

PARENTING FROM A DISTANCE: YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES—Third Edition—by Jan Walker

A valuable resource for incarcerated parents who are committed to remaining involved with their children and willing to accept the responsibilities associated with parenting from a distance.

1 - Commitment and Challenge

Research shows that children of incarcerated parents suffer from a variety of learning and attention disorders. They tend to ignore homework assignments. Many of them develop substance abuse problems.

2 - Rights and Responsibilities

Incarceration does not end your financial responsibility to your children unless the court legally terminates your parental rights. You can help pay child support costs by registering with the court for minimum support status.

3 - The Explanations

You have the right to choose what you want your children to know about your separation. You have a responsibility to give them that information as soon as reasonable.

4 - The Daily Routine

Stay involved in your children's daily routine by working closely with the children's primary caregivers.

5 - Touching From a Distance

Communication is important to parents and children. Phone calls keep voices alive. Letters answer questions.

6 - Visiting

Prison visiting requires planning and legal preparation. Minor children need the consent of their non-incarcerated parent or legal guardian. Consent may include notarized forms and certified birth certificates.

7 - Holidays and Occasions

Focus on ways to help children feel special on their birthdays and find joy on holidays.

8 - The Systems

Incarceration involves legal and social services systems. Laws affect child custody and guardianship. Legal guardianship can be tailored to meet the child's needs.

9 - Shared Parenting

Incarcerated parents who remain involved with their children are also involved in shared parenting.

10 - Reuniting

Taking parenting classes or relationships' counseling may be as important during reentry as AA and NA. For difficult reunions, use a **Contract for Forgiveness**. Make **Family Meetings** part of your reunion.

Suggestions at the book's end include an Affidavit of Legal Guardianship, a Sample Letter to School, and a Sample Letter to Caseworker.

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