

Commonly asked Children's Questions about Incarceration

1. How should family members behave if they attend a trial of a loved one?
A. *They should dress nicely and avoid drawing attention to themselves by laughing, crying or speaking during the trial*
2. What happens at a trial?
A. *A jury of 12 people hear the evidence and decide if the person is guilty or not guilty*
3. Are people searched before they enter a courtroom/courthouse?
A. *Yes*
4. What is Parole?
A. *It is time after prison when a person has to obey certain rules (like no drinking or using drugs) He will be checked on by a parole officer to be sure he is following the rules*
5. What are some things you can talk about with your family member who is in prison?
A. *School, books, TV shows, sports, music, something you enjoy*
6. Who decides how long a person will go to jail or prison?
A. *The judge*
7. Will a person who is sentenced to prison go to prison right away?
A. *They usually stay in the county jail for days or weeks before being sent to prison*
8. What are some rules you must follow when you visit a loved one in prison?
A. *Don't bring items that the prison forbids: weapons, drugs, alcohol, and paper money; dress appropriately (no gang affiliation, etc.) treat others with respect*
9. What kinds of programs can people in prison participate in?
A. *They can take classes on parenting, work on getting a high school or college degree, get counseling*
10. What happens when a person first gets to prison?
A. *He or she will be in admissions and orientation to help decide where he or she will be sent*
11. Do prisoners ever have free time?
A. *Yes*

- 12.** How is prison different than jail?
A. *Jail is maintained by the county. Prison is maintained by the state or federal government. In prison, the person may not be as isolated*
- 13.** What happens at an arraignment?
A. *The person enters a plea of guilty or not guilty and a trial date is set*
- 14.** Do police always need a search warrant to make an arrest?
A. *No, not in all situations. Police may not seek an arrest warrant if they fear that evidence or the person they are arresting will vanish*
- 15.** How does a person who has been arrested get to the police station?
A. *In the back of the police car*
- 16.** What are Miranda Rights and why are they important?
A. *It is a statement about the person's right to not make a forced confession*
- 17.** Who takes care of children if their parent is arrested?
A. *Often, children are sent to stay with a family member or responsible adult. If no such person is available, children will be in temporary custody of the Department of Social Services*
- 18.** What happens after the arrested person gets to the police station?
A. *They are "booked", Fingerprinted, Photographed, their personal belongings are taken and stored, and they are given prison clothes to wear*
- 19.** Who can the arrested person call from the police station?
A. *Anyone, but they usually call a family member, a friend or a lawyer*
- 20.** How long does it take once a person is in prison before he/she can call you?
A. *Usually 2-3 weeks*
- 21.** How many phone calls can the arrested person make?
A. *Usually just one but cooperative people may be allowed to make more*
- 22.** If someone gets out on bail, what do they agree to do?
A. *They agree to return to court at a specific day and time*
- 23.** Can you call the jail or prison and ask to talk to your family member?
A. *No*
- 24.** Are all people who are arrested handcuffed? Why or Why not?
A. *Yes, this is standard practice*

- 25.** What is a plea agreement?
A. *The person may plead guilty to a lesser crime to shorten prison sentence. The prosecution and the defense agree on a certain sentence which the judge must approve*
- 26.** Can you take food or drinks to share with your family member when you visit him/her in prison?
A. *No. Usually pop is available in the visit room; but you can't bring food or drinks in from outside. Make sure you eat ahead of time*
- 27.** In the first court appearance, is there a judge present? A jury?
A. *The first court appearance is before a judge only. This is when the person tells the judge if he/she plans to hire a lawyer, if he/she wants a Public Defender*
- 28.** What is bail?
A. *Bail is money that is paid to get someone out of jail until he or she goes to court*
- 29.** Once your family member is out of prison, are all the problems solved?
A. *No, there may still be many problems. You may worry about your family member staying out of trouble; there may be fights; it may be hard to have him/her back when you are used to life without them*
- 30.** What is a preliminary hearing?
A. *When the person goes before a judge, who then decides if there is enough evidence to proceed*
- 31.** Are you responsible for your family member's actions?
A. *No, everyone is responsible for their own actions*
- 32.** What do people in prison do with their free time?
A. *They can go to the library and read; go to the gym and work out; write; or make things*
- 33.** If you misbehave during a visit to the prison, what happens?
A. *The visit will be ended and you and your family will be asked to leave for the day*
- 34.** How would you treat the prison staff when you are visiting someone in prison?
A. *With respect*
- 35.** What can people do to reduce their sentence?
A. *They can follow the rules, treat the prison staff with respect, take classes and get counseling for their problems*

36. What sorts of activities can prisoners do?

A. There is a daily routine that includes three meals, work and recreation

37. How should you behave on a prison visit?

A. Use an inside voice, stay with the person you are visiting, be respectful of prison staff and others

38. Do prisoners have jobs? If so, what kinds of jobs do they have?

A. Yes, some people work inside the prison; cooking, cleaning, yard work, etc. There are also prison industries where things are made

39. Can you make phone calls from jail or prison with your cell phone?

A. No, all personal belongings are taken away and stored

40. What are some activities to do when visiting someone in prison?

A. Play a game, watch a movie, tell a story, give a hug