

Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated

The eight rights are as follows (www.sfcipp.org, 2005):

1. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. I have the right to be well-cared for in my parent's absence.
5. I have the right to speak with, see, and touch my parent.
6. I have the right to support as I face my parent's incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed, or labeled because of my parent's incarceration.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

"The Bill of Rights is derived from interviews and experiences shared by children and families who have experienced parental incarceration. These rights and needs may sometimes conflict with, and must be balanced against institutional concerns and requirements, but (the authors) believe it is essential to start from the child perspective and work on what is possible from there."

-Nell Bernstein, co-author of the Bill of Rights for Children of the Incarcerated

*For a more detailed description of each right and practical advocacy strategies go to www.spcipp.org