

February 27, 2018

BEHIND BARS

Difficult Questions Children Ask
and Answers that Might Help

Life is not easy for children who have experienced the trauma of parental arrest and who have been deprived of parents' attention and care. They may be victims of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and sometimes are deprived of the gift of conscientious parenting when parents engaged in criminal lifestyles prior to imprisonment. Whether they reside with the non-incarcerated parent, with a relative or in foster care with strangers, daily life can become confusing and stressful.

This Family Members Behind Bars Guide is a caregiver's guide to the criminal justice system from arrest to release. While this guide was created specifically for caregivers in Arizona, a lot of the tips are useful for all caregivers.

This guide includes 10 tips for caregivers and 10 questions a child might ask about:

- The criminal justice process
- Arrest
- Court
- Conviction
- Sentencing
- Prison
- Probation & parole

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Source: The KARE Family Center (Arizona)
and the Pima Prevention Partnership

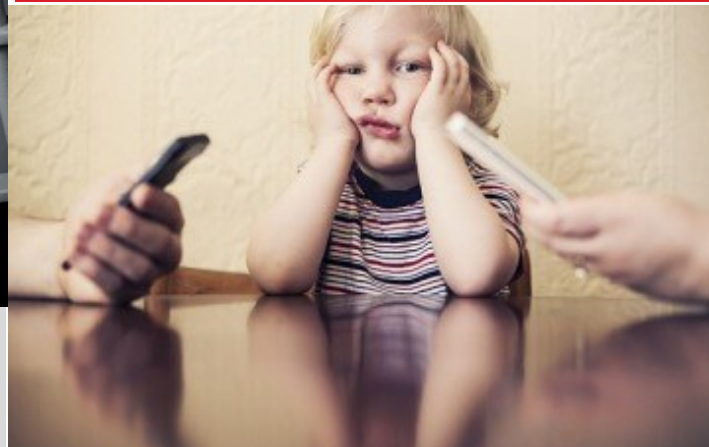


Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration

Provides much needed resources for families with young children (ages 3-8) as they encounter the difficult changes and transitions that come with a parent's incarceration.

[VIEW SESAME STREET TOOLKIT & VIDEOS](#)

How to Miss a Childhood



The Dangers of Paying More Attention to Your Cell Phone than Your Children

Rachel Macy Stafford, author of the blog *Hands Free Mama*, writes on her website about her experience with distractions of the modern age... "Yes, it is the 21st century. Yes, the whole world is online. Yes, the communications for your job are important. Yes, at times you must be readily available. But despite all those factors, you do not have to sacrifice your child's childhood; nor do you have to sacrifice your life."

I want to make memories, not to-do-lists. I want to feel the squeeze of my daughter's arms, not the pressure of over-commitment. I want to get lost in conversation with my spouse, not consumed by a sea of unimportant emails. I want to be overwhelmed by sunsets that give me hope, not by extracurricular commitments that steal my joy. I want the noise of my life to be a mixture of laughter and gratitude, not the intrusive buzz of cell phones and text messages. I am letting go of distraction, disconnection, and perfection to live a life that simply, so very simply, consists of what really matters."

To read her powerful must-read blog post about "How to Miss a Childhood" visit the following link:

www.handsfreemama.com/2012/05/07/how-to-miss-a-childhood/

IS MY CHILD'S ANGER NORMAL OR SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

By Child Mind Institute, Understood Founding Partner

QUESTION:

How do I know if my child's anger is normal or if I should be concerned?

ANSWER:

Most children have occasional tantrums or meltdowns. They may sometimes lash out if they're frustrated. Or they may be defiant if asked to do something they don't want to do. But when kids do these things repeatedly, or can't control their tempers a lot of the time, it may be more than typical behavior.

Here are some signs that outbursts might be more than typical behavior:

- If your child's tantrums and outbursts are occurring past the age at which they're developmentally expected (up to about 7 or 8 years old)
- If his behavior is dangerous to himself or others
- If his behavior is causing him serious trouble at school, with teachers reporting that he is out of control
- If his behavior is interfering with his ability to get along with other kids, so he's excluded from playdates and parties
- If his tantrums and defiance are causing a lot of conflict at home and disrupting family life
- If he's upset because he feels he can't control his anger, and that makes him feel bad about himself

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WHEN SEXUAL ABUSE RETURNS

By Shivonne Costa (Mommyhood: Striving for Sanity)

There are some articles that are easy to write and there are some articles that are easy to read. This, however, is not one of those articles. Chances are, if you've clicked on this post upon reading the title, you or someone you love has endured sexual abuse in some way, at some time. [KEEP READING](#)



49 PHRASES TO CALM AN ANXIOUS CHILD

By Renee Jain, MAPP

It happens to every child in one form or another – anxiety. As parents, we would like to shield our children from life's anxious moments, but navigating anxiety is an essential life skill that will serve them in the years to come. In the heat of the moment, try these simple phrases to help your children identify, accept, and work through their anxious moments.

1. **“Can you draw it?”** Drawing, painting or doodling about an anxiety provides kids with an outlet for their feelings when they can't use their words.
2. **“I love you. You are safe.”** Being told that you will be kept safe by the person you love the most is a powerful affirmation. Remember, anxiety makes your children feel as if their minds and bodies are in danger. Repeating they are safe can soothe the nervous system.
3. **“Let's pretend we're blowing up a giant balloon. We'll take a deep breath and blow it up to the count of 5.”** If you tell a child to take a deep breath in the middle of a panic attack, chances are you'll hear, “I CAN'T!” Instead, make it a game. Pretend to blow up a balloon, making funny noises in the process. Taking three deep breaths and blowing them out will actually reverse the stress response in the body and may even get you a few giggles in the process.

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YOU SHOULD JUST STOP FOSTERING

By Jill Rippy (TheFosterLife.com)

There is a darkness with foster parenting that foster parents rarely verbalize. The reason we don't talk about it is because to verbalize it means to hear from others, “Well, you should just stop fostering.” To verbalize the darkness is to invite people to discourage you from doing this thing that you know you are meant to do even though it's hard.

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