

THERE IS NO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT--
A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF INCARCERATION UPON THE FAMILY

Conservative estimates are that on any given day there are over 200,000 children, nationwide, who have a parent in prison.⁽¹⁾

In Massachusetts we estimate that over 2300 children have either a mother, or father incarcerated in our state prisons.

These children are young, most are under ten years old, and frequently, this is the first time they have been separated from their parent.⁽²⁾

Sentencing a man or woman, who is also a mother or father, has a dramatic effect upon their children. We know that in the short run incarceration leads to a myriad of behavioral problems both at home and at school. In the long run, these children may find themselves adopted into other families.

Tonight, I would like to talk about these children and the difficulties they face. Although the problems we will be discussing are indeed serious, I feel certain that by addressing them before an audience such as this, that something positive can be done. So not only do I feel hopeful, that together meaningful changes can be made, but possibly that some, can even be made by tomorrow.

I will be discussing young children's visits to prison and why they are important. We will then discuss why, if visits are not maintained a parent stands to loose custody of their child. Throughout we will be trying to understand these issues of visitation and involuntary adoption from two perspectives, that of psychology and the law.