

## Helping Young Children Cope With Parent Incarceration

- In the morning, let your child know some of the things that will happen throughout the day. For example, "Grandma will pick you up from school. Then you'll go to the park, and later we'll all have dinner together."
- Give your child a paper heart to keep in her pocket. You might say, "This is to remind you that I love you and will always be there for you."
- Take time each day to check in with your child and ask, "How are you feeling?" Remember to let your child know that it's okay to have big feelings no matter what they are
- When explaining where an incarcerated parent is, you can say, "Daddy is in a place called prison (or jail) for a while. Grown-ups sometimes go to prison when they break a rule called a law."
- Phone calls are a great way to reach out. Help your child to think of something she'd like to tell her incarcerated parent, and give her a photo of her parent to hold during the call.
- Before you visit your incarcerated loved one, let your child know some of the things she can expect to happen. For instance, "We won't be able to sit in the same room with Mommy, but we can see her through a window and read a story together."
- Caring for yourself helps you care for your child. At least once a day, do something that you enjoy or find relaxing.