



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 420

By Council Members Rivera, Restler, Won, Hanif, Cabán, Abreu, Ossé, Avilés, Williams, Ayala, Hudson, Narcisse, Farías, Schulman, De La Rosa, Hanks and Banks

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a program for child visitors of department of correction facilities

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 9 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 9-156 to read as follows:

§ 9-156 Child visitor program. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Borough jail facility. The term “borough jail facility” means any department facility that is located outside Rikers Island and in which people held in department custody are housed.

Child visitor. The term “child visitor” means a visitor under 16 years of age.

City jail. The term “city jail” means any department facility in which people held in department custody are housed.

Department. The term “department” means the department of correction.

Visiting area. The term “visiting area” means any space within any city jail designated for the purpose of visits.

Visitor. The term “visitor” means any person who enters a city jail for the purpose of visiting a person housed in any city jail, or any person who is screened by the department for visiting purposes, and includes the term “child visitor.”

b. The department, in consultation with not-for-profit organizations with expertise in issues affecting child visitors, shall develop a program to improve the visiting experience for child visitors and all other participants of visits involving children. Such program shall have the following features:

1. In all visiting areas where child visitors will be visiting, the department shall provide toys, games, books and arts-and-crafts for interaction between visit participants of all ages;

2. The department shall require all department staff who interact with child visitors to receive training designed to minimize stress for child visitors; and

3. All new or substantially remodeled city jails shall have a specially designed visiting area for child visitors and those who accompany them.

c. No later than 90 days after January 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the board of correction and the speaker of the council, and post on the department's website, a report regarding its efforts to improve the visitation experience for child visitors pursuant to the requirements set forth in subdivision b of this section. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, the following information:

1. The number of visitors to city jails, disaggregated by borough jail facilities and city jails on Rikers Island, and disaggregated further by facility;

2. The number of visits by child visitors, disaggregated by borough jail facilities and city jails on Rikers Island, and disaggregated further by facility;

3. The number of visits by child visitors that occurred in visiting areas specially designed for child visitors pursuant to subparagraph 3 of subdivision b of this section, disaggregated by facility;

4. The number of department staff that interact with child visitors;

5. The number of department staff that interact with child visitors who have received training required by subparagraph 2 of subdivision b of this section;

6. The inventory of toys, games, books and arts-and-crafts required by subparagraph 1 of subdivision b of this section, disaggregated by borough jail facilities and city jails on Rikers Island, and disaggregated further

by facility;

7. A description of the department's efforts to collaborate or consult with experts from relevant nonprofit organizations;

8. A list of borough jail facilities and city jails on Rikers Island, if any, that do not have visiting areas specially designed for child visitors; and

9. A description of additional improvements made or initiatives taken by the department to improve the child visitation experience.

d. The information required by subdivision c of this section shall be compared to the previous four reporting periods whenever possible, stored permanently and made accessible on the department's website.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law, except that the department of correction shall take such measures as are necessary for the implementation of this local law, including the promulgation of rules, before such date.

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