

Governor celebrates Moms and Babies program's 10 year anniversary

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DECATUR - Governor Bruce Rauner today joined Illinois Department of Corrections Assistant Director Gladys Taylor to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Moms and Babies program at the Decatur Correctional Center. He discussed the importance of building strong families.

“Crime and incarceration can tear families apart,” Governor Rauner said. “This program is designed to bring them together. It provides an incentive for mothers to focus on their future and their child’s future and it is revolutionizing the way we approach the correctional system.”

The Moms and Babies program allows incarcerated mothers to keep their babies with them while they serve their sentence. The mothers have their own room in the correctional facility, which is equipped with a baby crib and items that allow them to accommodate the needs of their child. A total of eight mothers can live on the unit at any given time. During their stay, they participate in classes that help them enhance their parenting skills, understand the developmental stages of their baby, learn how to communicate effectively, and build healthy relationships.

Studies show that mothers who develop a strong bond with their children are less likely to return to prison once they are released. IDOC Assistant Director Gladys Taylor was instrumental in getting the program off the ground in 2007, working with other IDOC personnel and community partners to establish a model for the program.

“We are breaking down barriers here,” Taylor said. “Eighty women have come through this program and only 15 have returned to our custody. That is an 80 percent success rate. Not only are we giving these mothers a second chance, we are also breaking the cycle of crime and decreasing the odds that their children will be incarcerated.”

The mothers can live on the unit until their child is two years old. The Department partners with Chicago based TASC and many other community partners to ensure the mothers get continued programming and assistance once they return to the community.

Video of the event can be found [here](#).