Parenting Issues During Incarceration

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Introduction

Parenting during imprisonment is difficult and very different. Many parent-child relationships are permanently severed during incarceration. Despite many challenges, some parents are able to maintain connections with their children and resume parenting responsibilities following their release from prison.
Preprison Lifestyles and Conditions Affect Prison Parenting

- Criminal involvement, substance abuse and poverty
- Different family structures
- Different relationships with different children and the children’s primary caregivers
Prison Parenting Challenges

- Coparenting Issues
- Long Distance Relationships
- Confinement Conditions
Coparenting

- Prisoners and caregivers assume different primary parenting roles
- Parents and caregivers may have different views and concerns
  - Caregiver resource needs
  - Parental worries
Long Distance Parenting

- Parent absent from the realities of day to day child rearing
- Parent and child communicate by phone, visits, and letters
- No privacy here and emotions are often controlled
Confinement Conditions

- Prisoner in dependent position
- Communication is expensive with costs borne by family
- Prison norms different from social norms
- Prison rules indifferent to cultural norms
Some of us keep trying

- Family Actions
  - Many families visit regularly
  - Some families communicate by phone and/or letter regularly
  - Family members pitch in

- Organizational Programs
  - Parent education
  - Family advocacy