



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 420-A

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

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a program for child visitors to 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 9-168 to read as follows:

§ 9-168 Child visitor program.

a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Child visitor. The term “child visitor” means a natural person under 16 years of age who enters a city jail for the purpose of visiting an incarcerated person.

City jail. The term “city jail” means any facility of the department in which incarcerated persons held in department custody are housed.

Specially designed visiting area. The term “specially designed visiting area” means a visiting area with interactive exhibits or other features designed to be used by children.

Visiting area. The term “visiting area” means a room or space within a city jail where a visit between an incarcerated person and a member of such person’s family, including a child visitor, may occur.

b. The department shall establish a program for child visitors and other participants of visits with incarcerated persons that include child visitors. Such program shall provide:

1. Toys, games, books, and activities, such as arts and crafts, and disinfecting wipes in any visiting area;

2. Training for department staff who interact with child visitors on minimizing stress for child visitors, which shall include, but need not be limited to, information about child development and communicating with children of various ages; and

3. A specially designed visiting area in any city jail constructed or renovated on or after the effective date of the local law that added this section.

c. The department shall, in accordance with applicable law and rules including minimum standards of the board of correction as set forth in chapter 1 of title 40 of the rules of the city of New York, make best efforts to reduce the time that a child visitor waits prior to commencing a visit with an incarcerated person.

d. The department shall conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing tele-visits on weekend days without reducing the number of hours for in person visits on weekend days. No later than January 1, 2026, the department shall submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council and post on the department’s website a report on the findings of the study conducted pursuant to this subdivision.

e. No later than April 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit to the mayor, the speaker of the council, and the board of correction, and post on the department’s website, a report on the program for child visitors required by this section. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, for the preceding calendar year:

1. The number of visits to city jails by child visitors, disaggregated by city jail;
  2. The number of visits to city jails by child visitors that occurred in specially designed visiting areas, disaggregated by city jail;
  3. The number of department staff who have received training as required by paragraph 2 of subdivision b;
  4. The average length of time between the time a child visitor arrives at a city jail and the time such child visitor commences a visit with an incarcerated person, disaggregated by facility;
  5. The types of toys, games, books and activities in visiting areas as required by paragraph 1 of subdivision b, disaggregated by facility;
  6. A list of city jails that do not include a specially designed visiting area; and
  7. A description of any initiatives of the department to improve the experience of child visitors.
  - f. The department shall post on its website a description of the program for child visitors required by this section, including any protocols or processes for cleaning and, where necessary, replenishing toys, games, books and activities in visiting areas as required by paragraph 1 of subdivision b.
- § 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

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