



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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PRISON NURSERY PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

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You asked for information on prison nursery programs in other states.

SUMMARY

We found eight states that have a women's prison that runs a nursery program for incarcerated mothers. These programs allow mothers to keep their infants with them inside a correctional facility. Most of these programs came into existence within the last 15 years. The programs usually operate for women who are pregnant at the time they are initially incarcerated and allow the mother to form a bond with the child during infancy. More often than not, the goal of the program is for the mother and child to leave the prison together at the end of the mother's sentence. Mothers participating in the program generally (1) must be evaluated as mentally and physically capable of caring for their child and (2) have no history of violence or child abuse. Staffing of nursery programs varies by state. Other inmates are often screened to participate in the nursery program as nannies or day care workers.

For a 2009 report on prison nursery programs, see the Institute of Women & Criminal Justice's [Mothers, Infants and Imprisonment: A National Look at Prison Nurseries and Community-Based Alternatives](#).

PRISON NURSERY PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

Table 1 provides information on prison nursery programs in other states, including: (1) the name of the state and the facility in which the program is run, (2) the name of the program, (3) the year the program was initiated, (4) eligibility requirements for mothers to participate, (5) the maximum capacity of babies in the nursery, (6) information on how the nursery is staffed, and (7) the maximum length of stay for a mother and her baby in the nursery.

Table 1: Prison Nursery Programs in Other States

State (Facility)	Name of Program	Year Started	Eligibility Requirement	Maximum Capacity	Staffed By	Maximum Length of Stay
Illinois (Decatur Correctional Facility)	Moms and Babies Program	2007	Mother must have two years or less from time of birth until discharge and not have a history of violent crimes or child abuse; mother and child must be healthy	10 babies	Two dedicated state employees (infant development administrator and child development aid), correctional officer, and inmates are screened to be day care workers	Two years
Indiana (Indiana Women's Prison)	Wee Ones Nursery	2008	Mother must be pregnant at the time of entering custody, never have been convicted of a violent crime, have 18 months or less from time of birth until discharge, read at an eighth grade level, and pass screenings based on medical and mental health	10 babies	Unknown	18 months

Table: 1 cont.

State (Facility)	Name of Program	Year Started	Eligibility Requirement	Maximum Capacity	Staffed By	Maximum Length of Stay
Nebraska (Nebraska Correctional Center for Women)	Nursery Program	1994	Mother generally must have 18 months or less until discharge from time of birth until discharge and not have a violent history or convictions of serious child abuse	7 babies	Combination of two staff members and inmate assistants who are screened to participate	Generally 18 months, but can be longer
New York (Bedford Hills Correctional Facility)	Nursery Program	Early 1900s	Mother must be physically fit to care for the child and pass evaluation based on parenting abilities and criminal record (N.Y. Correct. Law § 611)	27 babies	Combination of agency personnel and workers from contracted Catholic charity, includes designated nursery advocate	Usually 12 months, but up to 18 months if the mother will be discharged from custody
Ohio (Ohio Reformatory for Women)	Achieving Baby Care Success (ABCs)	2001	Mother must be pregnant at the time of entering custody, serving for nonviolent crimes, have 18 months or less from time of birth until discharge, and pass screenings based on medical and mental health and family history	21 babies	Unit staff and security guard, pediatrician on contract (grant funded), inmates are screened to serve as nannies	18 months
South Dakota (South Dakota Women's Prison)	Mother Infant Program	Unknown	Mothers must be pregnant at the time of entering custody	Unknown	Unknown	30 days

Table: 1 cont.

State (Facility)	Name of Program	Year Started	Eligibility Requirement	Maximum Capacity	Staffed By	Maximum Length of Stay
Washington (Washington Corrections Center for Women)	Residential Parenting Program	1999	Mother must be pregnant at the time of entering custody; have 30 months or less from time of birth until discharge; and pass screenings based on type of offense, family history, and behavior	20 babies	Correctional officers and counselors	30 months
West Virginia (Lakin Correctional Center)	Keeping Infant Development Successful (KIDS)	2009	Mother must be pregnant at the time of entering custody; have 18 months or less from time of birth until discharge; pass evaluation based on medical and mental health, and have no history of child abuse	5 babies	Full time staff case manager and counselor, security staff as needed	18 months

Sources: National Directory of Programs for Women with Criminal Justice Involvement, survey issued by Department of Correction, prison officials and websites

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