

Talking with Kids About Daddy Going to Jail

► Going to jail can cause confusion for many fathers and their children. Remember that although you will not be physically present in your child's day-to-day life, you are still a parent and can continue to play an important role in your child's life.

Helpful Answers to Children's Questions

Where are you going?

I'm going to a place called jail/prison. This is where grown-ups go when they break rules. This is not your fault, and I am not going there because of anything you did.

Will you come back?

I won't be home for a long time. As soon as I get more information about coming home, I'll let you know right away. Until then, know that I will be thinking of you every day, and we'll find ways to stay in touch.

Who will take care of me?

Your mom will take care of you. The rest of the family will help as well—grandma and grandpa and your aunts and uncles. If there is anything you need, they will be there to help you.

Will I get to come see you?

I really want you to visit me. I will do my best to arrange for you to visit me. But sometimes it will not be often. The jail/prison is far from our town. I'll talk with your mom (person taking care of your child) about you coming for a visit. Between visits, we can find fun ways to stay in touch, like writing letters and sending pictures.



What it's like to visit you?

Following are tips to help your child have a safe and enjoyable visit.

Describe the visiting room before your child or children come to visit.

- When you come to visit, we'll be in the visiting room with other fathers who are happy to see their children. You'll see an officer there. The officer is there to make sure that everyone is safe—just like at school.

Have positive conversation with your child during the visit.

- Ask them questions about their day-to-day activities and routines. Topics might include daily activities,



school projects, report cards, and friendship activities. Ask questions such as How is school going? “What do you like most about school? How are your friends? What fun things have you done this week?”

Keeping in contact.

Let your child know that you want to keep in contact with him or her and that you want to be there for him or her. Together, think of ways you can stay connected. For example, send pictures, write letters to each other, and send copies of report cards.

When you are involved, your child will have positive benefits:

- Higher self-esteem
- Good grades
- Good behavior
- Less contact with the juvenile justice system

Remember that you play an important role in your child's success.

For More Information

Planning a Visit

<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/federal-tools-resources/tip-sheet-parents-visits>

How to Explain Jails and Prisons to Children: A Caregivers Guide

http://www.ambassadorsforhope.com/aa_how_to_explain_prisons_and_jails_to_children_lancaster_version.pdf

Directory of National Programs Serving Families and Children of the Incarcerated

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/directory/>

Guide for Incarcerated Parents with Children in Welfare System

<http://youth.gov/sites/default/files/COIP-Parent-Guide-508.pdf>

Alabama Resources

<http://www.skipinc.org>

<http://alabamaparentcenter.com/web/programs-services/dedicated-dads/>

The Sesame Street Workshop

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/incarceration>

10 Facts about Father Engagement, The Fatherhood Project

<http://www.thefatherhoodproject.org/10-facts-about-father-engagement/>



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