

# Do You Have a Child on the Outside?



Parenting from the "inside" is not easy. Keep in mind you are always a parent even when you are away from your child. It is important to know that you and your child are not alone. *Parenting with Purpose* states there are over 15,000 children in the state of Minnesota who have a parent in jail or prison.

***Your child needs honest information about where you are. Tell them the truth in words that they can understand at their age.***

It is difficult to know what to tell your child about your stay in jail or prison. It may be tempting to say that you are on vacation or working out of town. This may make a child feel scared and confused if they sense they are not being told the truth. Your child needs honest information about where you are. Tell them the truth in words that they can understand at their age.

It is important for you to stay in contact with your child when it is legal and when your child is ready for it. While staying in touch with your child, remember this is not the time to show anger or frustrated feelings about your situation.

Your child and the person caring for him/her are also going through a very difficult time right now. Your child may be confused, angry or hurt and may not understand why you left. The best thing you can do is be patient and make sure they know you still love them.

## What can YOU do?

- Use time away from your child wisely:
  - Go to a parenting class in jail or prison
  - Take an anger management class
  - Attend a support group to work on issues such as drug and/or alcohol addiction.
- Support the person who is taking care of your child; this is hard for them too.
- Explain to your child what is happening in words they can understand at their age.
- Keep in touch with your child (when legal and appropriate). Here are some ideas:
  - Write a letter
  - Draw a picture
  - Call
  - Setup a visit
  - Read a book over the phone

## Resources for Families

For information about local resources and support call:

### **Central MN Inside-Out Connection**

Lucy Bauer at (320) 253-5828 X 5805  
lucille.bauer@isd742.org