



## **The impact on children in primary school when a parent is in prison**

The effects of parental arrest and incarceration on a child's development are profound. The children may suffer from multiple psychological problems some of which may include:

- trauma
- anxiety
- guilt
- shame
- fear
- sadness

The effects can be different for each child and may manifest itself in a multitude of negative behaviours some of which may include:

- a lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- depression
- low self-esteem
- withdrawal from peers and family
- bedwetting
- nightmares
- uncontrollable crying at night
- verbal aggression
- physical aggression with peers
- decline in school performance
- truancy

Positive intervention can help reduce the negative impact for the child. By creating a safe environment whereby the child is able to express their emotions without being judged can help reduce their anxiety and fears of losing a parent.

Often the child will have trouble trusting people therefore it is imperative to the child's wellbeing that you are open and honest whenever possible.

As in most cases the children have formed attachments and bonds with the parent in prison. Allowing the child regular contact with the parent in prison can help reduce their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Community groups run by SHINE for Kids can be extremely useful for the child's wellbeing and reducing the stigma and guilt associated with having a parent in prison. They are able to express their concerns and anxieties with other children in the same situation.