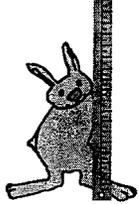


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Special ideas for school age children (ages 6 to 12):

You might like to make a grow chart for your child.



You could mark special times on the chart that you remember or know about from their earlier childhood. You can mark their birth size on it and then they can mark it with help from an adult as they grow.

Make a calendar for your child. If you have an idea about when you might be coming home, you may want to make a calendar for your child. You could make a calendar marking special occasions, such as birthdays, holidays, the first day of school, or summer vacation.

Write a poem for your child. Write a poem about how special your child is and why you love him or her. The poem could be something simple like:

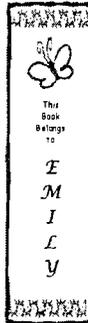
You are special because ...



You are my daughter,
You have a wonderful smile
You are a good learner, and
You make my heart smile

Another poem for your child might include their name, for example:

I love you, John, because you're:
Just right!
One of the best catchers,
Happy all the time, and
Near my heart always!
And because you are my son!



Make a bookmark for your child.

Draw a picture or write a special message on the book mark. Firm, stiff paper works well for this or, if possible, laminate your bookmark.

Send a note to be put in their lunch box or under their pillow or by their toothbrush. Just a small note that says "I love you. Have a great day! Love, Mom or Dad."

Special ideas for teens (ages 12 to 18):

Tell them stories about their childhood. Teens will like to hear stories about themselves, such as when they learned to walk, what their first words were, or about their birth.

Make a journal for your teen. Teens may also like to write in a journal. You may want to include some blank pages or some thoughtful or fun questions for your teen.



Ask other inmates for ideas. Many of the ideas in this publication came from incarcerated parents. You can use their experience and ideas about how they stayed connected with their children.



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Parenting From Prison



How can you parent from prison?

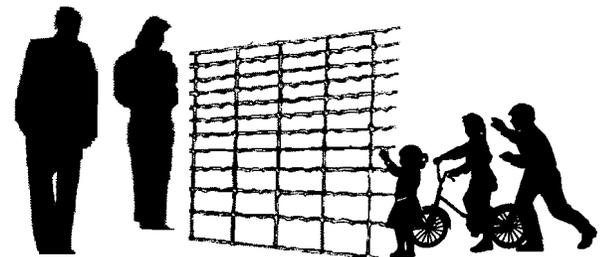


How can you stay connected with your child while you are in prison?



How can you help them with the changes that have happened because of your incarceration?

This brochure may give you some ideas for communicating and staying connected with your child while you are away.



Your child may have questions about your incarceration. You may not know the answers. It is okay to say "I don't know". It is important to keep telling them you love them and miss being with them.

Ideas for children of all ages:

Talking with your child after a long absence may be difficult at first. You may not know what to write or say. Ask the adult caring for your child what your child is "in to". Find out what has been happening with them while you have been gone. You may want to find out if your child is having any trouble or problems because of your incarceration.

Encourage your child to read. Reading with children is something that helps them do well in school. You may want to try some creative ways to read with your child while you are incarcerated. Some ideas might include:



- If there are children's books available at the prison, you can read to your children when they come for a visit.
- Ask the person who brings your children for a visit to bring their favorite book so that you can read with them while you are together.
- If you are earning money, you could ask the person caring for your child to purchase a book for you to give to your child. Even picture books can be fun for children and adults.

Make a book for your child. The book can be a story that you write about them. You could tell a story about something fun they did when they were young or perhaps a story about how much you love them.



For younger children you will want to be sure to use simple words and some pictures. The book can be put on several pages and you can staple the book to bind it.

Write letters to your child. Children love to get mail. Sending them a simple letter as often as you can is a great way to let them know you are thinking of them. In your first letter you may want to ask what they are learning in school or if they are playing soccer or football or doing gymnastics. Then you can write to them about their interests. You may be able to find out about their favorite television show. You can watch an episode and write to them about the show. Ask what part they liked best or what they thought about what happened on the show.



Make a hug for your child. You can trace your arm and hand on a piece of paper. Cut out 2 copies and tape or glue the arms together. Be sure that the thumbs point the same directions. You can decorate the hug. Some people have drawn rings or a bracelet or a watch on their hands and arms. You can write a special message on the hug to send to your child. Mail your hug to your child. You can send more than one hug to your child while you are gone. Maybe you can send one each month.



Make a card for your child. A card can be as simple as a folded piece of paper with something special written in it. You can make a card for your child's birthday, for any other special day, or just to tell them you love them.

Special ideas for young children (under 6 years of age):

Make a placemat for your child. Place mats can be made from stiff paper or even a file folder. Laminating it will help it be strong and keep it from being ruined by spills. The place mat can have a special message on it or you can draw a child's favorite animal or sport.



Make a mobile for your child. A young child might like a mobile or a hanging sign. You could make pictures of special things they might like.

Again, laminate them if you can. You can punch a hole in the top of the paper and then it can be hung from string or yarn.

