

# ON LIFE'S TERMS MOTHERS IN RECOVERY

## Facts from the Film

- Since the 1986 mandatory sentencing drug law, the number of women in prison has jumped 400% and 800% for African American women.
- Among incarcerated women today 66% have children under the age of 18.
- When the test for drugs on a newborn is "tox positive" Child Protective Services, CPS, may take the infant away from the mother and put her baby in foster care.
- In the 1980s, a media frenzy over possible long-term damage to children whose mothers used cocaine while pregnant added fuel to the "war on drugs." These so-called "crack babies" were taken away from their mother and considered deficient. There were multiple reports of abuse of the children.
- In 1991, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provided start-up funds for 35 family based residential treatment programs to assist mothers with young children in their recovery. Center Point was one of them.
- The mother has six months to be drug-free and self-sufficient in order to reunify with her child under the age of 3 and one year for older children. Some of these children live with family members, but most are put into the foster care system. The mother can get a 6 month extension if she is actively pursuing reunification. (in California)
- Family treatment drug court began in the 1990s, as an alternative to prison. This special court addresses addiction as a mental health issue providing mothers access to comprehensive gender-specific recovery programs.
- In 1996, Congress passed a law that permanently bars anyone convicted of a drug offense from receiving food stamps and government assistance. States can modify or opt out of the ban.
- The long-term Maternal Lifestyle Study begun in 1992 and funded by NIH shows that, "if children who are prenatally exposed to drugs grow up in a relatively decent environment, they have a good chance of developing normally."
- Fear of punitive actions drive expectant mothers with substance use problems away from prenatal care.
- In 2013, in America there are less than 150 residential substance use treatment programs for pregnant women and mothers with young children.