



Prison Nursery Fact Sheet

From the Equality State Policy Center. See more at www.equalitystate.org.

What is the issue?

When mothers are sent to prison, they are at risk of losing their children. Children are usually placed in foster care or kinship care, and it is difficult for incarcerated mothers to remain in touch. Children left behind as a result of maternal incarceration are vulnerable to suffering significant attachment disorders. They are more likely to become addicted to drugs or alcohol, engage in criminal activity, manifest sexually promiscuous behavior, and dangerously lag behind in educational development.

Prison nursery programs, while far less desirable than non-incarceration alternative sentencing, provide a way to keep mothers and children together during a crucial period of child development. Mothers who participate in prison nursery programs show lower rates of recidivism. Moreover, the mother-child bond is preserved during a formative and critical time in an infant's development, and the emotional and financial costs of foster care involvement are avoided.

The basic facts:

The Wyoming Department of Corrections requested funding for the construction of a prison nursery at the Wyoming Women's Center in Lusk.

The Joint Appropriations Committee recommends approval of \$1,010,865 for capital construction costs of the WWC Women & Children's Program.

What's next for the 2012 Legislative Session?

The Joint Appropriations Committee recommended approval of the 2013-14 state budget, including funding for the WWC Women & Children's Program.

The budget was received for floor action in the Wyoming House and Senate on Thursday, February 16. First action on the mirror budget bills HB 1 and SF1 is expected Feb. 21.

What can you do to make a difference?

- 1. Join the conversation.** You can track the ongoing discussion in the state using the information and links below.
- 2. Write a letter to the editor.** You can let your fellow citizens know about the benefits of prison nurseries by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper.
- 3. Call your legislator.** Call your legislator to support funding for the construction of the WWC Women & Children's Program.

How can you keep track of this discussion?

Watch for more information from ESPC on this issue. Go to www.equalitystate.org for updated information.

Check the status of the general government appropriations budget (HB0001 and SF001):

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LSOWeb/Session/BillStatus.aspx>

Read the Level I & Level II Studies on the WWC Women & Children's Program:

http://www.wyomingassociationofchurches.org/pdf/DOC_2011_12_02_FINAL.pdf