

The

Inside Out DAD™

Guide to Family Ties

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF THE INSIDEOUT DAD™ PROGRAM



**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

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PURPOSE AND PARTS OF THE GUIDE



“As far as success goes, my daughters truly love all the little things I do. They look forward to what the next project will be. How do I know? Because those letters and projects I sent caused them to write back and tell me. I have been in prison for five years. At first I never heard from my daughters. Now we have a relationship.”

Adam C. LeCroy
Correctional Facility
Hobbs, NM

Being in prison or jail will create a challenge to staying in touch with your children and their mother or getting in touch with your children for the first time in your life and theirs.

This might be the first time you’re away from your family. Your children and their mother will go through many changes that you won’t see. Your family will also face a challenge staying in touch with you.

There are four parts of this guide.

- Part 1:** Advice on what to expect for the relationships with your children and their mother while you’re away.
- Part 2:** Assess the relationships with your children and their mother.
- Part 3:** Advice and tips on getting and staying involved with your children and their mother while you’re away.
- Part 4:** Advice and tips on a plan for reentry with a focus on getting back with your family in a healthy way for them and for you.

The guide covers many topics that will help you learn how important it is to stay in touch or to get in touch for the first time. It will help you create strong ties between you and your children and between you and their mother. That’s right. It’s very important that you do all you can to create a strong or at least decent relationship with their mother. If your children live with her, she is the key to staying or getting in touch with your children. Whether you have a good relationship with her or not, you must do what you can to create a relationship with her that helps you stay or get in touch with your children.

Food for Thought and Writing

You will find questions throughout the guide that will challenge you to think. Some questions will ask you to reflect while others to reflect and write. You will also find some short surveys and other exercises that will help you apply what you learn. You will need something with which to write.

After You Finish the Guide

National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) provides a certificate and a letter that the prison/jail staff or your probation/parole officer can sign to prove that you finished this guide. They might know about the certificate or letter. If they don’t, ask them to visit NFI’s website at **www.fatherhood.org/iod-family-ties-guide** to download a copy or to contact NFI at corrections@fatherhood.org to get a copy. They can place the certificate or letter in your file to show you finished this guide.

PART ONE

WHAT TO EXPECT¹

“It was a dream come true to be able to hold my 17-month-old son for the first time. It’s a joy that’s hard to put into words.”

Jimmy G., InsideOut Dad™ graduate – Abilene, TX

It’s clear that going to prison or jail changes your life. What some fathers don’t know is how their relationships with their children and with their children’s mother will change. The advice in this part of the guide is most helpful if you had a relationship with your children and their mother before you went away. But it is also helpful if you didn’t have a relationship with your children and want to get in touch for the first time.

Your Children

If you are about to have your first child, your children were just born, or they are an infant or toddler (age 1 to 3), they won’t have the feelings and issues right now of older children who know why you went to prison or jail. But they will have those feelings and issues when they’re older if you get out of touch or wait until they’re older to get in touch with them for the first time.

What to Expect

Here is what to expect from and for your children, especially if they know what it means that you went away.

- Anger toward and withdrawal from you, their mother, and friends. Even though they might be really mad at you, they might be mad at and pull away from others, too. They can’t show their anger toward you because you’re not there, so they might turn their anger toward others.
- Worse relationships with their family and friends.
- A feeling that you left them on purpose.
- A belief that you don’t care about them.
- They might
 - ▶ Become lonely or depressed.
 - ▶ Be made fun of for having a dad in prison or jail.
 - ▶ Hide the fact that they have a dad in prison or jail.
- As they become older, they might want to end the relationship with you.
- Problems in school with grades and behavior (actions).
- Greater chance they will use alcohol or drugs.
- Greater chance they will land in prison or jail.

¹ The information in this part of the guide draws from books, studies, and interviews with people across the country who run NFI’s InsideOut Dad™ program for fathers in prison or jail. The studies and books include: a) National Fatherhood Initiative (2007). *Father Facts V*; b) Herman-Stahl, M., Kan, M., & McKay, T. (2008). *Incarceration and the Family: A Review of Research and Promising Approaches for Serving Fathers and Families*. A report prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by RTI International; c) Nickel, J., Garland, C., and Kane, L. (2009). *Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Action Plan for Federal Policymakers*. A report prepared by the Council of State Governments Justice Center; and d) Pattillo, M., Weiman, D., and Western, B. (2004) *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration*. Russell Sage Foundation (New York, NY).

The facts above can be made worse by the degree to which your children know about your arrest and the reasons for it. If your children saw your arrest or were around when you did the things that landed you in prison or jail, they are more likely to have nightmares and flashbacks (a vivid memory of when you were arrested that scares them). You must get real about the effects on your children—not just those that resulted from you going away but from your actions before you went away.

Take a few moments to place a check mark next to any of the reactions above your children have had because you went to prison or jail. Then write down other ways you're children reacted in the space below.

SAMPLE

Why to Expect It

Your children will react this way because of the stress caused by your arrest and time in prison or jail. That stress results from the effect on their relationship with you and between you and their mother. When you leave a family behind, they will likely struggle to make ends meet without your income and presence.

The stress will be greater if you lived with your children before you went away because it can lead to major changes in their relationships. Their mother might start a relationship with another man who moves into the home, maybe bringing his own children. (The bad effects on children increase the more often that their mother changes her romantic relationships.) They might end up living with a relative or in a foster home. Their mother might start to use harsher forms of discipline and punishment because of the stress. She might also be so tired from caring







SAMPLE

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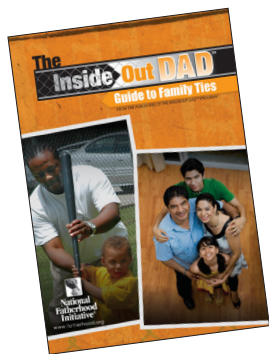
Research shows that family connections are critical to reducing recidivism. Therefore, it is critical to provide fathers with a resource that helps them to get and **stay connected** with their children and family.

Developed with the input of seasoned practitioners who work with incarcerated fathers, **The InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties** helps dads create and maintain connections to family while in prison and upon re-entry.

One of the most challenging aspects for incarcerated fathers is effectively communicating with the mother(s) of their children. **The InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties** helps dads communicate more effectively with the mother(s) of their children by providing assessment tools and action steps to improve their relationship(s) and effectively communicate, thereby increasing their ability to connect with their children while incarcerated.

The InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties provides incarcerated fathers with advice and tips on:

- What to expect for the relationships with their children and their children's mother while incarcerated
- Assessing the relationships with their children and the mother of their children
- Getting and staying involved with their children and the mother of their children while incarcerated
- How to integrate into a reentry plan getting connected to their family in a healthy way



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Suggested Uses for The InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties

- Great for long or short-term stay facilities (not just prisons, but jails, half-way houses, etc.)
- Use the guide as part of a one-on-one case management, counseling, coaching, or mentoring
- Ideal supplement to the group-based InsideOut Dad®—use it before, during, or after (not intended to replace or substitute for the InsideOut Dad® group-based program)
- Use with dads on wait lists for the group-based InsideOut Dad®
- Implement as a stand-alone, self-paced resource to reach incarcerated fathers who are unable to participate in the group-based InsideOut Dad® program

Benefits:

- **Easy to use format** walks fathers through the guide at their own pace
- **Includes a free, customizable certificate** and letter of completion
- **Includes free post-surveys** to measure knowledge gained
- **Includes a free instruction guide** on how to use this great resource

FREE items available only via download
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By connecting with their children and families, incarcerated fathers are motivated to maintain good behavior.

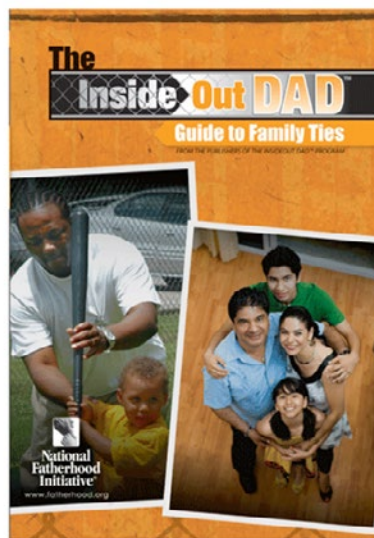
What's Included

- **Purpose and Parts of the Guide**
- **Part 1: What to Expect** - Your Children, Your Children's Mother, What You Should Do
- **Part 2: Assess Yourself** as Dad and Partner - The Ideal, The Real, The Deal
- **Part 3: Getting and staying in touch** - With Your Children's Mother, With Your Children, Become an Expert on Your Children, Become a Long Distance Coach, Ways to Get and Stay in Touch
- **Part 4: Create a reentry plan** - Your Reentry Plan, Your Role in the Family, Bad Feelings, Gatekeepers, New Father Figures

Topics Covered

- **Part 1: Advice on what to expect** for the relationships with your children and their mother while you're away.
- **Part 2: Assess the relationships** with your children and their mother.
- **Part 3: Advice and tips on getting and staying involved** with your children and their mother while you're away.
- **Part 4: Advice and tips on a plan for reentry** with a focus on getting back with your family in a healthy way for them and for you.

Order your guide today!



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visit: store.fatherhood.org/insideout-dad-guide-to-family-ties-single
