



THROUGH OUR EYES
APART
FAMILY JOURNAL

Dear Family,



There are many reasons why children may live apart from one or more of their parents or guardians. In this way, you may see yourself, a family member, or someone else you know in the stories of the families in this episode from the award-winning series, *Through Our Eyes*. Use this journal with your child as you watch “Apart” together. Explore ideas about how the structures of families may change from time to time and how you can remain resilient and connected, although you may be apart.

Meet the Children



Nnadji lives with his loving grandmother, aunt, and cousin while his mother is in prison. He loves playing basketball and video games. To stay connected, Nnadji talks with his mom on the phone. They play board games together during his visits with her.

“Even though she didn’t grow up with me and take care of me, she still loves me. She’s a sweet, kind, nice person if you really get to know her.”

– Nnadji, 10 years old



Eric lives with his mother. His devoted father is in prison. Eric likes to make breakfast with his mom. They share photos of the three of them together. He and his dad remain connected through their love of football. They text back and forth and talk on the phone before every game.

“Ever since my mom and my dad lived together, he would love the topic of football. And he wished that when I grew up, I would talk about football. His wish came true.”

– Leo, 8 years old



Lyric’s dad went to prison when she was three years old. She currently lives only with her mom. Lyric loves to draw. It relaxes her and helps clear her mind. She looks through pictures of herself with her dad and it reminds her of the time she spent with him.

“You can be far far far far FAR away but, as far as you are, I’m still going to love you and you’re still going to love me.”

– Lyric, 10 years old

Family Viewing Tips

Take a moment, if possible, to watch “Apart” before sharing it with your child. This may help you prepare how best to talk about questions your child may have. As you watch, write down ways in which your family expresses your resilience and support for one another. Ideas include:

- Showing family support and pride
- Taking time for self-care and caring for one another
- Holding loving conversations through phone calls, letters, physical or video visits, and more

Talking about how your family is structured helps to deepen your child’s sense of connection to family – near, extended, and apart.

before

We are a family.

A positive sense of belonging helps to deepen children’s sense of self-worth. When children live apart from their parents, they may question why and what happened. This can be challenging for your child *and* for you. While you watch, continue to highlight that, just like you, the children in the video have the support of trusted grown-ups—for now, for later, and forever. They are a family.

during

Follow your child’s lead.

Families with incarcerated parents may face challenges such as financial and housing insecurity and a sense of helplessness. As you watch the video together, it’s important to share commonalities such as love, hope, and connectedness. As possible, pause to check in with your child. Following your child’s lead gives you the opportunity to do more listening and sharing. See the “Questions Kids Ask” list on the next page for additional support.

after

Helping begins at home.

After children feel comfortable expressing their feelings about the ideas in this video or about their own away parent, they may want to get more involved. Helping can begin at home with time spent together as a family, taking some alone time, and other acts of self-and-family care, e.g. making a chart of friends and extended family members who support you.

Questions Kids Ask

We know that a trusted grown-up's love, support, and stability helps children through challenging times such as changing family structures due to incarceration and other hardships. Far too many children experience a family member or know another child with a parent who has been, or is incarcerated.

Talking through what being separated from a parent means can help deepen trust and connectedness. These conversations can take place before and as you watch "Apart" or later, during everyday moments like taking a walk together. Continue to model how to share feelings about what is happening. Sharing can help us feel connected.

Developmental note: Some children may feel guilty when their parent goes to jail or prison. They may believe that they caused it to happen. Help children understand that they are not responsible for their parent's actions.

What does incarcerated mean?

There are times when some people are put into jail or prison because they did not obey the law. Laws are rules for what grown-ups should and should not do.

Will these parents ever get out or come home?

I don't know. The video doesn't say exactly when or if these parents will be released or return home. How long someone spends in jail or prison depends on many things, such as which laws were not obeyed, what decisions were made by the court or judge, and more.

Do kids get to see their parents who are in jail or prison?

We saw different ways the children visited with their away parent. Sometimes, children can see their away parent once in a while. They can also call or write letters. Most, if not all the time, children are asked if they want to see and talk to their away parent.

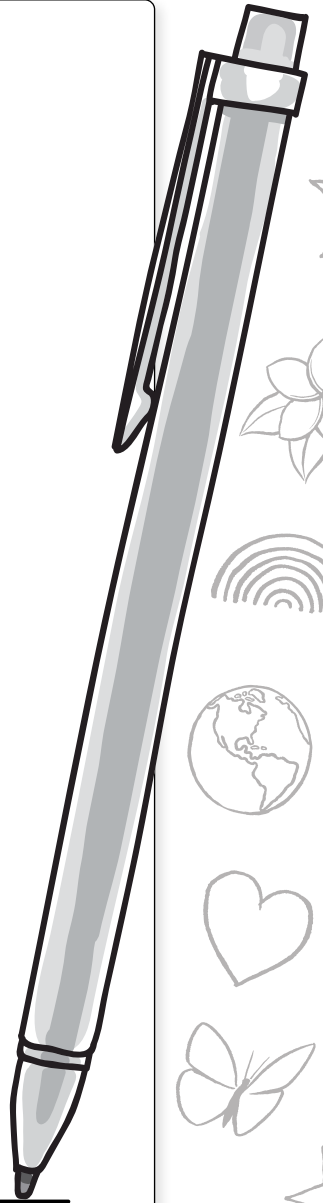
How can we help?

Let's begin by finding out different ways to help children with a parent who is incarcerated. Helping also means that we should be sure to be mindful of our own needs so that we have energy to help others.

These are your drawing and writing pages. Share your ideas, questions, and how your connection to your family is strong and filled with love.



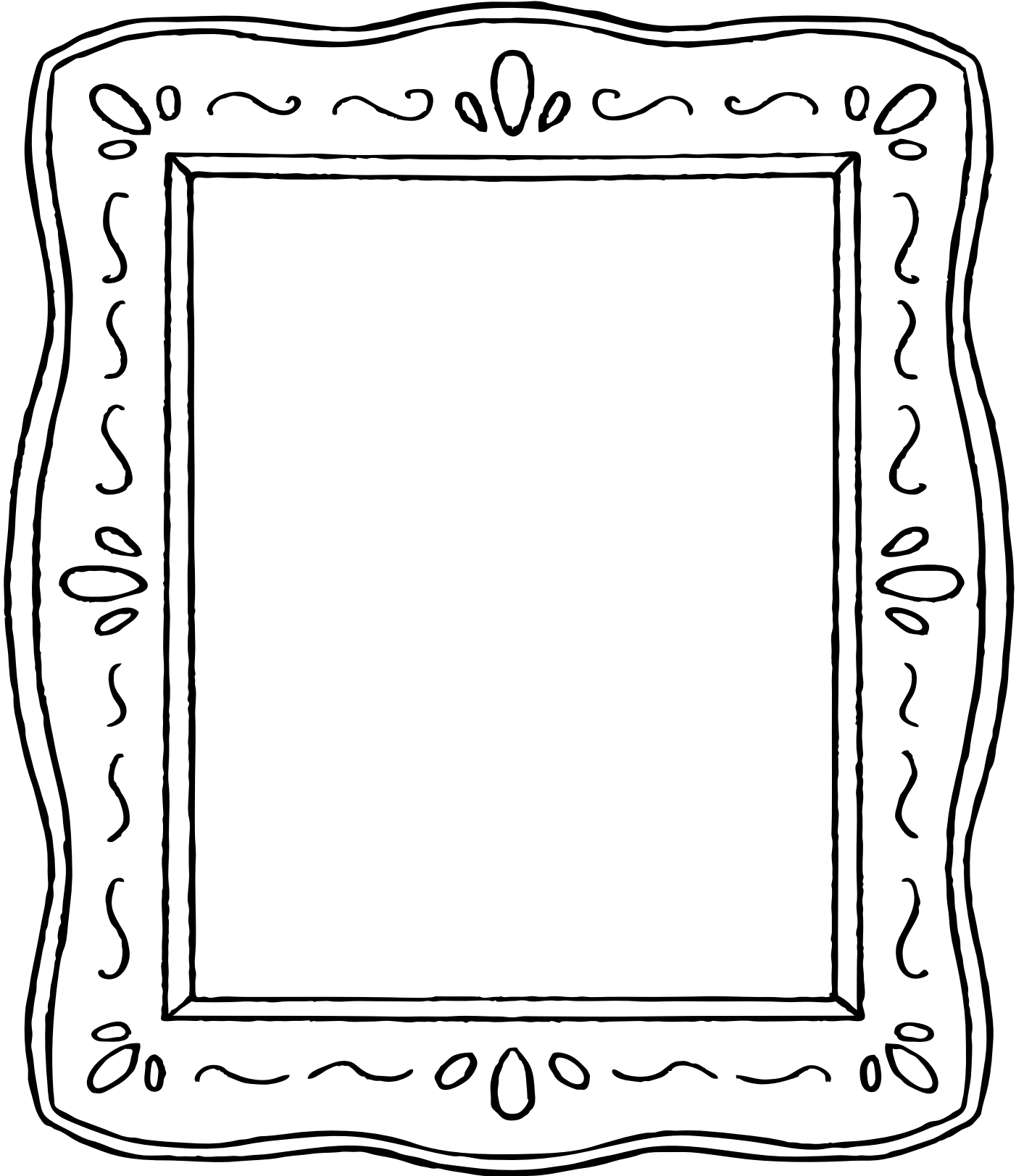
MY JOURNAL: APART



fam-i-ly: We are all a part of a **family**. A family is made up of people who are connected to each other and have a strong emotional bond.

I am part of my family!

Families are made up of different people near and far.
Draw a picture of who is in your family!



What would you like to ask Nnadjji, Eric, and Lyric?
What would you say to them if you were to meet them?

The form consists of three large, empty speech bubbles arranged vertically, each with a tail pointing towards the top-left. The top bubble is cloud-like, the middle one is oval, and the bottom one is rounded rectangular. Three orange hearts are scattered around the bubbles: one to the right of the top bubble, one to the left of the middle bubble, and one to the right of the bottom bubble.

My Family's Circle of Care

Together with a family member, make a list of the people you can reach out to and talk to. Share some of your favorite family activities.

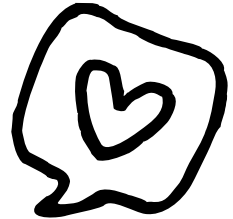
My Circle

My Family Members

More Family Contacts (aunts, uncles, cousins, and more)

Family Friend & Neighbor Contact

Teacher's Name & Contact



Family Time Ideas

Books We Like

Favorite Meals

Favorite Activities

Family Traditions

About Apart

In the United States, 2.7 million children have a parent in prison or jail right now. In “Apart,” we watch this story unfold through the eyes of three brave and resilient children, Nnadj, Eric, and Lyric as they cope with the unique struggles they face while living apart from one of their parents. With the love, understanding, and steady support of their families, they find ways to stay connected.

For more information and
resources, please scan this
QR code:



About Sesame Workshop. Sesame Workshop is the global impact nonprofit behind *Sesame Street* and so much more. For over 50 years, we have worked at the intersection of education, media, and research, creating joyful experiences that enrich minds and expand hearts, all in service of empowering each generation to build a better world. Our beloved characters, iconic shows, outreach in communities, and more bring playful early learning to families in more than 150 countries and advance our mission to help children everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder.

About the Director. Geeta Gandbhir embarked on her career in narrative film under the guidance of Spike Lee and Sam Pollard. As a director, her recent credits include the series *Born in Synanon* for Paramount, *Eyes on the Prize* and *The Sentence* for HBO, and *Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power* for Peacock, which was nominated for the 2022 Critics Choice Award and two 2023 Emmys. Additionally, she won a 2022 NAACP Award for Best Directing and a 2022 Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary Series for HBO’s *Black and Missing*.

About the Director. Rudy Valdez is an Emmy-winning filmmaker dedicated to crafting impactful narratives that explore social, cultural, and political themes. He directed *The Sentence* (HBO), a decade-long, deeply personal project depicting his sister’s plight in the criminal justice system. The work earned him an Emmy, an Audience Award at Sundance Film Festival, and a Best New Director nomination at the 2018 Critics Choice Documentary Awards. Most recently, Valdez directed the currently streaming four-part Netflix docuseries *We Are: The Brooklyn Saints*.

About the Production Company. Multitude Films is a queer and women-led independent production company dedicated to telling nonfiction stories by and about historically excluded and underrepresented communities. Multitude’s films have been programmed at dozens of festivals internationally including Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW, and IDFA, and distributed by Netflix, Topic, POV, Independent Lens, and HBOMax, among others. Recent releases include Peacock Original *Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power*, Emmy-nominated Netflix Original *Pray Away*, Sundance Award-winning *Always in Season*, and *The Feeling of Being Watched*.

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