

# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS OFFENDER NEWSLETTER

Homeward Bound  
Volume 3, Issue 2

## HOMEWARD BOUND

### PARENTING TIPS-QUESTIONS CHILDREN ASK

*This information is provided by the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Division of Programs and Community Services, Office of Transitional Services. The title “What About Me?” is a guide for discussing your incarceration with your children.*

A child needs contact with the parent in prison for the relationship to continue in a meaningful way. It also helps the child adjust to and heal from the separation. A child may have contact with an incarcerated mother or father by personal visits, letters, or phone calls. But the value of the contact often depends on the quality of the interactions and the content of the conversations.

Collect calls from prison are expensive and need to be kept short. Children are often not included in calls except for a fast greeting. Sometimes the children have so little to say that it seems that the conversation is meaningless. Yet hearing the parent’s voice, even for a short time, may be more reassuring than it seems.

Mail from a parent in prison is important to children. A post card, acknowledging an accomplishment or remembering a birthday or holiday, means a lot to all children. Children of prisoners have little else to connect them to their parents, so mail from them is especially treasured. But children of prisoners need more than just contact from the parents and other adults. They need help coming to terms with what has happened. Children need a safe place to express their fears and feelings, and find answers to their questions.

There are four main questions that children ask or want to ask their incarcerated parents:

- Where are you?
- Why are you there?
- When are you coming home?
- Are you okay?

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There are also two questions in the hearts and minds of prisoners' children that they rarely ask and are often "behind the scenes" in their conversations:

- Do you blame me?
- Do you love me?

These questions can come in many forms. Some children ask them directly with straightforward language. Other children beat around the bush. Some act out their questions by getting into trouble or by confronting adults with challenging or aggressive behaviors.

### **THE ANSWERS PARENTS GIVE**

Incarcerated parents, their children's caregivers, and other interested adults should prepare to answer these questions. Sometimes parents are uncomfortable having these conversations. More often they are just not sure how to answer children's questions in ways that children will understand.

Another issue is who will answer the questions? An incarcerated parent who is active in the child's life will want to be the one to answer most of these questions. Children typically ask about the experiences of the prisoner parent. These questions should be answered by that parent whenever possible. Sometimes though, the job of answering these questions belongs only to the caregiver or other parent. In either case, children seem to respond best when their questions are answered simply and honestly.

This article was written to help parents in prison and the caregivers of their children as they try to answer children's questions. As painful as these conversations may be, parents and children will weather the separation best when children better understand the situation.

### **WHERE ARE YOU?**

Children's caretakers often try to protect children by avoiding the truth about the whereabouts of their incarcerated parent. There are several stories often used by parents and family members to answer the question "Where is Mom or Dad?" or "Where are you?"

Away at school: Sometimes children are told the parent in prison is "away at school." This lie rarely succeeds with school aged children who are old enough to understand that people (even college students) come home from school sometimes. Children of prisoners may already have difficulty in school. It doesn't help to associate school with the pain of what feels like permanent separation from parents. It might even lead to, or exaggerate, a dislike of going to school.

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Working far away: Sometimes children are told the parent in prison is “working far away.” This may satisfy children at first, especially if there is not increased financial stress. But it is hard for children to understand why money is tighter if the parent went away to work. Why aren’t they sending home money? Children could assume that a parent doesn’t want to see them or they would come home on their days off.

In the military: Sometimes children are told the parent in prison is “in the military.” This can give children a way to explain their parents’ absence to their friends, especially if the parent’s sentence is short. But in times of world conflict, it usually leaves children afraid of war and dangers. This can increase their worry and fear.

In the hospital: Sometimes children are told the parent in prison is “in the hospital.” This can raise children’s fear of doctors and hospitals, and increase anxiety over the health of the parent. When parents do not return home within a few days, many children imagine that the parent has died and that no one is telling them the truth.

Regardless of the story, these lies become exposed to the child sooner or later, usually sooner if the child is visiting the parent in prison. As children read, watch TV, and listen to people talk, they quickly learn what a prison is and how it differs from work, school, or the military. Then the fact that the prison is not a school, hospital, or military base become clear to them.

*Tune in next moth’s edition and we will discuss what happens when children realize they have been lied to about where you are and some suggestions on how to address those very important questions of :*

- *Where are you?*
- *Why are you there?*
- *When are you coming home?*
- *Are you okay?*

## GOODWILL CARS TO WORK PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### **How do I refer someone, or get referred to Cars To Work (CTW)?**

- ⇒ CTW is not a public car dealership; everyone in the program must be referred from a partnering agency or non-profit.
- ⇒ Your agency/non-profit must sign a partnership agreement.
  - ⇒ Once in partnership, a referral form for E ACH person referred is required along with a completed budget, application and release of information.
- ⇒ Agencies/non-profits give the person being referred a copy of a check sheet for items they'll need to bring when meeting with CTW.
- ⇒ Agencies/non-profits either fax, email or mail the referral, budget worksheet, application and any other supporting material to the CTW office in your area. Once it is received, CTW will contact with the applicant.

### **How long does it take?**

- ⇒ While the goal is to provide dependable transportation to those who qualify as quickly as possible, due to high demand CTW may sometimes have a waiting list.
- ⇒ Waiting list will be first come, first served.

### **How much does a car cost?**

- ⇒ The loan amount for the car is 80% of its retail value, however Goodwill Cars to Work Inc., also provides a warranty and buys down the loan interest so recipients are paying zero interest on the vehicle.
- ⇒ A down payment at the time of purchase of \$250.00 is required to cover taxes, title and registration. This down payment is in addition to the car loan amount.
- ⇒ Payments are approximately \$200.00 a month. Payments are sometimes lower, depending on the cost of the car and the length of the loan. Loans range from 12-24 months.

### **Will the vehicle have a warranty?**

- ⇒ Yes, every CTW vehicle had a warranty to cover major repairs for the length of the car loan. However, recipients are responsible for regular maintenance on the vehicle, like oil changes and replacing brake pads.

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**What if I have bad credit?**

- ⇒ The CTW is designed to help people obtain and maintain employment with a safe, dependable car. We do look at your credit history but it is not the ONLY factor we consider when you apply.
- ⇒ CTW understands that financial hardship does occur and is willing to work with people who wouldn't normally be able to obtain bank financing.
- ⇒ During the life of your car loan, your payments are reported to the three major credit bureaus, this can help your credit score in the future.

**What about insurance?**

- ⇒ Every loan recipient must agree to and is required to keep state minimum insurance on their vehicle. This cost will be in addition to the car loan payment.

**I'm not working, can I get a vehicle?**

- ⇒ CTW was created to provide reliable transportation to and from work; you must be employed to be considered.

**Will I get a car?**

- ⇒ Being referred to CTW and/or applying for a CTW loan does NOT guarantee that you will be approved for a CTW vehicle.

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**BLUEGRASS FAMILIES OF THE INCARCERATED(BFOI)**

BFOI is made up of families who have (or had) a loved one incarcerated in State or Federal Prison. We meet to support and encourage one another as we deal with the issues of life on the outside.

Meetings are the 3rd Monday of each month at the following address:

Northeast Christian Church  
990 Star Shoot Parkway  
Lexington, KY 40509

**Contact Information: Jim Norton 859-543-1494**

**Email: [bluegrassfoi@gmail.com](mailto:bluegrassfoi@gmail.com)**

## **Jefferson County Legal Aid Society**

The mission of the Legal Aid Society is to pursue justice for people in poverty. Legal Aid provides free legal services to low-income families and individuals facing serious threats to their physical and economic well-being. For more information, visit Legal Aid's website at [www.laslou.org](http://www.laslou.org)

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### **FORECLOSURE CLINIC**

**Tuesday, February 26, at 11:00 AM**

Legal Aid Society Office (416 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd.)

Attorneys will be on hand to answer questions about foreclosures and provide advice on alternatives to foreclosure.

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### **EXPUNGEMENT CLINIC**

**Tuesday, February 26, at 2:00 PM**

Legal Aid Society Office 416 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd.)

An attorney will be on hand to discuss the expungement process and which charges can be expunged. Attendees are encouraged to bring a copy of their criminal record which shows the disposition of each case. A copy of the record may be obtained from Court Archives located in the basement of the Old Jail Building at 514 West Liberty Street in Louisville.

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### **DIVORCE CLINIC**

**Wednesday, February 27, at 10:00 AM**

Legal Aid Society Office (416 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd.)

Clients will receive assistance from attorneys in filling out all of the necessary paperwork to file for a divorce.

**Wednesday, February 20, 2013**

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

**Time:**

**Issues related to newly incarcerated offenders:**

**6:00 PM—7:00 PM**

**Issues related to offenders nearing release:**

**7:30PM— 8:30 PM**

**The Southern Kentucky Reentry Council will be hosting a Family Engagement session for family members and significant other(s) of those individuals recently incarcerated or reentering society from incarceration. This will provide an opportunity to ask questions and provide valuable resource information from your community.**

**There will be a representative from resources in your community as well as representatives from the Department of Corrections for an open discussion on incarceration / release issues. The first hour will be devoted toward those that have family entering incarceration and the last hour will be devoted to the families of offenders who are coming home.**

**WHERE:**

**Bowling Green FOP Lodge  
150 Corvette Drive  
Bowling Green, KY 42101**

**QUESTIONS:**

**Call the Reentry Branch at 502-564-2220**