Fresh Start

After years of selling and using drugs—and a stint in prison—Eric Pogue works to build a trusting relationship with his sons.

November 29, 2007 By Kia Gregory

Name Eric Pogue
Age 37
Incarcerated 14 months for drug offenses
Released March 26, 2007
Current residence A halfway house in Philadelphia

Drug Problems I started out selling cocaine when I was about 17. Then I began using my own product. I was addicted for about 10 years. I think curiosity and the pressure of dealing with life caused me to use.

A Shaky Start Things weren't the way they should have been with my children. It was easier with the younger ones because of their age, and their mom lived closer. With the 14-year-old, it was hard because his mother lives in New Jersey and is married. And I always thought I couldn't get visitation rights because of the drugs, not having a steady job or a steady place of residence.

Making Every Call Count I was locked up for 14 months for drug offenses. I called my kids two or three times a week. With the 14-year-old, I would see how things were going in school. I would draw stuff for the little ones, like their favorite cartoon characters, with the words I love you. But I know I missed a lot.

Reconnecting and Rebuilding I'm living in a halfway house until April. They have three phones and over 50 people, so I don't talk to my kids as much as I want. I can tell they don't want to get too attached, and they don't really trust me yet. That hurts me a lot. I tell my oldest that he has to learn how to do the right thing so he won't be in trouble like I am, because that's why I can't be with him now. I think he knows he doesn't want to go the route I took.

Not Giving Up I usually see the younger ones about once a week. We go to the movies and out to eat. I play ball with my oldest one sometimes. I want to have a house for them. I'm trying to get everything back to where it should have been, where it should be.

ERIC'S ADVICE

Continuously write to your kids while in prison.Make letters personal by adding a drawing or picture, and by asking them about their lives and feelings.

Be honest about what’s going on, and listen to howit makes them feel.

Take responsibility for how your negative choices affected your children, and offer them an apology.

Realize that you have to earn your children’s trust, and that it will take time.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/black-drugaddiction-incaceration-fatherhood-13582-7605