



# Do You Have a Child in your Classroom?

Young children need a healthy start in life. The thousands of children whose parents have broken the law are no exception. It is not always easy to identify these children and few supports exist for them. As an early care professional, you are in a key position to identify and provide support to these children.

***One quarter of children with an incarcerated parent are age 4 or under.  
- Bureau of Justice***

## It is important to know:

- Parenting with a Purpose states that there are over 15,000 children in the state of Minnesota who have a parent in jail or prison.
- 80% of children with an incarcerated parent are living in poverty, 9% are homeless.
- One quarter of children with an incarcerated parent are age 4 or under (Bureau of Justice).

## Children under the age of five are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of parental incarceration because they:

- Are more likely to be present when a parent commits a crime or is arrested.
- Tend to view threats to their parents as threats to themselves.
- Have difficulty grasping that their parents are all right after they are arrested.

Stereotypes associated with incarceration often keep the caregiver from sharing this information with those who can help. Early childhood professionals are a crucial link to helping these children.

## What can YOU do?

- Plan for more flexible class schedules to accommodate caregivers of children with an incarcerated parent.
- Creating a trusting relationship with caregivers so that they will come to you for support and ideas about healthy parenting.
- Teach a parenting class inside a local jail or another location that reaches families dealing with difficult situations
- Read “All alone in the world” by Nell Bernstein.
- Partner with your local Inside-Out Connections coalition.

## Resources for Families

For more information and to receive free copies of “How to Explain Jails and Prisons to Children - A Caregiver’s Guide” contact:

### Central MN Inside-Out Connection

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### Resources:

- “Let’s Talk About When Your Parent Is in Jail” - a children’s book
- “How to Explain Jails and Prisons to Children” - A Caregiver’s Guide
- Salvation Army LIFE Camp