

# FAMILIES

Deal With

**PRISON**

IN ILLINOIS

Contributors to this document:

Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers

Contact: [312-675-0912](tel:312-675-0912)

Chicago Public Defender

Contact Phone: 312-603-0600

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Contact: 618/997-9196, ext. 821 OR 773/783-9516, ext. 16

[Jane.otte@lssi.org](mailto:Jane.otte@lssi.org), [valerie.everett@lssi.org](mailto:valerie.everett@lssi.org)

Roosevelt University Office of Metropolitan Affairs

Contact Phone: 312-341-4336

Your family member or loved one has been sentenced to prison in Illinois. You may feel tired, angry, relieved, embarrassed, scared, or just very sad. The list of possible feelings is endless, especially if this is your first contact with prison. No matter what your feelings are, just know that others have gone through what you are feeling and survived. They come through stronger than they thought they could.

**When your loved one is sentenced  
the whole family is doing time.**

**Right now a thousand questions  
like these might be  
going through your head:**

- “Where will *my loved one* go?”  
“How will I care for the children?”  
“Will my marriage survive?”  
“When will I be able to talk with *my loved one*?”  
“Will *my loved one* get any help for his/her problems while in prison?”  
“Who can I talk with about this?”  
“Shall I keep it a secret from the children?”  
“Where can I get information that I need?”  
“What will my friends think about me?”  
  
“Is it my fault?”

This booklet is to help you answer some of these questions.

**Let’s start with the most important one first:**

**“WAS IT MY FAULT?”**

Unless you were there when a law was broken and had the ability to stop it or report it,

**IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!**

*One mother’s son drank and put her in danger. She had to call the police and always felt guilty that her son returned to prison because of her. Her son finally wrote his mother and told her, “You did the right thing.”*

*She said that until that time she thought it was her fault that he was imprisoned.*

Most crimes come from destructive choices.

Unless you made the bad choice that broke the law or did not report what you knew was happening,

**IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!**

Often a young child thinks if they had acted better and done what they were told, then their parent would not have been upset, and been arrested. You need to make sure the children know that they could not have changed things. If it is possible their incarcerated parent should also let them know it was not their fault.

Children have to be told more than once there is nothing they could have done.

**“IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!”**

## Where Are They Going Now?

Your loved one may have been in a county jail or a youth detention center, which is different than a prison. The jail is meant to be temporary because the person in jail is going through a court case. Officially they are not called inmates because they have not yet been found guilty. However, in some ways jail is more difficult than prison. People in jail are uneasy because they aren't sure what will happen to them. Some are more hopeful than they have cause to be. Also, many are coming off drugs and off the streets. That is always a difficult change. Many are worried about their family and the children they left behind. Most jails do not have many programs but some do have classes or drug treatment.

Jails generally do not allow contact visits so visitors are behind a plastic window (or are televised). Young children may not understand why their mother or father does not come out to be with them. They sometimes cry and pound on the window, disturbed that their parent can't touch or hug them. Even though jails are closer than prisons, the visits can be difficult, especially for youngsters.

On the other if the child is old enough to understand then child-parent visit may be the only way for a child to be certain that the parent is okay. The parent can tell the child that he or she loves them and it isn't their fault that they cannot come home. This may help the child adjust to the situation with less emotional hurt.

### Other Booklets That Can Help You

There are other booklets to help with the legal case of juveniles and with adults. There is also a book about legally taking care of children of prisoners. You can get these books from the organizations listed in the front cover or from the web.

### Illinois Youth Centers

Juveniles are protected from incarcerated adults in a separate prison system. Occasionally juveniles can be tried as adults. If convicted they usually remain in the youth prisons until they are 17, when they are then transferred to adult prisons. There are seven locations where youth are held. Boys first go to St Charles IYC and girls go to Warrenville IYC. Then boys may be transferred to one of the other five locations around the state. Girls stay at Warrenville.

*"As a practicing attorney, let me tell you in no uncertain terms that Juvenile offenders come in all kinds. The old assumption that if the kid goes bad it's the parent's fault simply is not true in most cases. Children of broken homes, stable homes, wealthy and not wealthy, well disciplined and not so well disciplined, can all end up in court.... The greatest reason kids get in trouble is because of the peers they associate with when away from home."*

*Robert Kramer*

### **Federal Correctional System**

If your loved one has been sentenced by a federal judge he or she will be sent to a federal prison somewhere in the United States but not necessarily in Illinois. The website of the Federal Bureau of Prisons is [www.bop.gov](http://www.bop.gov). There you can locate where your loved one is, what the visiting rules are and more. This booklet is about Illinois State Prisons but there are sections that may help you even if you are dealing with federal prisons.

### **Illinois Department of Corrections (Adults)**

If your adult loved one was sentenced to a state prison your family member or friend is now in the Illinois Department of Corrections. This is known as the IDOC. IDOC has a website which provides information on each prison with updated visiting hours and rules. The website is [www.idoc.state.il.us.gov](http://www.idoc.state.il.us.gov)

Libraries have computers that you can use if you do not have one. You could check on the internet for the Illinois [Administrative Code Section 525](#) for Visiting Privileges and other accurate information on prison rules. You can find a list of correctional centers (prisons) with their phone numbers in the back of this booklet.

Your loved one will first go to the [Receiving and Classification](#) center at Stateville, Graham, or Menard Correctional Centers for the men or to Dwight Correctional Center for women. Here the new person in prison spends several weeks being physically and mentally tested. The IDOC chooses where a prisoner is then sent based on many things, such as age, health, nature of the offense and length of sentence.

During these first days the new prisoner will be given an ID number that they will use in prison. If they ever return to prison they will have the same number. These ID numbers help to keep people straight since many people have the same name. You must include this number on the address when you write to an inmate.

## You Are the Parent of an Adult Prisoner

If you are a parent with an adult child in prison you are likely to feel a heavy burden. You may feel it is your fault that your child is in prison and that you did something wrong. These feelings are shared by many parents. Remind yourself that every person is responsible for his own actions and that you are not responsible for your adult child.

*Some parents become obsessed with their incarcerated child but this will only put you in prison. It will not free your child and may make your other children feel ignored.*

## You are a Partner

Marriages and other close relationships are put under a terrible strain when a partner goes to prison. There are no magic answers to what you should do next. Many people decide to separate or divorce because of all they have learned about their partner. Others decide to stay with their spouse through these hard times.

*One woman said her salvation was regular meetings with "Alanon" while her husband was away. She was getting support from other people who had similar situations and understood what she was facing.*

Hopefully you can find a support group that will fit you. If necessary go on the internet for a support group like Prison-OnLine.com

Keep in mind that your loved one has pressures inside prison. This may make them think it is easy on the outside. Try to help your partner realize that life is a challenge wherever you are. Honest conversation on both sides is important. Keep in mind that letters and phone calls may be monitored by prison staff. Find a way to say what is important but be careful how you say it. If you stop speaking the truth to one another you will have nothing to build on when you are reunited.

While you wait continue to live life the best you can. The days will pass. For most, finally, there comes time for your loved one to return. That will be a time that takes great willpower for you to help your family to come together in a new way.

## Children of Incarcerated Parents

While your loved one is "doing time" so are the children who are involved. Children have their own questions.

**"When can I see my parent?"**

**"Is he/she being treated OK?"**

**"Why do I feel so scared?"**

**"Why do I feel so lonely?"**

**"Who can I trust?"**

**"Can I tell my friends or teachers?"**

**"Who is going to take care of me?"**

**"Why did she/he do this to me?"**

**"Why does it all seem so unfair?"**

Whether it is a parent or other family member, having someone in prison has a huge impact on children. Children should know the truth about the family member according to their age level. They should be included in some of the conversation about their parent or family member. Otherwise, sooner or later they will hear the truth and feel betrayed. Some families may lie that the family member is in the army or at school. That doesn't explain why they don't come home to visit. Many children feel forgotten and unloved. Children should not feel this way because parents can still love and care about their children from prison.

A big problem is that the children learn what scares them about prisons from television and movies. They have to be told that, "Dad's prison is not like that movie."

Adults can put prison in a larger picture. This is not true for children because they cannot see a larger picture. Some may feel that they will go to prison when they grow up.

Listen closely to what the children are thinking and saying. If they don't talk about their feelings they might act them out in harmful ways. They might do poorly in school, wet the bed, get into fights, steal, cry for no reason or have bad dreams. These changes in behavior are cries for help and they need to be heard. Every child is different and they will react differently. They have the right to feel whatever they feel. Answer their questions honestly and help them to draw their own conclusions. Your child will learn that he or she can trust you.

Children should not hear that the family's loved one is evil or bad but rather that they made bad choices. Little children can think about this in relation to "time out" when they made a poor choice. Prison is "time out" for adults who make a bad decision. Say that this does not make them a bad mother, father or brother.

You could say something like this.

*"Your dad still loves you very much. He really wishes he could be with you. He expects that he will be home for your 6<sup>th</sup> grade birthday.*

*Your dad feels very bad that he made the decision when he first took drugs and stole things when he was young. Now he wants to overcome his addiction to drugs but he knows it is a hard thing to do. He is now in a program for drug addicts at prison.*

*Dad never wants this to happen to you. Just because Dad went to prison does not mean that you ever will. He wants you to have a better life and I want that for you, too. He says he is thinking of you every single day. We will send him a letter or picture every week so we keep in touch. We will get letters from him, too."*

### **At School**

Sometimes children are harassed by other children if they find they have a parent or sibling in prison. This is especially difficult if it is a mother. Many children keep it a secret but they may always be in fear that someone will find out. It is good if the child can meet other children who are in this situation. In some towns there are support groups for the children so that they don't feel alone. Additionally, there are mentoring programs for children of parents who are incarcerated. Also, there are a few books about children of prisoners that will fit your child's age level.

Some teachers are sensitive to the concerns of children. It would be good for the child to pick a trusted teacher or counselor. The two of you can meet with the teacher and tell them about the family member. Bring a picture and let the child talk about their parent so the teacher sees the parent from the child's point of view.

The teacher can help the child by doing things like sending a report or envelope of the child's best work each month to the absent parent. The teacher can also be aware of any harassment.

Make sure the teacher understands how important it is to keep the confidence of the child. Talking about the family parent should be limited to trusted teachers and staff. There is no reason for the whole faculty to be involved.

The sad fact is that there might be someone who will say, "He is just like his father in prison." A counselor could help the child learn to handle negative attitudes.



## About Prison

If your loved one is sent to a *minimum* security correctional center it may be like an army camp. They would have classes, work in a laundry or kitchen and have some free time for exercise, TV, or to go to chapel. In *maximum* security they will be in a cell with another inmate with very limited movement and programs. The majority of prisoners are in *medium* security prisons somewhere in between. Your loved one may be moved from prison to prison. Sometimes this is a good move to a lower security prison.

Most prisoners have to be patient but most can get their name on lists for

- drug programs, school,
- education and GED,
- job related training,
- mental health groups
- groups run by outside volunteers such as Alcoholics Anonymous
- and religion classes.
- Prisons have libraries so reading is a good way to spend time usefully.
- Some people in prison find they can draw, write poetry, or similar skills. Many talents come to light among incarcerated men and women.
- Prisoners also have the right to attend religious services unless the prison is locked down and everyone is confined to their cell.

Encourage your loved one to use their time wisely.

## Prisons are Costly for Families

Usually it is writing, phone calls and the rare visit that keeps people in prison balanced, remembering the world outside. This is the world they will, most likely, return to one day.

Most of Illinois' prisons are located in small towns in the southern half of the state. This is not easy for families if you are from Chicago or another area to the north. Visits to prison can be very expensive. Some families rent a car and face the expenses of staying over night. Others buy a ticket for a van ride from Chicago. Very few prisons have public bus and train service

There is some good news, however. For example:

- Three hospitality houses are connected to some prisons in southern Illinois. Families of prisoners can stay overnight for a small charge or stay in a motel at a lower cost. These are listed in the back of this booklet.
- If children need to be taken to see their mothers the moms can fill out forms so that Lutheran Social Services of Illinois will provide free rides to state and federal prisons for families from Chicago.
- Salvation Army in Chicago has trips to some prisons that do not cost very much.

### Visits

If you go to visit your loved one first make certain that everyone is on their Visitor's List. Write your loved one or call the corrections counselor at the prison to make sure. Wear comfortable clothes that are good for both cool and warm temperatures, like sweaters that can be put on or taken off. Dress the children the same way. Dress modestly, without much jewelry. Cell phones, pagers and palm devices are not allowed. Leave them in the trunk of your car if you drove.

When you arrive make sure there is nothing in your car or on your person that will make a police officer or drug sniffing dog suspicious. *For example, one visitor was stopped when he had a hunting rifle in the car trunk.*

Every visitor age 17 or over is considered an adult. All adults, 17 and older, must show a state I D or drivers' license plus one other piece of identification. It would be wise for 15 or 16 year olds should bring some ID to prove they are not yet 17 in case they are questioned.

You can bring \$10 or more to put on a prison debit card to buy snacks from machines plus a few quarters to pay for a locker for your purse and coat. But it is wise to leave all you can in the trunk of your car. Everyone should empty their pockets. If you have anyone with you that has been in prison they must have a letter from the warden allowing them to come in, even if they are visiting family. Make sure you have a certified letter from the guardian saying you can bring in children if you are not the legal guardian.

The first time you visit a prison it may be best to visit your loved one without the children because you need to get used to the prison routine. If you can not afford two trips talk with the staff of the facility or to others who have visited prisons to learn the ropes. After that, if at all possible, bring the children to visit. It is very good for the children to see their parent to know their mom or dad has not forgotten them and wants to see them. Even children who get letters or talk on the phone need to see and be hugged by their parent if this is possible.

Before you reach the visiting room you show your ID and are "patted down" like they do at courts or the airport. Then you go through a metal detector.

#### While Waiting in the Visiting Room

It will take a while for your loved one to arrive but you will be given a table to sit at. If your loved one has not arrived in 20-30 minutes remind the correctional officer who you are waiting for.

Remember that you are always being watched so if the children become cranky do not be tempted to physically put your hands on them. Everyone needs to be on good behavior or you could lose visiting privileges. It is hard for children to sit at a table. They will do better if you talk directly to them about what is interesting to them. Ask them what they are going to talk to their parent about. Ask them about their favorite sport. Play a guessing game with them. Remember, if you act comfortable or if you act tense the kids will take their cues from you.

#### The Visit

At most prisons you are allowed to give a hug when your loved one arrives and leaves. Small children may sit on their parents' lap in most visiting rooms. Sometimes there are games for the children and this is important. Usually it is easier for children to talk to their parents while playing games. Each child should have some individual attention from their parent that is right for their age.

Visiting should be a good time, not a time to scold the children. If children are noisy and disturb other visitors it can cause problems. If possible walk the child to the bathroom and talk to them. If they are young you might promise them a treat when you leave if they are good. A good two or three hour visit is better than a miserable five hour one. Children cannot sit too long in one place.

When you leave you and the children may cry, especially the first time. If it is true, tell the child that they will return. Be sensitive to the children for a few days. This is the time they may act out or want to talk more about their parent. Tell them their mom or dad is also missing them.

Have them write a letter or draw a picture for their parent and mail it soon after the visit. You may have been able to have a snapshot taken at prison - you can enlarge it at a drugstore for the children to put in their bedroom.

### **PHONE CALLS**

You cannot phone the prison and ask to speak to your loved one or family member. They must call you and it will be an expensive collect call. These phone calls cannot be taken by a cell phone but only by a land phone. It would be wise to limit phone calls to a certain number a month. If you cannot afford the bill do not feel you need to accept a call. Many families have lost their phone service because of the high phone bills from prison. If necessary put a block on the phone and promise to write letters.

If you have a family emergency you can call the prison chaplain or your loved one's counselor. They may be able to set up a call for your loved one.

### **MAIL**

Your letters will be very welcome. You can pay for twenty stamps for the cost of one phone call from prison, and a prisoner has the time to write you. Just remember that whenever you write make sure you put your loved one's ID number with the name on the envelope.

It is likely you don't have time to write long letters. When you get a moment write a short note. Perhaps comment on a letter you received from your loved one. Include a snapshot or a picture that one of the children drew and encourage the kids to put a note or drawing in with your note. Make sure you do not send anything that can be considered "contraband". Stickers are not allowed. Even glue and glitter on a child's picture is not allowed. All mail, except for legal mail, will be opened and possibly read.

Some families ask what they can send their loved one for a gift. It is possible to give your loved one a subscription to a magazine or newspaper direct from the publisher. Prisoners love mail and often share magazines they get. Being in prison makes a person isolated so a hometown newspaper or a magazine may help them feel more connected to the world outside the prison. (Of course, some magazines like those with exposed women or featuring guns will not be allowed.) Don't forget to tell the magazine company to put the ID number with your loved one's name. Books must be mailed from a bookstore. In Illinois nothing else can be sent to an inmate.

### **\$ \$**

Your loved one must go to the commissary to buy what they need. This includes everything from toothpaste or deodorant to candy or even a television. The prison provides about \$15 a month to each person in prison and a little more if they have a job within the prison. With this money the inmates can just afford to buy the basics like stamped envelopes or \$2 for each medical need.

Your loved one will probably ask for a money order to be put in his or her account. Perhaps you will be able to send them a money order once in a while. Budget yourself so you don't feel guilty about not sending money frequently. Perhaps a little more can be a treat for Christmas or for their birthday. If you are like most people you have many expenses in keeping your household and family going. Remember that, unlike you, your loved one will be fed and given a bed without paying rent. But also recognize that your loved one will probably continue to ask since that is human nature.

## Now, about YOU

You need to take care of yourself! But if you need the strength to do this here is an Alcoholics Anonymous goal that may help you as well:

### Serenity

Grant me the serenity,  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

There is a lot you cannot change and just have to accept. But there are some things that can help you if you have the courage or determination to reach out for them. Wisdom comes when you recognize each for what it is.

You **can't change** the past. You can't change the prison system. You can't change people who will foolishly talk about you or even blame you. You can't change people who tell you your loved one is no good and you should just forget him or her. Maybe you need to listen to these people but you don't need to believe them.

You **can change** the present. You can gather around you whoever will listen to you without judging you – a wise friend, a special family member, an understanding pastor, or a support group of people who are in your situation. You can also gather good memories and your own strength.

With that kind of help and encouragement you will make it. You will have the **wisdom** to ignore anything negative and surround yourself with good memories and people.

**Start right now by making a list with at least five of these.**

- Include some good memories of the past.
- Then add some supportive people that care about you and your family. (They are out there!)
- Now write down some positive things in your life at present. (like family, loved ones, faith, health)
- Finally, add some good things about yourself at your best – your strengths, abilities, attitudes and feelings. (For example: sense of humor, determination, loving, forgiving, even enjoyment of gardening or music)

This is the list that will keep you going when you feel down. Hold on to it! When you think of these you will reach for serenity or peace of mind and you can say, "Amen."

## Here Is More

Support groups can be hard to find. It would be a good idea for places of worship or social services to offer space where members affected by incarceration can meet. Here are four things to remember about a good support group.

- The starting, ending and location is the same each time
- Confidentiality is most important
- Everyone has freedom to share their thoughts
- All are supported

There are a few support groups for families of prisoners, for example:

Kairos Outside is a weekend retreat in northern Illinois for any women who have a loved one who is incarcerated. This is a chance for women in similar situations to spend a weekend together in a Christian atmosphere.

Contact: Pat Williams at (815)469-4049.

RAPP Support Groups RAPP stands for "Relatives as Parents Program." This kind of support group can be found throughout Illinois. Relatives often take care of children of prisoners who are nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters, and frequently grandchildren. RAPP members care for children of relatives for many reasons including mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction and imprisonment. A support group for caregivers of children might fit you.

There is one group in Chicago that is just for those caring for children of incarcerated mothers. Contact: Lutheran Social Service of IL at 773/783-9516

The Sankofa Grandparents Raising Grandchildren initiative focuses on the Austin and Lawndale neighborhoods in Chicago 773-542-8634.

Family and Corrections Network has a many ideas on the Web for families who have someone incarcerated. It has a variety of articles, including for those caring for children. [www.fcn@fcnetwork.org](mailto:www.fcn@fcnetwork.org)

Restorative Justice is a way of looking at justice that considers how the victims, accused and community can heal. You might like some of the good books written about Restorative Justice. You might want to talk about Restorative Justice in your support group.

## Dealing with Life...

Medical Care The stress you may be feeling can take a toll on your body. Try to avoid getting sick by getting sleep, exercise and going to your doctor regularly. Let your doctor know that you are in a stressful situation. Doctors know stress can bring on illness so he or she will have these in mind as you are checked.

Professional Counseling This may be the most important time in your life for you to have counseling. Counselors know what would be normal for you to feel while going through stress and what has become too much. They can help you judge and improve your situation. When necessary they may send you to a doctor to get medication to address the stress. Look for a helpful counselor with sliding fees.

Don't be tempted to depend on alcohol, street drugs, overeating or staying in bed. All of these could cause terrible problems, as you certainly know. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. You are precious!

Your Spiritual Life may be especially important during times of difficulty. You might set aside time to meditate, reflect or pray. Seek the courage to complete each day the best you can. You might ask your trusted pastor, imam, rabbi or spiritual advisor to pray with you and for you and for your loved one.

## **The Sentence is Completed – Then What?**

There are three low points for you and your loved one. The first is when you both are adjusting to prison. Next is planning for the loved one who is getting out. The last is readjustment to home and society. Each has its own challenge.

When your loved one has “done the time” it is time to make decisions for getting out. You want to make good choices.

One important choice is whether to have your loved one come to your home to live.

Before a prisoner can leave IDOC the person in custody gives their placement counselor the names of people who may be willing to provide housing. The placement officer calls each person and asks if the person in custody may parole to their home. If the family and friends are not able to house the person the placement officer tries to find a place for him or her to live in a “half-way house” or in a program. If a place cannot be found, the person in custody will remain in prison until his or her sentence is completed or until a place can be found at an agency.

You may decide that your loved one will not return to your home. For example,

- He or she will not come home unless they have successfully completed an addiction program.
- You know that your loved one has mental or physical needs that you cannot or do not wish to handle.
- You may live in public or Section 8 housing and know you would lose your home if your loved one moved in. Your loved one is now legally considered a “felon” and not legal in government subsidized housing.
- Depending on the offense (for example, sex offenders) your loved one may be required to register with the state and have specific conditions about where he or she can or cannot live.
- Perhaps you want the family member to prove themselves before they move back in with their children so that the children will not be disappointed if the parent were to be re-arrested.

### **ON THE OTHER HAND**

Your home may be just what your loved one needs! In general those who have family support have the best chance of “making it” when they leave prison. You may decide you want your loved one or family member to come live with you. It can help the children if both of you work together for a smooth transition. It won't be easy.

Adjustment after prison is a slow process. Here are some things to keep in mind if your loved one is coming home.

- Your loved one needs to follow all parole rules. They need to contact their parole officer immediately and sometimes often.
- People who are released need to get identification soon after they come home. This can be difficult.
- Handling addiction on the outside is much harder than in prison. They may need to join an AA or NA or other support program right away, even if they took part in a prison addiction treatment program.
- The whole family has changed and grown older. It will take time to be comfortable with one another and build a fresh life together.
- The differences between prison and the free world are huge. It takes time to adjust. The longer your loved one was in prison, the longer the adjustment takes.
- Remember that your loved one hasn't made any decisions since entering prison. He or she will have to rebuild good decision-making skills.
- Your loved one has had very little support while he or she was in prison. He or she may have had verbal or physical abuse.
- It is important to stay away from what took him or her to prison. They may need to give up old friends and make new ones.
- She or he may experience flashbacks of prison life. They may even need mental health counseling with this.
- Health problems may not have been taken care of in prison.
- Many former inmates feel everyone judges them. It takes time to get comfortable in public places.
- They may want to be alone since people in prisons do not experience solitude since entering IDOC.
- Your loved one may miss some of the people left behind.
- Being a "felon" will make a big difference when looking for a job or apartment. Most employers turn felons down. There are a few programs that can help. Maybe there are friends or family your returned loved one could approach for a job or a referral. Many formerly incarcerated people make very good workers because they know how hard it is to change jobs.

Don't forget the children:

- You may both feel responsible for the children. You have to talk this through so the children do not play you against one another.
- Children may worry that their life will change when their parent comes home, especially if they have to move.
- Children may be so excited about a parent's return that they think you "will live happily ever after."

Perhaps this seems like a lot but knowing these things will make coming home easier. Families are restored by talking through any feelings or difficulties. It is best if this starts while your loved one is still in prison. When he or she returns plan to have meals together and weekly family meetings to talk things through and celebrate happy events.

## **And the Wisdom to Know...**

**Someday this will be a memory.**

**But if you meet another family with someone who is incarcerated give them the encouragement they need.**

## Resources

Illinois Department of Corrections

[www.idoc.state.il.us](http://www.idoc.state.il.us)

U.S. Federal Prisons (Bureau of Prisons)

[www.bop.gov](http://www.bop.gov)

Family and Corrections Network website

[www.fcn@fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcn@fcnetwork.org)

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois  
(Prisoner and Family Ministry)

[www.lssi.org](http://www.lssi.org)

Forever Family

[www.foreverfam.org](http://www.foreverfam.org)

Illinois Prison Talk

[www.illinoisprisonstalk.com](http://www.illinoisprisonstalk.com)

Prison On-Line

[www.prison-online.com](http://www.prison-online.com)

### **Prisons in Illinois with phone numbers**

#### **Illinois Department of Corrections**

Big Muddy (Ina, IL)	618-437-5300
Centralia	618-533-4111
Danville	217-446-0441
Decatur	217-877-0353
Dixon	815-288-5561
Dwight	815-584-2806
East Moline	309-755-4511
Graham (Hillsboro, IL)	217-532-6961
Hill (Galesburg, IL)	309-343-4212
Illinois River (Canton, IL)	309-647-7030
Jacksonville	217-245-1481
Lawrence (Sumner, IL)	618-936-2842
Lincoln	217-735-5411
Logan (Lincoln, IL)	217-735-5581
Menard (Chester, IL)	618-826-5071
Pinckneyville	618-357-9722
Pontiac	815-842-2816
Robinson	618-546-5659
Shawnee	618-658-8331
Sheridan	815-496-2181
Stateville (Joliet, IL)	815-727-3607
Tamms	618-747-2042
Taylorville	217-824-4004
Thomson	815-259-1177
Vandalia	618-283-4170



Vienna 618-658-8371  
Western Illinois (Mount Sterling) 217-773-4441

**Youth Facilities:**

Chicago IYC 312-633-5219  
Harrisburg IYC 618-252-8681  
Joliet IYC 815-725-1206  
Kewanee IYC 309-852-4601  
Murphysboro IYC 618-684-8500  
Pere Marquette IYC (Grafton, IL) 618-786-2371  
St Charles IYC 630-584-0506  
Warrenville IYC 630-983-6231

**Federal Bureau of Prisons in Illinois**

Greenville and Greenville Satellite 618-664-6200  
Marion 618-964-1441  
Metropolitan C C(Chicago) 312/886-2317  
Pekin and Pekin Satellite 309-346-8588

**Hospitality Houses For Families - overnight housing**

Hospitality House of Chester 618-826-9810  
-Menard Correctional Center

Hospitality House of Vienna 618-658-2722  
-Shawnee, Vienna, Dixon Springs  
& Tamms Correctional Centers

**Legal Guardianship of Children**

Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM)  
- Serves caregivers of children of mothers and fathers as long as the parents agree to guardianship

**Returning Home Resources in Chicago**

Good Will 312/ 212-2208  
Safer Foundation 312/ 922-2200

## Looking for Answers

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart.  
And try to love the questions themselves.

Do not search for the answers,  
they could not be given to you now,  
because you would not be able  
to bear them.

And the point is,  
to live today,  
live the questions now.

Perhaps then,  
some day in the future,  
you will gradually, without noticing it,  
live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke  
(1875-1926) Austria