



Support Children Whose Parents Are Incarcerated

And Keep Families Connected

Children need their parents to care for them and work to meet their basic needs. Unfortunately, in Kentucky 13 percent of children have had a parent separated from them due to incarceration—the highest rate of any state in the nation.

Children whose parents are incarcerated have to move more often, are more likely to drop out of school, and are more likely to experience poor physical and mental health as adults. These children need the support of their family and the community during the challenging time of separation from their parents.

To help children before, during, and after a parent's incarceration:

Hold parents accountable in ways that allow them to work and care for their children

Parents who have committed minor offenses and do not pose a risk to public safety should not be incarcerated. Throughout the court process, information on whether a defendant has children should be gathered and considered, along with critical factors like public safety, in the determination of whether or not someone is incarcerated.

Support family relationships while the parent is incarcerated

Keeping children and their incarcerated parents connected benefits the children and helps reduce parents' chance of recidivism, which is better for the community. When a child's parent is arrested and incarcerated, ensure systems are in place to alert the child's school and let them know the child needs to be handled with care. Find relatives to care for the child whenever possible, and support those relatives as caregivers. Place parents in facilities where their child can travel to visit them.

Help the family work through challenges that often arise when a parent returns home

Ensure children and families are connected to resources as the parent prepares for reentry. Provide access to educational and vocational training opportunities to prisoners to reduce recidivism and strengthen a family's earnings so a parent can provide for their family.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:

Hold parents accountable in ways that allow them to care for their children and better support children whose parents are incarcerated.

