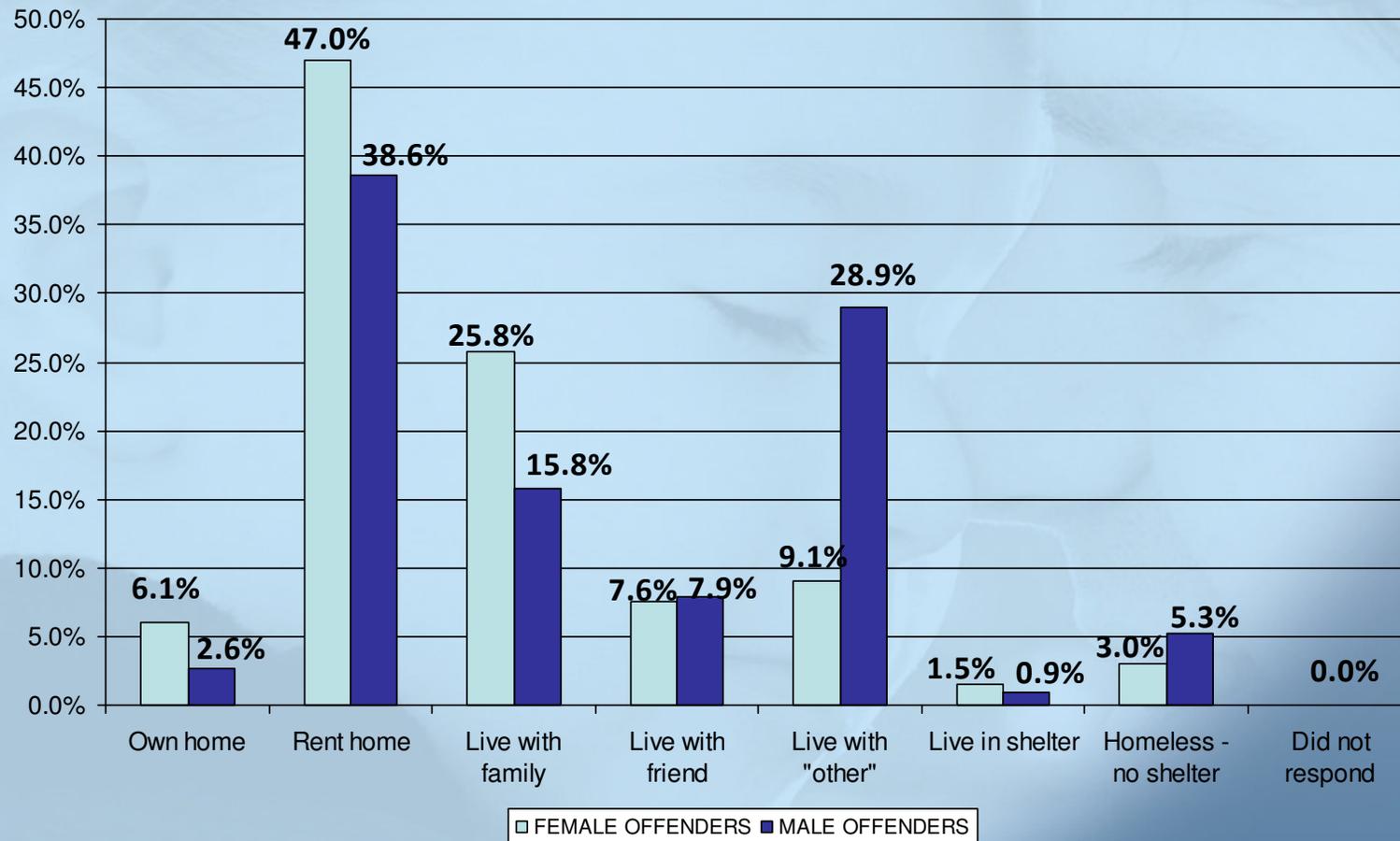
180 inmates surveyed at IDOC Institutions

66 Females

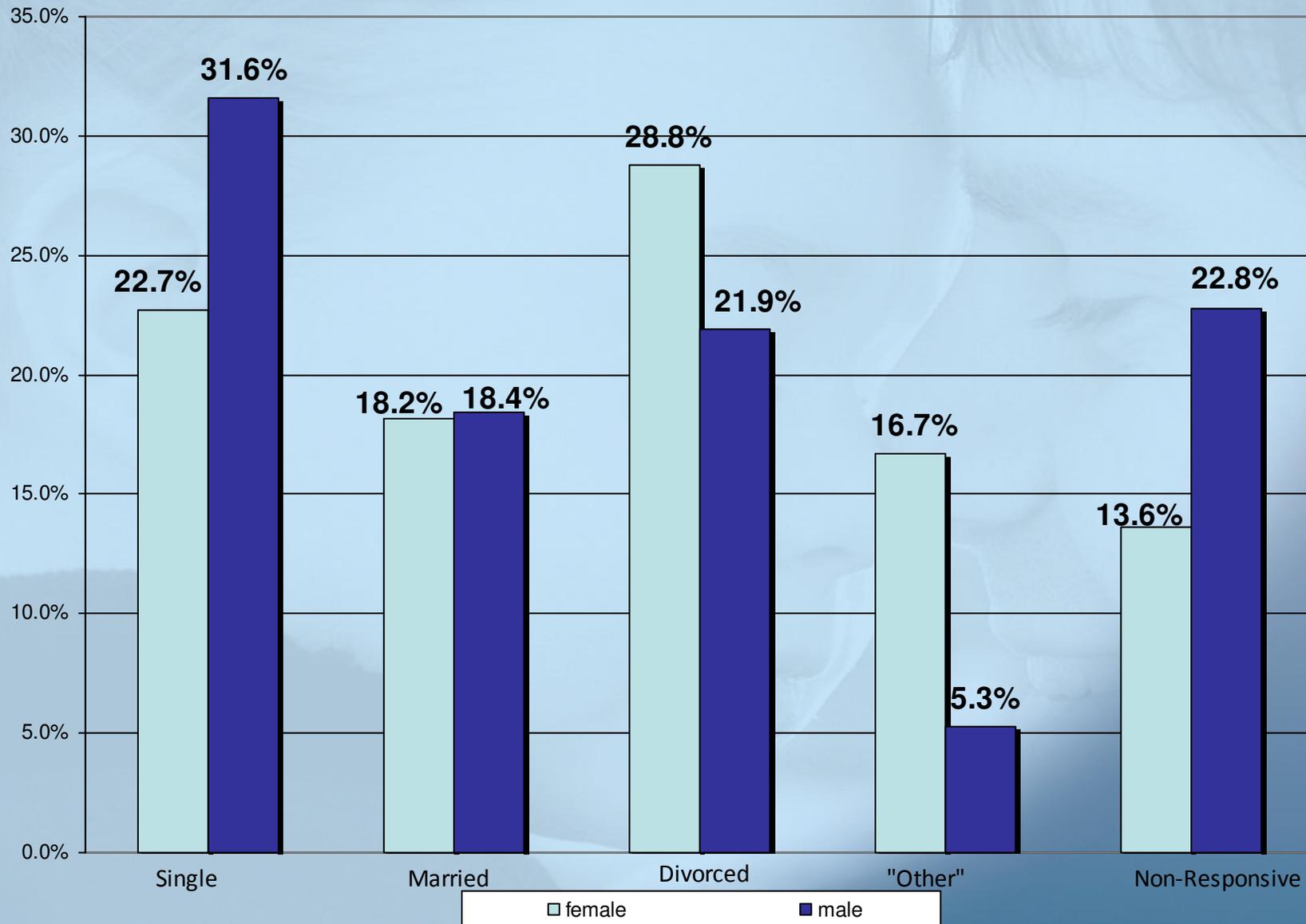
114 Males

Combined for 300 children

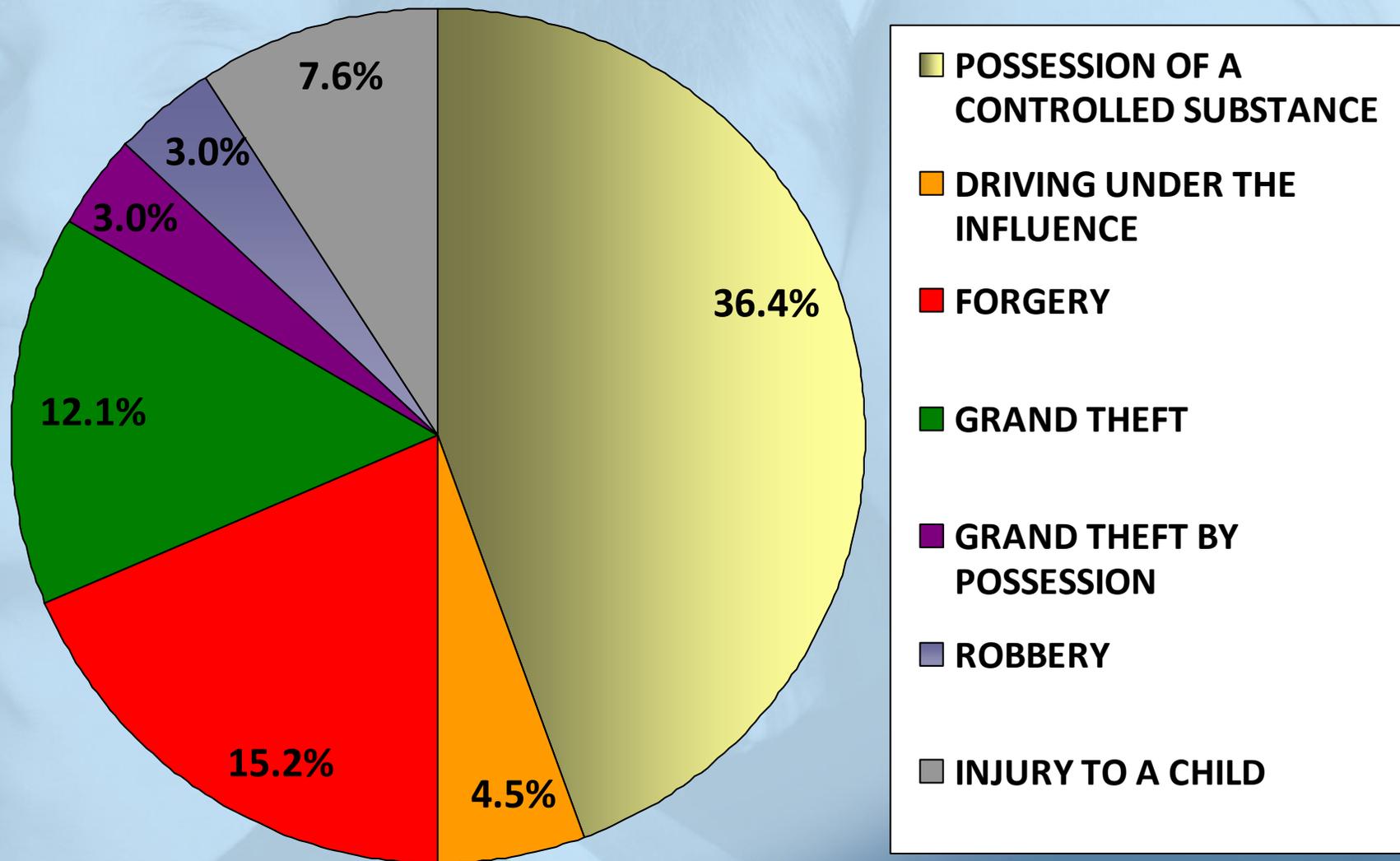
Housing Status at the Time of Incarceration



Marital Status of Incarcerated Parents



Criminal Offenses of Mothers



Mothers & Their Children

15 Percent of female offenders reported no children

21 Percent of female offenders reported one child

29 Percent of female offenders reported two children

20 Percent of female offenders reported three children

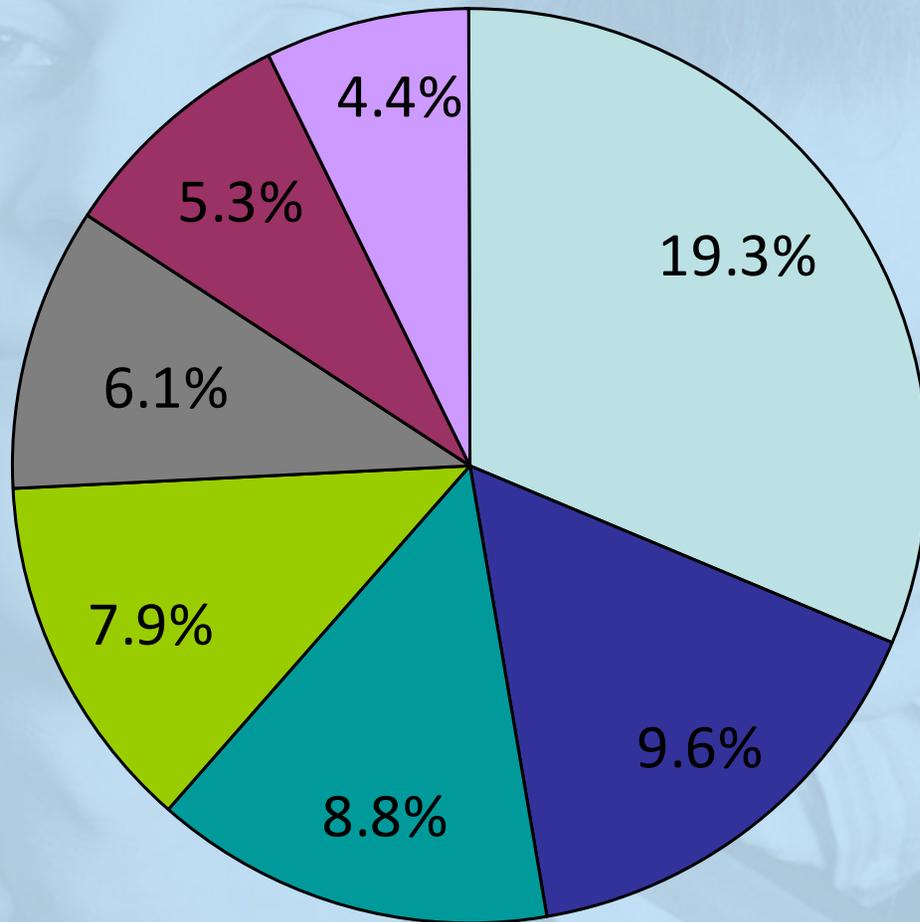
15 Percent of female offenders reported four or more children

64 percent of mothers reported two or more children

Other Information on Mothers

- 50 percent of the women were employed at the time of their arrest making an average of \$8.81 per hour
- 77 percent were living with their children at the time of arrest
- 88 percent plan to live with their children upon release
- Average age at the time of the birth of first child was 20 (youngest was 14)

Criminal Offenses of Fathers



- POSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE
- GRAND THEFT
- BURGLARY
- DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE
- AGGRAVATED BATTERY
- INJURY TO A CHILD
- LEWD & LASCIVIOUS CONDUCT W/MINOR UNDER 16

Fathers & Their Children

10 Percent of male offenders reported no children

42 Percent of male offenders reported one child

25 Percent of male offenders reported two children

17 Percent of male offenders reported three children

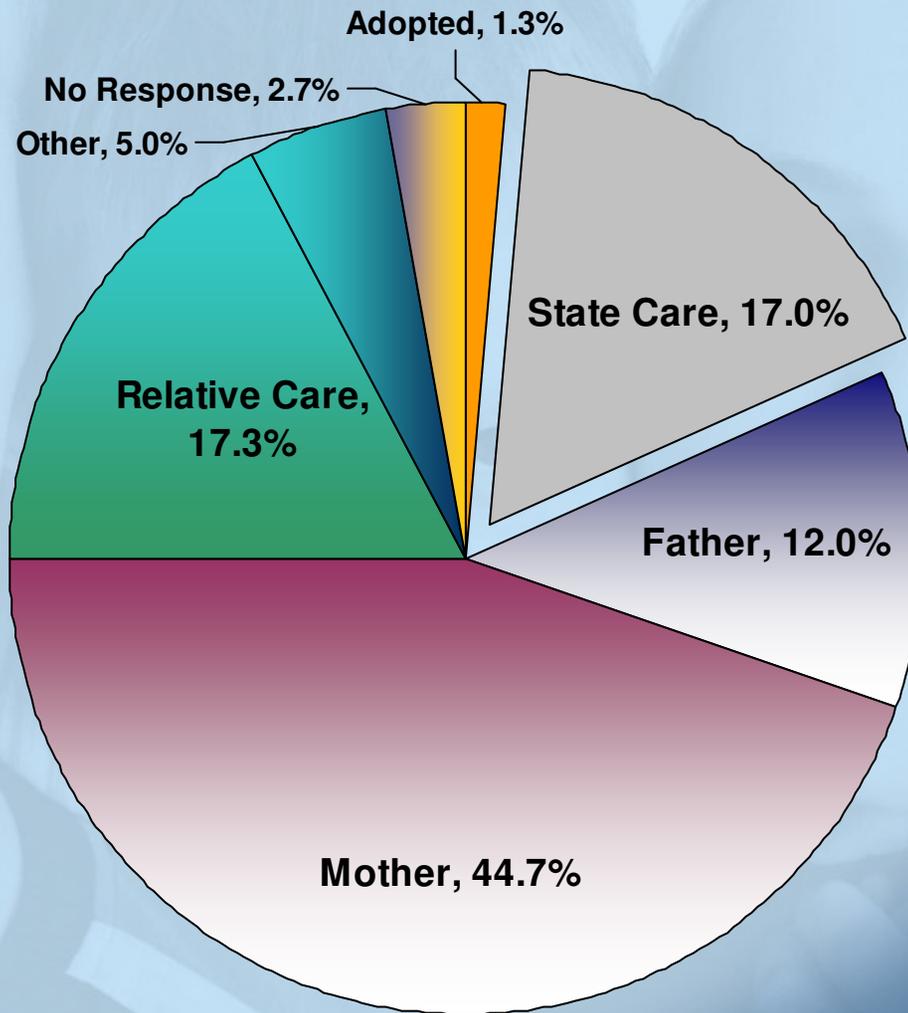
6 Percent of male offenders reported four or more children

48 percent of fathers reported two or more children

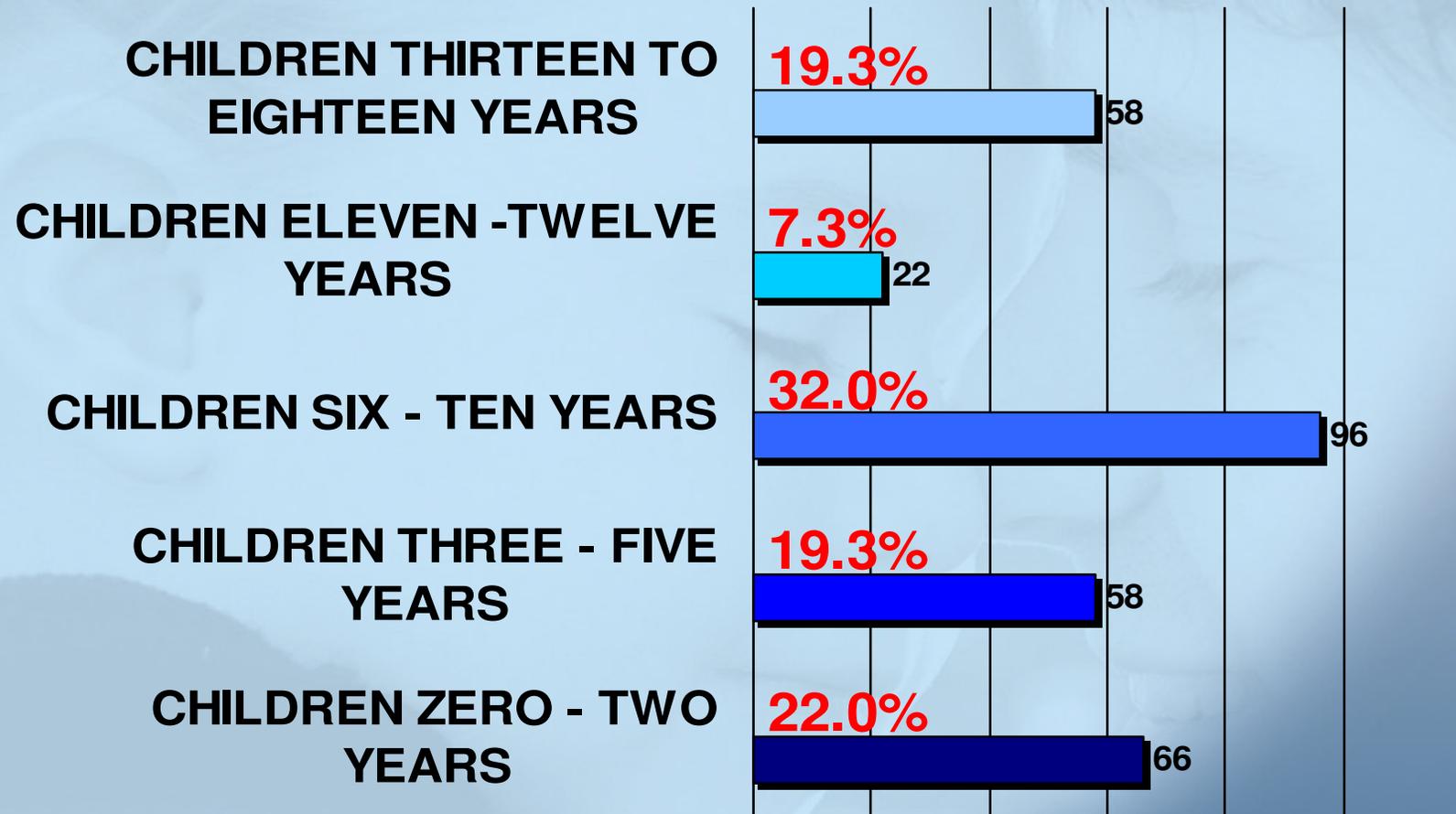
Other Information on Fathers

- 48 percent of the men were employed at the time of their arrest making an average of \$11.57 per hour (35 men did not answer this question)
- 64 percent were living with their children at the time of arrest
- 96 percent plan to live with their children upon release
- Average age at the time of the birth of first child was 22 (youngest was 14)

Custody Status of Children

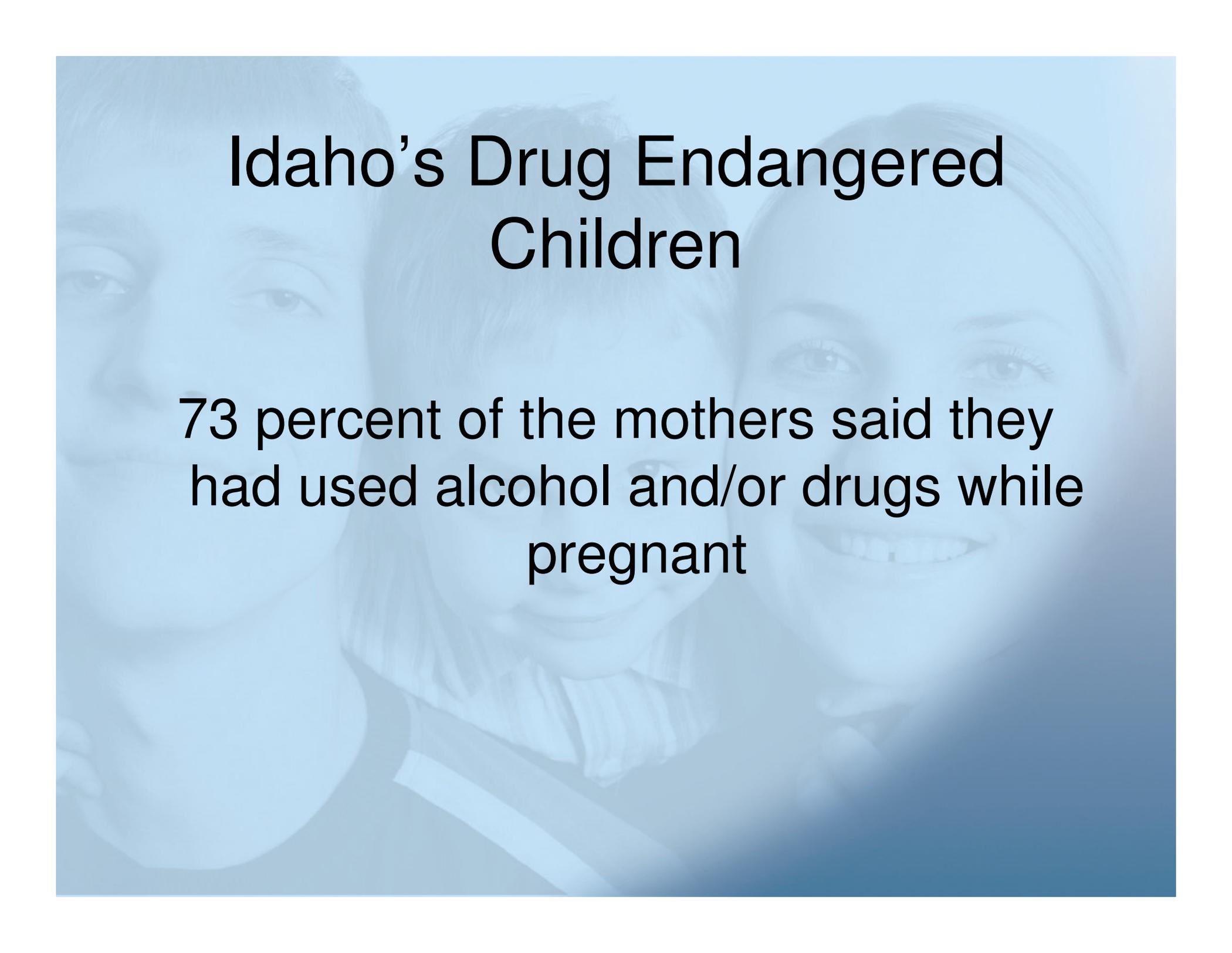


Age Range of Children



Benefits Received By Children

Children's mental health services	18	6.0%
Food stamps	259	86.3%
Medicaid/CHIP	215	71.7%
WIC	190	63.3%
Cash Assistance (TAFI)	94	31.3%
Infant Toddler Program services	18	6.0%



Idaho's Drug Endangered Children

73 percent of the mothers said they had used alcohol and/or drugs while pregnant

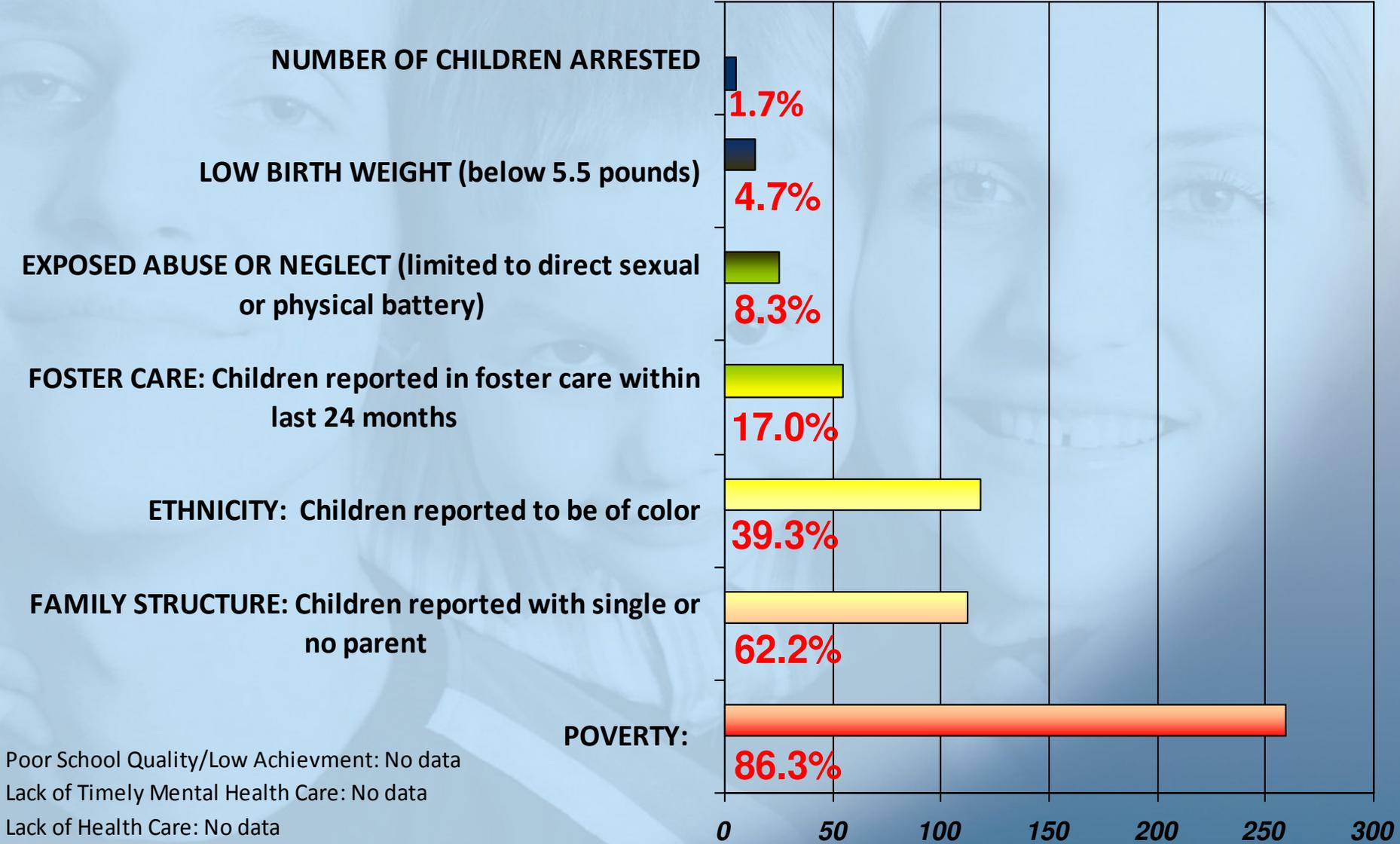
Children's Risk Factors

Through the survey we measured the following risk factors:

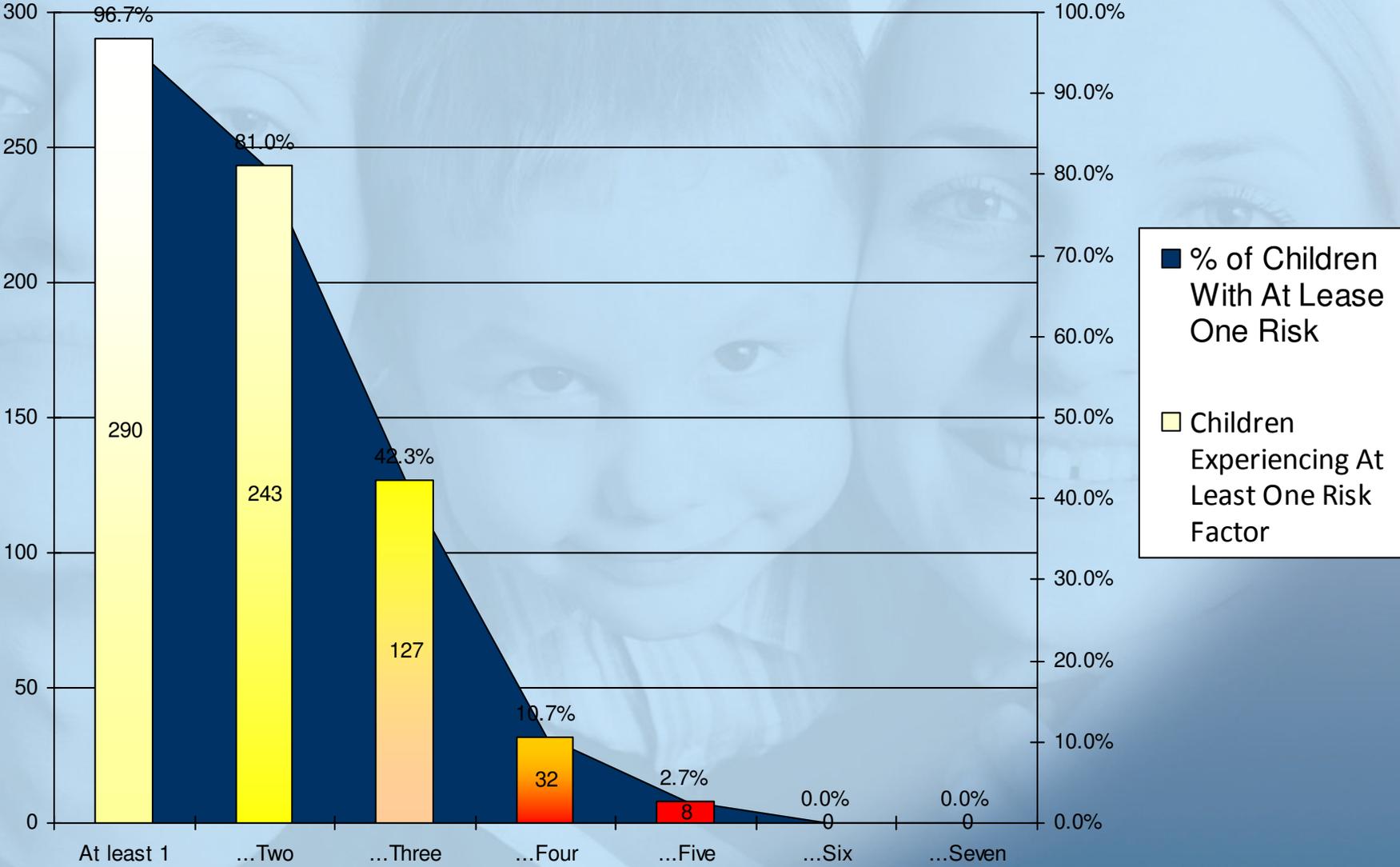
- 1- Poverty Status
- 2- Family Structure
- 3- Low Birth Weight
- 4- Abuse or Neglect
- 5- Foster Care Placement
- 6- Ethnicity
- 7- Juvenile Justice System Involvement

We were unable to determine lack of health care, lack of timely mental health care, poor school quality/low achievement

Children's Risk Factors



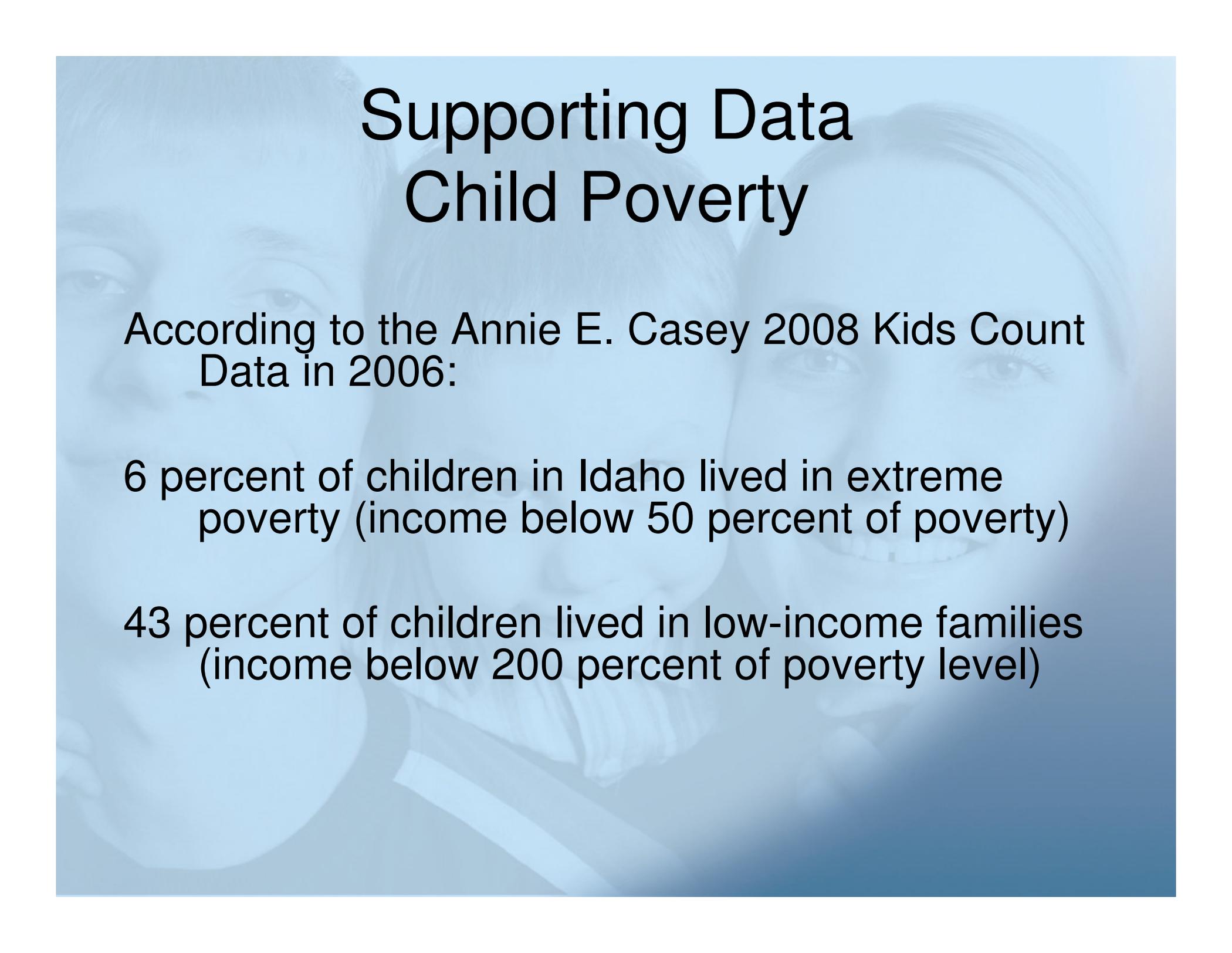
Children's Risk Factors



The Results

What we learned:

- The top three risk factors facing the children that we surveyed were ***poverty, family structure*** and ***children of color***
- Substance Abuse continues to be a major contributor to our prison population
- Almost two-thirds of mothers reported using alcohol or drugs while pregnant

The background of the slide features a faded, light blue image of three children's faces. On the left, a young boy with dark hair looks towards the camera. In the center, a young girl with dark hair is looking down. On the right, a young girl with blonde hair is smiling broadly. The overall tone is soft and focused on the subject of child poverty.

Supporting Data Child Poverty

According to the Annie E. Casey 2008 Kids Count Data in 2006:

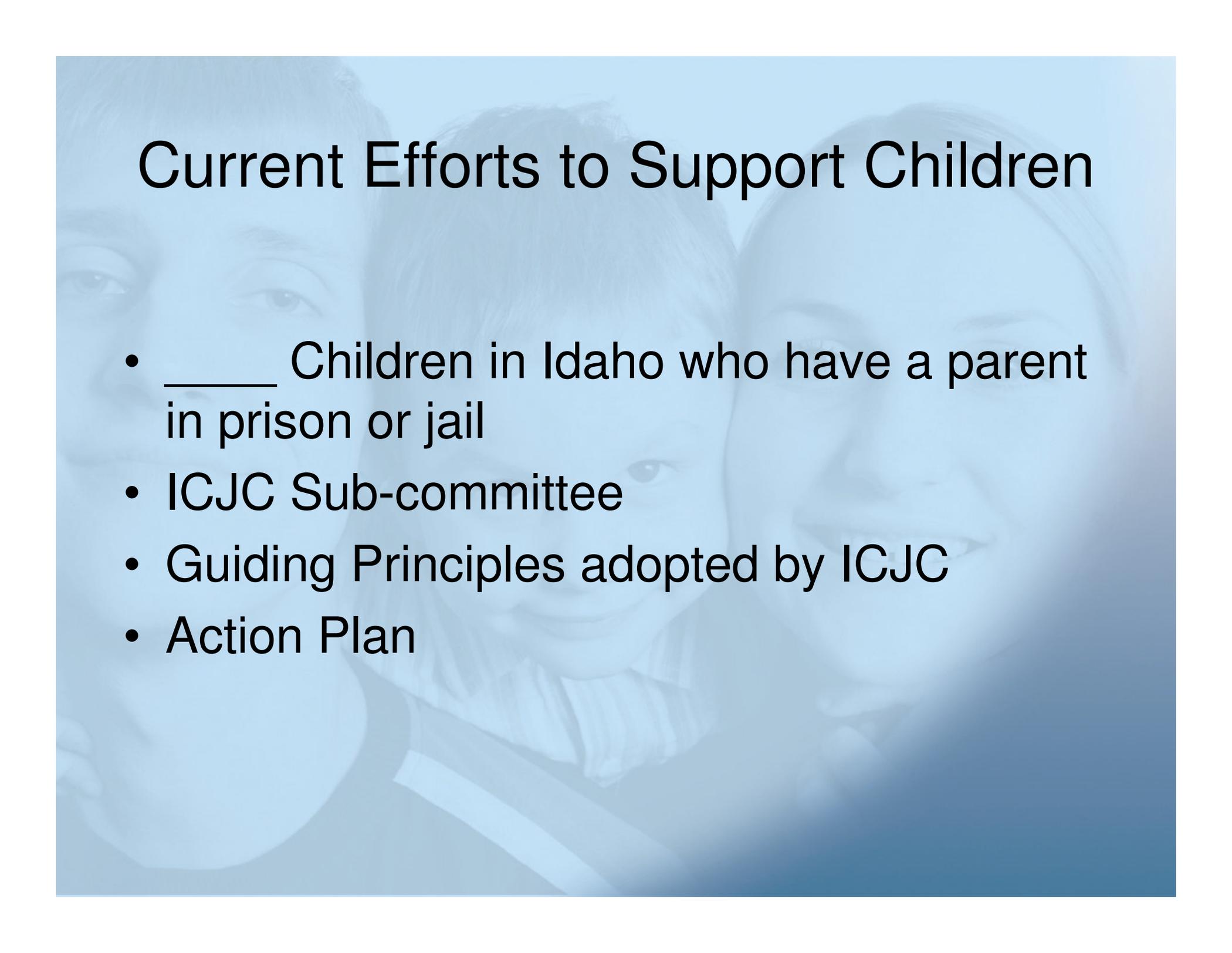
6 percent of children in Idaho lived in extreme poverty (income below 50 percent of poverty)

43 percent of children lived in low-income families (income below 200 percent of poverty level)

Supporting Data Family Structure

According to Idaho's 2006 vital statistics data there were about 3400 children born out-of-wedlock in 2006 to mothers between the ages of 18-24.

Mother's age	Total number of births	Number out of wedlock
15-17	597	477 (79.9%)
18-19	1551	970 (62.5%)
20-24	7511	2355 (31.4%)



Current Efforts to Support Children

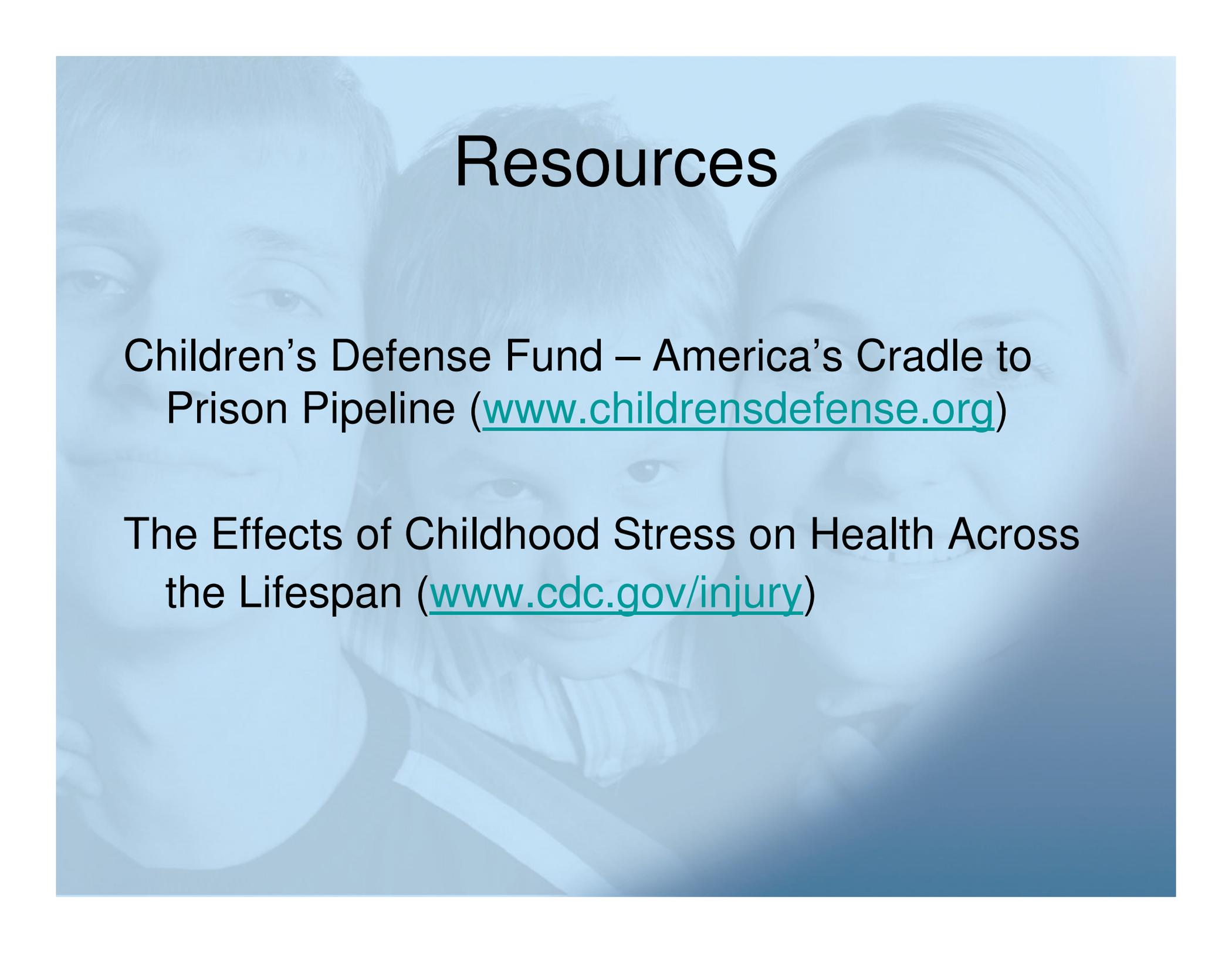
- _____ Children in Idaho who have a parent in prison or jail
- ICJC Sub-committee
- Guiding Principles adopted by ICJC
- Action Plan

Remember...

- Right or wrong – children love their parents
- Almost all offenders return to their communities and the majority regain custody or attempt to engage in a relationship with their children
- Action must be taken to break the generational cycle of incarceration
- The stigma of incarceration is profound to both the child and the parent
- We have an opportunity to evaluate our current policies and make changes that are sensible and can benefit children

In Closing...

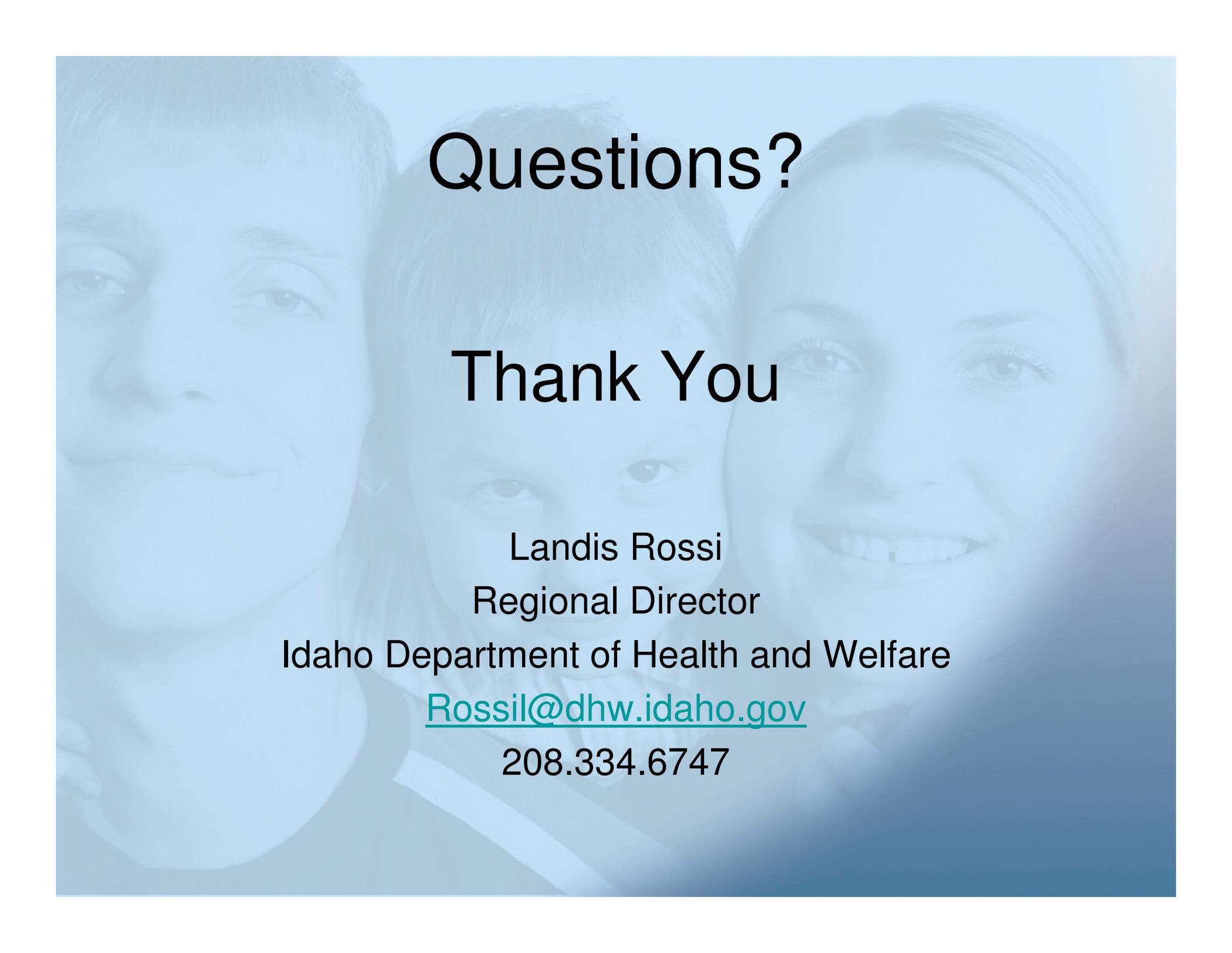
Children and their incarcerated parents become clients of separate public agencies, often at odds and seldom partners in addressing the family's need for rebuilding and reunification. We should understand, as clearly and as deeply as we can, that the collateral damage of our war on crime and drugs is our most vulnerable children. These children lie at the intersection of educational, social service, correctional, family service and other agencies. Coordinated, specialized, and targeted intervention can break the cycle of generational imprisonment, but not without leadership and not without commitment



Resources

Children's Defense Fund – America's Cradle to
Prison Pipeline (www.childrensdefense.org)

The Effects of Childhood Stress on Health Across
the Lifespan (www.cdc.gov/injury)



Questions?

Thank You

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