



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

NEW YORK STATE  
OFFICE OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES  
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Commissioner

## Administrative Directive

<b>Transmittal:</b>	11-OCFS-ADM-7				
<b>To:</b>	Commissioners of Social Services Executive Directors of Voluntary Authorized Agencies				
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Strategic Planning and Policy Development				
<b>Date:</b>	June 15 <sup>th</sup> 2011				
<b>Subject:</b>	Incarcerated Parents and Parents in Residential Substance Abuse Treatment with Children in Foster Care: Termination of Parental Rights and Other Issues				
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Directors of Social Services Child Welfare Supervisors				
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	See pg. 9 Section V “Contacts”				
<b>Attachments:</b>	Attachment 1 “Connectivity Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents” (Power Point) Attachment 2 “ <i>You Don’t Have to Stop Being a Parent</i> ” (A & B) Attachment 3 Model Release of Information Form				
<b>Attachment Available Online:</b>	Yes attachments 2 A & B are on the OCFS Website ( <a href="http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us">www.ocfs.state.ny.us</a> ) under “publications”				
<b>Previous ADMs/INFs</b>	<b>Releases Cancelled</b>	<b>Dept. Regs.</b>	<b>Soc. Serv. Law &amp; Other Legal Ref.</b>	<b>Manual Ref.</b>	<b>Misc. Ref.</b>
98 OCFS INF-3		18 NYCRR 431.9 (e)	SSL 384-b (8) SSL 409-e		

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Directive (ADM) is to inform social services districts (districts) and voluntary authorized agencies (agencies) of Chapter 113 of the Laws of 2010 (Chapter 113) which was signed into law on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Chapter 113 amends Social Services Law 384-b by adding additional considerations to the requirement that social services districts file petitions to terminate parental rights (TPR) when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. An exception to the requirement

to file a TPR may apply to some parents who are currently incarcerated or in a residential substance abuse treatment program or to parents whose past term of incarceration or participation in a residential substance abuse treatment program was a significant factor in the child's remaining in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. In such cases, before filing a TPR petition the agency must assess whether the parent maintains a meaningful role in the child's life and whether terminating the parent's rights is in the child's best interests. For purposes of this law, the term "incarceration" includes a parent's placement in Office of Children and Family Services' (OCFS) custody.

In assessing whether the parent maintains a meaningful role in the child's life, the agency must base its determination on evidence, including but not limited to the parent's communications with the child, the parent's communications with the district or foster care agency, and information regarding the parent's participation in services to assist him or her in complying with the service plan. The district or agency should gather input from the parent, the child, the child's attorney, the parent's attorney, individuals of importance to the child's life and individuals providing services to the parent. If the district assesses that a parent maintains a meaningful role in the child's life, it must then determine whether the continued involvement of the parent in the child's life is in the child's best interests. An exception to file for a TPR exists only if both these conditions are met.

Additionally, Chapter 113 requires the court to take into account the particular barriers and challenges faced by a parent who is or has been incarcerated or in a residential substance abuse treatment program during the child's placement in foster care when determining whether a child is permanently neglected. The law requires districts and agencies to distribute information provided by OCFS to these parents, outlining their legal rights and obligations and providing information on social and rehabilitative services available in the community to which they will return.

Finally, Chapter 113 requires the family's service plan to reflect the special challenges of a parent who is incarcerated, or in a residential substance abuse treatment program, and allows the district or agency to utilize available technology, such as video or teleconferencing, as a means for the parent to participate in reviews if it is impractical to hold such consultations in person.

## **II. Background**

In 1997, the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was enacted to address the needs of children "adrift" in long-term foster care without achieving permanency. ASFA requires agencies to file a termination of parental rights (TPR) petition when a child has been in foster care 15 of the last 22 months, unless there is a compelling or other reason for not filing such a petition. New York State enacted comparable ASFA legislation: Chapter 145 of the Laws of 2000. For more information about compelling and other reasons not to file a TPR, refer to 18 NYCRR 431.9 (e) and 98 OCFS INF-3.

Chapter 113 was enacted to address the situation of foster children with parents who are currently incarcerated or in residential substance abuse treatment and foster children with

parents whose past incarceration, or placement in residential substance abuse treatment, is a significant factor in why the child remained in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. This legislation provides a possible exception to the requirement to file a TPR against these parents and sets forth other provisions specific to these parents.

### **III. Program Implications**

Chapter 113 applies to parents of foster children who are currently incarcerated or in residential substance abuse treatment programs. It may also apply to parents of foster children who in the past were incarcerated or in a residential substance abuse treatment program, but only if that past term of incarceration or time in a residential treatment played a significant factor in the child's presence in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. In some cases, parental incarceration or time in a residential substance abuse treatment program may form the basis of an exception to the requirement to file a TPR petition when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. This must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In order to determine whether an exception to the requirement to file a TPR is warranted, Chapter 113 requires that the agency or district assess whether the parent maintains a meaningful role in the life of a child and, if so, whether the continued involvement of the parent in the child's life is in the best interests of the child. Chapter 113 defines evidence of the parent's meaningful role in the life of the child to include, but not be limited, to the following:

- a parent's expression or acts manifesting concern for the child such as letters, telephone calls, visits, participation in planning, and other forms of communication with the child; and
- efforts by the parent to communicate and work with the district or agency, the child's attorney, the foster parent, the court, the parent's attorney and others providing services to the parent, such as correctional, mental health, and substance abuse treatment program staff.

The agency is required to gather information from the parent, the child and others providing services to the parent for the purpose of complying with the service plan and repairing, maintaining, or building the parent-child relationship. This includes correctional, mental health and substance abuse treatment program personnel, the child's attorney and the parent's attorney.

When determining whether the parent's continued involvement in the child's life is in the best interests of the child, districts and agencies are encouraged to consider the following:

- whether the parent was the child's primary caregiver prior to the child's placement;
- the parent's role in the child's life prior to the parent's incarceration or residential substance abuse treatment;
- the parent's current role in the child's life;

- the age of the child at the time of the child's placement;
- the length of the parent's period of incarceration or residential treatment;
- the length of time the child has been in foster care;
- the child's primary attachment;
- any special needs or vulnerabilities of the child; and
- whether the parent has addressed safety concerns, if any.

The parent/child assessment and best interests determination must be documented in the child's periodic Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP), and all efforts made to reach the permanency goal of the child must be documented in the case record.

During the child's placement, agency and district caseworkers are to make suitable arrangements with a correctional facility, or a residential substance abuse treatment program, for the parent to visit with the child within the facility or program unless such visiting would be harmful to the child.

The initial family service plan and the ensuing Service Plan Reviews (SPRs) must be done in consultation with the incarcerated parent, or parent in a residential substance abuse treatment program, unless such consultation is deemed harmful to the child. If it is impractical to hold such consultation in person as a result of incarceration, or placement in a residential substance abuse treatment program, such consultation may be done utilizing available videoconferencing or teleconferencing technology.

In addition, social services districts and agencies must provide information developed by the Office of Children and Family Services to these parents outlining their legal rights and obligations. (See Attachment 2, "***You Don't Have to Stop Being a Parent.***" Version A is for Incarcerated Parents, Version B is for Parents in Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Centers.) Social services districts and agencies must also provide parents with a list including, but not limited to, social or rehabilitative services available in the community, including family visiting services to aid in the development of a meaningful relationship between the parent and child. When possible, such information should include transitional and family support services in the community to which an incarcerated parent, or parent in a residential substance abuse treatment program will return. This information must be provided as soon as the district or agency has located the parent and must include information on how the parent is to communicate with the agency or caseworker. Attachments 2 A and 2 B, "***You Don't Have to Stop Being a Parent.***" translated in Spanish, are forthcoming.

#### IV. Required Actions

##### **For Parents Incarcerated in New York State Department of Corrections (DOCS) Facilities**

The agency and district caseworkers must familiarize themselves with the means to access NYS DOCS facilities by reviewing the attached PowerPoint: “Connectivity Between Children and Their Incarcerated Parents: How to Navigate the New York State Department of Correctional Services.” **See Attachment 1**

Once the caseworker has information that a child in foster care has a parent incarcerated in a DOCS facility, the caseworker must gather information about that parent in order to locate him or her using the DOCS Lookup website.

In order to successfully utilize the Inmate Lookup, agency or district caseworkers should attempt to learn the following information regarding the incarcerated parent:

- Full Name and any aliases
- Date or year of birth
- County of commitment

The Inmate Lookup will provide the incarcerated parent’s Department Identification Number (DIN) and facility location. It is essential that all correspondence to the incarcerated parent include the parent’s DIN, according to NYS DOCS inmate mail procedures.

The DOCS Inmate Lookup is available at:

<http://nysdocslookup.docs.state.ny.us/>

The DOCS Facility Lookup is available at:

<http://www.docs.state.ny.us/faclist.html>

The NYS DOCS website is available at:

<http://www.docs.state.ny.us/>

Once the incarcerated parent has been located:

1. Caseworkers must contact the deputy superintendent of the appropriate facility to determine the parent’s corrections counselor. Deputy superintendent phone numbers can be found on the NYS DOCS website (URL above). The deputy superintendent at any NYS DOCS facility is reachable at extension 4000.
2. The inmate-parent must be mailed “*You Don’t Have to Stop Being a Parent*” (see attachment 2 Version A also posted on the OCFS website)

[www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us) under publications # 5113). A list of social or rehabilitative services available in the community, including family visiting services, to aid in the development of a meaningful relationship between the parent and child must be included. Despite the fact that an adult's incarceration and the location are public information, any programmatic information such as drug treatment, mental health treatment, etc. is still confidential and would require a release of information form signed by the parent. A model release of information form is included in this ADM as attachment 3. The district or agency should include a "release of information" form for the parent to sign allowing the agency or district, and the facility staff, to communicate with each other regarding the parent. The district or agency must clearly identify its return address. DOCS recognizes correspondence from districts and agencies as "legal mail" and the parent's receipt of mail from the agency or district will be documented by DOCS staff.

3. Once a parent's corrections counselor is identified, the caseworker must initiate contact with the counselor to discuss visiting arrangements between the parent and foster child, the parent's participation in SPRs, and any other pertinent information.
4. The caseworker should also determine the availability of videoconference or teleconference capacity within the facility in order to accommodate the parent's participation in Service Plan Reviews. The use of alternate technology, where available, is required by law when a parent's physical attendance is impractical.
5. The caseworker must coordinate with the corrections counselor to obtain an acceptable time for phone contact with the parent.
6. The caseworker must contact the parent by phone to explain any court or Service Plan Review dates, visitation schedules, and provide an update on the progress of the child.

Any correspondence between the caseworkers and the corrections counselors is to be mailed directly. DOCS has advised OCFS that the deputy superintendent of the correctional facility is to be contacted should there be any communication difficulties with the parent's correctional counselor.

### **For Parents in a Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program**

The process for assisting parents in a residential substance abuse treatment program is somewhat different from the process used to assist incarcerated parents because treatment programs are prohibited by law from disclosing any information about their clients without a signed release of information. If the parent is there as the result of a court order, the caseworker should make every effort to get a release signed by the parent before the parent goes into the treatment facility. If the parent is already in a

treatment facility and the caseworker knows where the parent is located but does not have a release the caseworker must mail a blank release to the parent in care of the facility. The caseworker should include a cover letter explaining the purpose of the release and should enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope so the parent can mail back the signed release. The agency fax number should also be included in case the facility is willing to fax the signed release back to the caseworker and then mail the original. Once the caseworker has the signed release, a copy should be faxed to the facility. At this point, information may be exchanged between the parent's counselor/clinician at the facility and the caseworker. If the caseworker wishes to share information regarding the parent and child with the treatment provider, the release must also authorize the child welfare agency to do that.

In cases where the parent has entered treatment voluntarily, and has not notified the caseworker of his or her location, the caseworker will have to learn the parent's location from family members or other collateral sources. Once the parent's location has been determined, the caseworker must follow the procedures above.

The signed release must be included in the child's record and a copy should also be retained by the identified treatment provider. Even if a parent refuses to sign a release, the caseworker must document the efforts to obtain a release and keep copies of all correspondence in the case record. Once the release has been signed, caseworkers must again contact the program manager in order to determine the primary counselor/clinician for the parent. A model release of information form is included in this ADM as attachment 3. The caseworker must then follow steps 2-6 above (using attachment 2, Version B: ***"You Don't Have to Stop Being a Parent while you are in a residential treatment facility"*** OCFS Publication #5114) to satisfy the requirements of Chapter 113.

Here is the link for New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) program directory:

<http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/providerDirectory/index.cfm>

OCFS has provided OASAS with a list of social services districts and foster care agencies. In addition, OASAS recognizes correspondence from districts and agencies as "legal mail."

### **For Parents in OCFS Custody**

The process for assisting parents in OCFS custody is described below. Caseworkers must work with facility directors and youth counselors in OCFS facilities. In the event that the parent in OCFS custody is placed in a facility at a known location, caseworkers will utilize the Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth web page for the Regional Listing of OCFS facilities and directors located at:

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/rehab/regionalListing.asp>

In the event that a parent in OCFS custody and his/her placement location is not known, the following procedure must be followed due to the confidential nature of placement location of juvenile delinquents and offenders:

- The caseworker must fax a release of information form to the OCFS Legal Division's Juvenile Justice Unit at **518-402-6526**. Once the release of information is approved, the Legal Division's Juvenile Justice Unit can provide the location and refer inquiries to the website for the contact person.

Caseworkers must contact the appropriate facility director who will identify the Youth Counselor I (YCI) who has the parent on his or her caseload. The caseworker must, with the assistance of the YCI, follow steps 2-6 above to satisfy the requirements of Chapter 113. A model release of information form is attached to this ADM as attachment 3.

In the event that a parent is incarcerated or placed in a facility other than NYS DOCS, an OASAS licensed residential substance abuse treatment center, or an OCFS facility, the caseworkers is to initiate the appropriate contacts with that facility. These other facilities may include parents incarcerated in county jails, federal prisons, or immigration detention facilities. Once contact is made, the caseworker is to follow steps 2-6 above to satisfy the requirements of Chapter 113.

Below are additional websites to assist caseworkers in finding parents in local jails, federal prisons and immigration detention facilities:

New York City Department of Correction inmate lookup:

<http://a072-web.nyc.gov/inmatelookup/>

Other county inmate lookups:

[http://www.theinmatelocator.com/New\\_York\\_Inmates\\_Search.html](http://www.theinmatelocator.com/New_York_Inmates_Search.html)

Federal Bureau of Prisons inmate lookup:

<http://www.bop.gov/iloc2/LocateInmate.jsp>

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement inmate lookup:

<https://locator.ice.gov/odls/homePage.do>

## **V. System Implications**

There are no system implications at this time. It should be noted that CONNECTIONS HELP has not been updated to add incarceration or placement in residential substance abuse treatment as possible exceptions for filing a TPR.



**VI. Contact Information**

Any questions concerning this release should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office, Division of Child Welfare and Community Services:

Buffalo Regional Office- Dana Whitcomb (716) 847-3145

[Dana.Whitcomb@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Dana.Whitcomb@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Rochester Regional Office- Karen Buck (585) 238-8200

[Karen.Buck@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Karen.Buck@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Syracuse Regional Office- Jack Klump (315) 423-1200

[Jack.Klump@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Jack.Klump@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Albany Regional Office- Kerri Barber (518) 486-7078

[Kerri.Barber@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Kerri.Barber@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Spring Valley Regional Office- Patricia Sheehy (845) 708-2499

[Patricia.Sheehy@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Patricia.Sheehy@ocfs.state.ny.us)

New York City Regional Office- Patricia Beresford (212) 383-1788

[Patricia.Beresford@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Patricia.Beresford@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Native American Services- Kim Thomas (716) 847-3123

[Kim.Thomas@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Kim.Thomas@ocfs.state.ny.us)

Any questions concerning this release as it pertains to parents in OCFS custody should be directed to the OCFS Juvenile Justice Unit in the Division of Legal Affairs:

Kristen Northrup, Senior Attorney (518) 402-6723

[Kristen.Northrup@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:Kristen.Northrup@ocfs.state.ny.us)

**VII. Effective Date**

Chapter 113 was effective on June 15, 2010 and this ADM is effective immediately.

*/s/ Nancy W. Martinez*

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**Issued By:**

Name: Nancy W. Martinez

Title: Director

Division/Office: Strategic Planning and Policy Development

**CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CHILDREN  
AND THEIR INCARCERATED  
PARENTS:  
HOW TO NAVIGATE THE NEW YORK  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

**Commissioner**

**Brian Fischer**

**Acting Deputy Commissioner of  
Programs**

**Catherine M. Jacobsen**



# Learning Objective

- Participants will learn how to set up and conduct visits for children in foster care who have a parent who is incarcerated.
- Participants will learn the policies, guidelines and recommendations on how to set up and conduct successful foster care visits within the NYS Department of Correctional Services.
- Participants will learn the importance of connectivity of family and friends within the NYSDOCS



# About the NYS Department of Correctional Services

The New York State Department of Correctional Services is guided by the Departmental Mission and is responsible for the confinement and habilitation of approximately **57,000** inmates held at **67** state correctional facilities plus the 916-bed Willard Drug Treatment Campus.

# MISSION STATEMENT of NYS DOCS

Enhance public safety by providing appropriate treatment services, in safe and secure facilities, that address the needs of all inmates so they can return to their communities better prepared to lead successful and crime-free lives.

## ■ Goals

- Create and maintain an atmosphere where both inmates and staff feel secure.
- Develop and implement positive individualized treatment plans for each inmate.
- Teach inmates the need for discipline and respect, and the importance of a mature understanding of a work ethic.
- Assist staff by providing the training and tools needed to perform their duties while enhancing their skills.
- Offer career development opportunities for all staff.

# MISSION STATEMENT of NYS DOCS (con't)

## ■ Values

- Operate with ethical behavior.
- Recognize the value of each person.
- Protect human dignity.
- Offer leadership and support to all.
- Offer respect and structure at all times.

## ■ Policies

- Offer opportunities for inmates to improve all their skills, and to receive individual treatment services, based on their ability and willingness to participate.
- Provide appropriate medical and psychiatric services necessary to those requiring such treatment so each inmate can maximize his/her own rehabilitation.
- Establish a structured environment that fosters respect through disciplined learning.
- **Enhance positive relationships by providing opportunities for interaction between inmates and their families.**

# UNDERSTANDING THE NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

- The New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) is headed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. The Commissioner is responsible for the overall management and operation of the New York State Department of Correctional Services to ensure the safe, humane incarceration of adult and young adult offenders committed by the judicial system to our custody.
  
- Every correctional facility has an administration usually comprised of:
  - Superintendent,
  - Deputy Superintendents for Security, Programs, and Administration
    - Security staff consisting of Captains, Lieutenants, Sergeants, and Correction Officers.
  
- There are also a myriad of Program and Administrative staff from the civilian ranks including:
  - Correction Counselors and Supervising Correction Counselors
  - Teachers, Education Supervisors and Recreation Program Leaders
  - Chaplains, Institution Stewards, Nurses and Principal Account Clerks
  - Maintenance Supervisors, Plant Utilities Engineers, Food Service Administrators, Stores Clerks, and others

# Connectivity

Connectivity - maintaining ties between family and friends while incarcerated. The Department of Corrections has established clear policies regarding all of these forms of contact.

Contact between incarcerated individuals, friends and their family can take place in 3 ways:

1. Visitation which is actual visits to the correctional facility



2. Phone Calls (Collect)



3. Letter writing





# NYSDOCS Family Connectivity Programs

- **The Family Reunion Program** provides approved inmates and their families the opportunity to meet for a designated period of time in a private home-like setting.
- **The Family Visiting (Free Bus) Program** provides family members and significant others with free transportation to various facilities for visitation. Trips are scheduled every two or three months. ( This program is currently suspended 1/31/2011)
- **Visitor Hospitality Centers** are located at thirty-eight of our facilities to accommodate incoming and departing visitors.
- **Children's Play Areas** are located in, or adjacent to, our Visiting Rooms and offer the opportunity for incarcerated parents to interact with their children in a positive and healthy way.
- **Nursery Program** allows a pregnant incarcerated individual (who met the criteria) an opportunity to give birth and keep her baby with her up to one year in a facility nursery. An extension is possible up to 18 months if mothers release is pending.

# NYSDOCS Family Connectivity Programs

- **Temporary Release Programs** allow incarcerated individuals who are within two years of their earliest release date to become reintegrated back into their families and communities on a gradual basis.
- **Parenting Programs** vary in length and content but are in place to enhance the knowledge and skills of incarcerated individuals to foster better relationships with their children and other family members.
- **Reading Programs** allows incarcerated individuals to communicate with their children by reading a book onto a tape and sending the book and tape to their children.
- **Tele-visiting** is a live and interactive virtual visit at select facilities where families and incarcerated individuals are brought together using videoconferencing technology. This service is available for families living in the New York City area.
- **Foster Care Visits** assists in strengthening family ties. Facilities accommodate special visits arranged through CHIPP, foster care agencies and county Departments of Social Services.

# Challenges to Maintaining Connectivity

- Distance from Residence
- Transportation Issues
- Family/Caregiver Issues
- Lack of Awareness of Incarceration
- Personal Decision
- Financial Hardships
- Orders of Protection

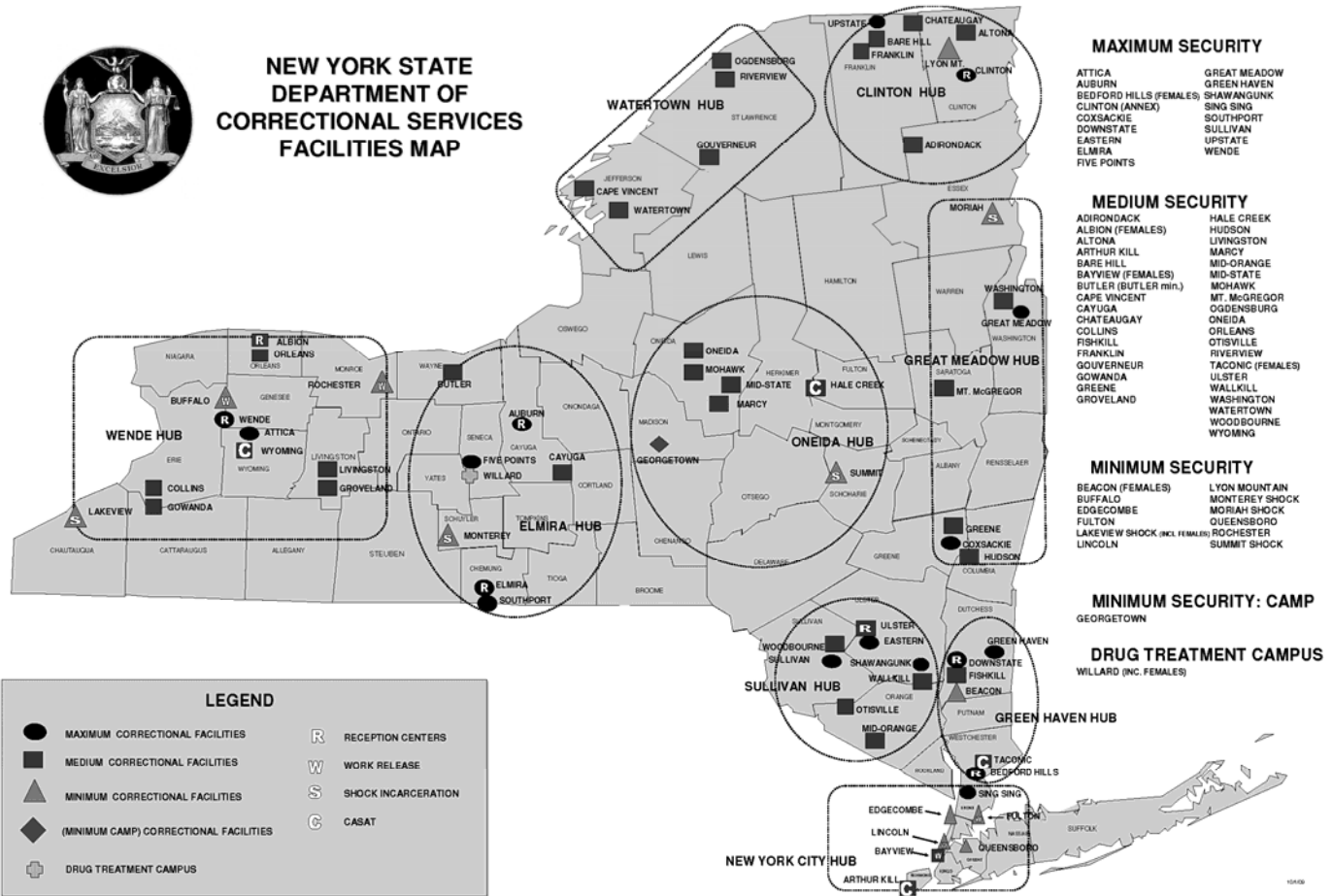
# LOCATING AN INMATE

- A Department Identification Number (DIN) is assigned to each inmate admitted to the New York State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS). It is an internal number used as an identifier for the inmate while he/she is in the custody of the Department. This number can be used to locate your loved one, and you need to know this number. If you do not know this number, you may find it by using our [online Inmate Lookup service](#).
- You will need to know the inmate's complete name and birth date for a successful search. Incarcerated individuals can also be located by calling the DOCS Central Office at (518) 457-5000 during normal business hours.
- An example of a Din is : *99 r 1234* or *99 g 1234*

# State Facilities



## NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES FACILITIES MAP



### LEGEND

- |   |  |   |                     |
|---|--|---|---------------------|
| ● | MAXIMUM CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES        | R | RECEPTION CENTERS   |
| ■ | MEDIUM CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES         | W | WORK RELEASE        |
| ▲ | MINIMUM CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES        | S | SHOCK INCARCERATION |
| ◆ | (MINIMUM CAMP) CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES | C | CASAT               |
| + | DRUG TREATMENT CAMPUS                  |   |                     |

# VISITOR CHECKLIST

- ✓ Confirm that the inmate has not been transferred and has visitation privileges.
- ✓ Bring valid Picture Identification (ID).
- ✓ If you have made special arrangements with the facility, call before leaving to be sure that plans for your visit have been made and are in place.
- ✓ Check clothing and jewelry for compliance with visiting regulations.
- ✓ If you are bringing a child and you are not the legal guardian or parent, you must have the notarized statement from the child's parent or legal guardian with you.
- ✓ Before leaving home, check your vehicle for contraband and/or hazardous items. This includes, but is not limited to, implements of escape, drug paraphernalia, intoxicants, poisons, any items that pose a danger to others, weapons, such as knives, scissors, or firearms, and any item used to show a gang affiliation. Remove these items before entering the correctional facility grounds.
- ✓ Arrive on the designated day during proper visiting hours.
- ✓ All Visitors must clear a metal detector search.
- ✓ Leave purses, wallets, and electronic devices in your car - either in the glove compartment, or in the trunk. Be sure to lock your car!
- ✓ Do not leave any minor children waiting in the car or your visit will be ended.
- ✓ Remember to treat correctional staff with respect.
- ✓ Do not have any contraband on you when you enter the facility.
- ✓ Do not bring anything into the visiting room to give to the inmate. Inmates are not permitted to take anything from the visiting area.

# Welcome

- The New York State Department of Correctional Services welcomes family members and friends to visit their loved ones at any of our correctional facilities. It is the intent of the Department of Correctional Services to maintain visiting programs that help incarcerated individuals strengthen and preserve positive ties with family and friends.
- Visitation is not only encouraged because it helps support the individual while incarcerated, but it also provides a basis of support for the incarcerated person's return to the community.

# What is a Foster Care Visit?

- A foster care visit is a visit designed to promote connectivity between an incarcerated individual and their child who is in the foster care system.



# How is Foster Care visitation **different** from General Visitation ?

- It requires advance preparation
- A gate clearance is generated
- It can occur at times when general visitation is not in effect
- Expediency in regards to processing time

# How to set up a foster care visit

- The social worker should call and verify the location of the incarcerated parent.
- The process should commence at least **1** month in advance for proper processing if time permits.
- The social worker or agency representative must put the request in writing to the Superintendent.

# Setting up the visit



- The letter should include the following information:
- The name of the incarcerated individual
- And their Department Identification Number
- The name of the social worker and the agency being represented
- The children's names and ages

# NYS DOCS WEBSITE TUTORIAL

- Our website has a plethora of information regarding the incarcerated individual, policies and directives, as well as a comprehensive guide for families and friends to gain a greater understanding of the operations of this agency.
- Please feel free to review other screens not listed below to learn who and what we are about!

[www.docs.state.ny.us](http://www.docs.state.ny.us)

# Department of Correctional Services

This is the Home Page for NYS DOCS

Click

- About DOCS
- DOCS Home Page**
- Find a Facility
- Contact DOCS
- Inmate Info**
- Inmate Lookup
- Inmate Info
- Family Guide
- Guía para la Familia
- Program Services
- Victim Services**
- Victim Services
- Servicios Víctima
- News**
- News Room
- Reports/Publications
- Jobs Available
- Directives
- Rules & Regulations
- Contracts

## About DOCS

The New York State Department of Correctional Services, guided by the [Departmental Mission](#), is responsible for the confinement and habilitation of approximately 57,000 offenders held at 67 state [facilities](#) including the 915 bed Willard Drug Treatment Campus.

### Commissioner Testifies on 2011-12 Executive Budget

Commissioner Brian Fischer appeared at the public hearing on the Public Protection portion of the 2011-12 Executive Budget, held by the State Legislature's fiscal committees on February 9, 2011, and presented [testimony](#) on the Department of Correctional Services' proposed budget for the fiscal year that begins April 1, 2011.

### Use it or Lose it Deadline Approaching

Employees enrolled in the Flex Spending Account for the 2010 plan year have until March 31, 2011 to send in reimbursement requests for eligible expenses incurred under the Health Care Spending Account and the Dependent Care Advantage Account. For more information, log onto [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov) or call 1-800-358-7202.

### Commissioner Fischer Receives Bar Association Award for Correctional Contribution



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor



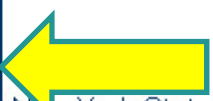
Brian Fischer  
Commissioner

- Biography
- Testimony
- Speeches

# Department of Correctional Services

This link provides a listing of all of the facilities, their addresses, phone numbers, security level and a link to MAPQUEST for each facility.

- About DOCS
- DOCS Home Page
- Find a Facility
- Contact DOCS
- Inmate Info
- Inmate Lookup
- Inmate Info
- Family Guide
- Guía para la Familia
- Program Services
- Victim Services
- Victim Services
- Servicios Víctima
- News
- News Room
- Reports/Publications
- Jobs Available
- Directives
- Rules & Regulations
- Contracts



Click

## Facility Listing

New York State Correctional Facilities are located across the state as depicted in the [maps of prison locations](#). The following list provides the phone number, mailing address, security level, and links to MapQuest\* for each correctional facility within the department. Facilities are listed alphabetically. To locate a specific facility, scroll down or use the index below.

Index: [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [L](#) [M](#) [O](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [W](#)

**MAPQUEST.**

Address & Phone Number	Security Level	Male / Female	Maps & Driving Directions
<b>Adirondack Correctional Facility</b> 196 Ray Brook Road P.O. Box 110 Ray Brook, New York 12977-0110 (518) 891-1343 (Essex County)	Medium	Male	<a href="#">Map</a> <a href="#">Driving Directions</a>
<b>Albion Correctional Facility</b> 3595 State School Road Albion, New York 14411-9399 (585) 589-5511 (Orleans County)	Medium	Female	<a href="#">Map</a> <a href="#">Driving Directions</a>
<b>Albany Correctional Facility</b> ...	Medium	Male	<a href="#">Map</a>

# Department of Correctional Services

This link provides information on how to contact the NYSDOCS

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## Contact Information

When contacting us, you may want to utilize the [Inmate Lookup](#) to obtain available information regarding inmates.

**NYS Department of Correctional Services is not responsible for inmates housed in county correctional facilities or local police lockups.** For information on inmates housed in local facilities, please contact the [county facility or law enforcement department](#).

To contact us online, please complete our [Contact Us form](#). Note that we will be unable to process incomplete or inaccurate entries.

Online requests for records pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law must be made using our [New York State Freedom of Information Law Request form](#). You may also submit your request in writing to the address below, attention FOIL Unit.

**Mailing Address:**  
NYS Department of Correctional Services  
Building 2  
1220 Washington Ave  
Albany, New York 12226-2050

**Phone:** (518) 457-8126

# Department of Correctional Services

Google Custom Search Search

This link provides specific information on each inmate including location, crime, sentence and county of commitment.

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## Inmate Population Information Search

Please specify one or more of the following:

- Use Name alone or in combination with birth year. [More on Name Search](#)
- DIN or NYSID are meant to be used alone - not in combination with name or birth year. [More Detailed Instructions](#)



[Who's Listed Here?](#) | [About Youthful Offenders](#) | [Hours of Operation for Inmate Lookup](#)

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Init:

Name Suffix:  (SR, JR, etc.)

Birth Year:  (Optional, see above)

DIN:  -  -  (Department ID Number, format 99-A-9999, example 95-A-9876)

NYSID:  -  (For Criminal Justice Use Only, New York State ID Number)

Submit Reset



http://www.doccs.state.ny.us/inmateinfo.html

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

★ Favorites Suggested Sites

NYS DOCS Inmate Information»NYS Department of Correctional ...

New York State State Agencies

This link provides information, about the inmate, specific policies about communication and sending mail/packages.

# Department of Correctional Services

Google Custom Search Search

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## Inmate Information

**Inmate Lookup**  
Click 



Inmate information is available from the [Inmate Lookup](#) capability which is generally available 24 hours a day 15 minute period every night beginning at approximately 11:45pm (Eastern time zone). This brief outage is needed to allow necessary maintenance activities.

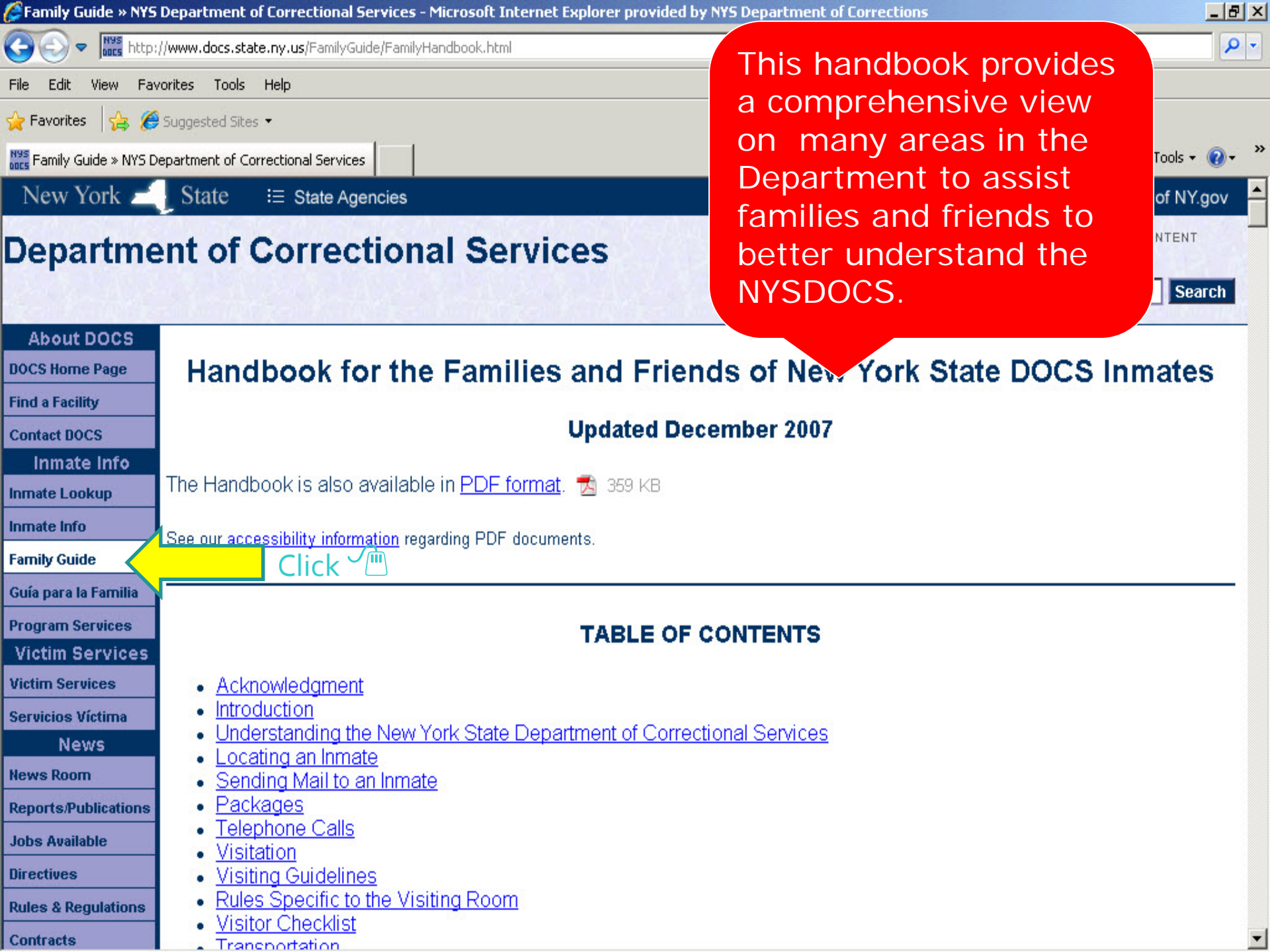
In addition, the Inmate Lookup is unavailable from 11:30pm Saturday to approximately 12:30am Sunday (Eastern time zone) due to scheduled server maintenance.

**Note** - Executive Law Section 296(15) and Correction Law Section 752 in pertinent part provide that no application for any license or employment shall be denied by reason of the applicant's having previously been convicted of one or more criminal offenses unless:

1. there is a direct relationship between one or more of the previous criminal offenses and the specific license or employment sought; or
2. the issuance of the license or the granting of the employment would involve an unreasonable risk to property or to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the general public.

### Sending Mail to Inmates

Mail for inmates should be sent to the mailing address found in the list of state [correctional facilities](#). The first line of the address on the envelope should contain the inmate's name and Department Identification Number(DIN). Rules governing



This handbook provides a comprehensive view on many areas in the Department to assist families and friends to better understand the NYSDOCS.

## Handbook for the Families and Friends of New York State DOCS Inmates

Updated December 2007

The Handbook is also available in [PDF format](#).  359 KB

See our [accessibility information](#) regarding PDF documents.

Click 

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- [Acknowledgment](#)
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- [Understanding the New York State Department of Correctional Services](#)
- [Locating an Inmate](#)
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# Department of Correctional Services

This page provides information on the myriad of programs offered within the Department . Click on the program units to gain specific information on programs and the facilities where offered.

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## Program Services

The Department offers an extensive array of programs and services for inmates to re-direct their lives and become productive, law-abiding members of society. Programs include educational and vocational training, substance abuse treatment, parenting skills, anger management, domestic violence counseling, health education, sex offender treatment, religious services, and many more.

### Program Units:

- [Correctional Industries](#)
- [Education \(Academic\)](#)
- [Education \(Vocational\)](#)
- [Guidance and Counseling](#)
- [Division of Hispanic and Cultural Affairs](#)
- [Library Services](#)
- [Ministerial, Family and Volunteer Services](#)
- [Resource Management](#)
- [Special Subjects](#)
- [Substance Abuse Treatment Services](#)
- [Temporary Release](#)
- [Transitional Services Program](#)

[Alphabetical Listing of Programs](#)

[Programs by Facility](#)



Click

# Department of Correctional Services

This page provides a list of programs and services that the Division of Ministerial, Family, and Volunteer Services offers and are more focused on the family.

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## Ministerial, Family and Volunteer Services

### PROGRAMS

- [Children's Play Areas](#)
- [Family Reunion Program](#)
- [Family Services Programs](#)
- [Family Visiting \(Free Bus\) Program](#)
- [Ministerial Services](#)
- [Visitor Hospitality Centers](#)
- [Volunteer Services Programs](#)

### CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

#### Description

Children's Play Areas are a separate part of the Visiting Room where the inmate and family members can go with their child to play with a variety of toys, puzzles or watch a video. This area of the Visiting Room is meant for the inmate to share some time with his/her child or children.

# Thank You

For additional information about this presentation, please contact:

Division of Ministerial, Family & Volunteer Services  
NYS Department of Correctional Services  
Harriman State Campus- Building 2  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12226-2050  
(518) 402-1700



## You don't have to stop being a parent while you are incarcerated.

### You have the right to:

**Help find an appropriate person, such as a friend or relative, to care for your child.**

If this person needs financial or other assistance, he/she can apply for a "child only" temporary assistance grant or to become certified or approved as a foster parent for your child. If you are unable to make such an arrangement, your child will be placed with a foster parent or in another setting, such as a group home.

**Be informed about the foster care agency responsible for your child's care,** the name of your child's caseworker, and how to contact the caseworker and his/her supervisor. You should be notified in a timely manner if your child's caseworker changes.

**Know how to reach your family caseworker,** if that person is different from your child's caseworker.

**Participate in permanency planning for your child** (see reverse side).

**Take advantage of services** to help you address the issues that led to your child's placement in foster care (parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, etc.).

**Participate in meetings about your Family Service Plan** (see reverse side).

**Get information about family visiting** and other services that can help you build a meaningful relationship with your child while you are incarcerated and after your release.

**Visit with your child** unless the court orders otherwise. Ask about video/teleconferencing if in-person visits are not possible. If you are not having regular visits with your child or you are dissatisfied with your visits, contact your child's caseworker, his/her supervisor, or your attorney.

**Be kept up to date on your child's health and development** and his/her progress in school.

**Be assigned an attorney** to represent you in your child's Family Court case, if you are financially eligible. Speak with your attorney if you have any issues with the foster care agency or the court. Your attorney is your advocate and should keep you informed about your case.

**Attend Family Court proceedings.** If you know of an upcoming court date, talk to your attorney, caseworker, and corrections counselor about making arrangements for you to attend court.

## What is termination of parental rights?

Termination of parental rights (TPR) ends the legal relationship between a parent and child and frees the child to be adopted.

A petition to terminate parental rights can be filed for a number of reasons described in New York State Social Services Law 384-b. For example, when a child has been in foster care for six months or more and the parent has had no significant contact with the child, the foster care agency, or the social services agency, the agency can file a TPR for abandonment.

If a child is in foster care for 12 consecutive months or 15 of the most recent 22 months and the parent has failed either to maintain contact with the child or to plan for the child's future, the agency can file a TPR for permanent neglect if it has made diligent efforts to work with the parent. The agency does not have to make these efforts if the parent moves and fails to provide new contact information to the agency.

The law allows the agency to decide **not** to file a TPR for a number of reasons: that the child is living with a relative foster parent, that there is a compelling reason why TPR is not in the child's best interests, and that the parent is incarcerated or in a residential substance abuse treatment program and has maintained a meaningful role in the child's life. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with a focus on the best interests of the child.

You can help keep your parental rights by:

- Arranging for an appropriate friend or relative to care for your child while you are incarcerated.
- Staying in touch with your child, your child's caseworker, and your attorney.
- Attending planning meetings and court proceedings.
- Visiting with your child as often as possible.

## If your child is in foster care, you have the responsibility to:

**Make regular contact with your child.** Although this can be difficult while you are incarcerated, you are expected to make efforts to communicate with your child unless there is a court order prohibiting such contact. Even if that is the case, you should stay in contact with the agency caseworker. You must be able to show your caseworker and the judge that you have made every effort to stay in contact with your child and/or the foster care agency caseworker. It is a good idea to:

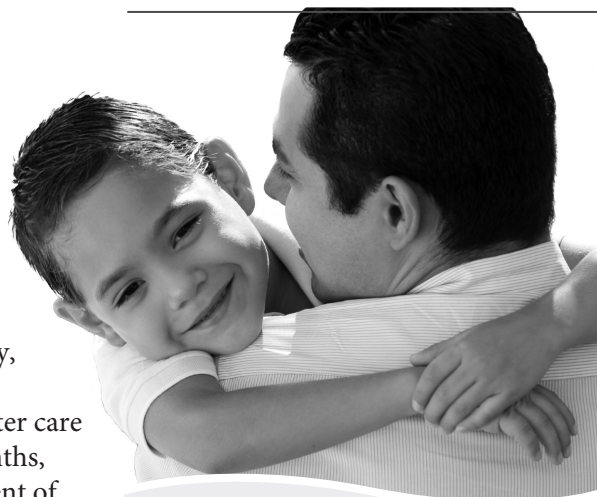
- Keep all the papers you receive about your case.
- Keep a list of all scheduled visits with your child (even if they didn't happen).
- Document all the phone calls you make to the caseworker, your child, and your child's caregiver (even if you left a message or no one answered the phone).
- Make a copy of every letter, birthday card, or other mail you send your child.

**Show that you are planning for your child's future.** Find someone to care for your child while you are away.

**Stay in touch with your child's caseworker, your family caseworker, and your attorney.** Notify the foster care agency if you are released, you are transferred to another facility, or your address changes. If you haven't had contact with the foster care agency or your child for six months, it can be considered abandonment of your child and a petition could be filed to terminate your parental rights.

**Complete any programs your Family Service Plan requires.** Work with the foster care agency to finish the goals stated in your Family Service Plan (see box below).

**Participate in Family Court proceedings.** Contact your attorney if you have questions or concerns and arrange to talk before every court date. Make sure your attorney has copies of any documents relevant to your service plan or to the case. If you can't go to court for an important reason (such as seeing the parole board), notify your attorney, your caseworker, and the judge.



### What is permanency planning?

In general, foster care is a temporary arrangement – permanency is a primary goal for every child in foster care. Possible permanency goals for a child include:

- Return to parent(s).
- Referral for legal guardianship with a relative. This may include participation in the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program.
- Permanent placement with a fit and willing relative or other suitable person.
- Surrender of parental rights or termination of parental rights and placement for adoption.
- Another permanent, planned living arrangement with a significant connection to an adult. This goal may be appropriate for an older child who is ready to live independently.

### What is a Family Service Plan?

The Family Service Plan outlines your child's permanency goal and the services required to achieve that goal. The plan should include steps you are expected to take to achieve that goal.

- Your plan should take into account the special challenges facing you and your family due to your incarceration.
- You have a right to participate in regular Service Plan Reviews (SPRs). SPRs begin 60 to 90 days after the child is placed in foster care and are held every six months thereafter. If you can't be there in person, you can participate via phone or videoconference, if available. This can be arranged through your corrections counselor and foster care agency caseworker.
- You should receive two weeks' notice when SPRs are scheduled and you should get a copy of the Family Service Plan within 30 days after the SPR.



New York State  
Office of  
Children &  
Family Services

[www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us)



## You don't have to stop being a parent while you are in a residential substance abuse treatment facility.

### You have the right to:

**Help find an appropriate person, such as a friend or relative, to care for your child.** If this person needs financial or other assistance, he/she can apply for a “child only” temporary assistance grant or to become certified or approved as a foster parent for your child. If you are unable to make such an arrangement, your child will be placed with a foster parent or in another setting, such as a group home.

**Be informed about the foster care agency responsible for your child's care,** the name of your child's caseworker, and how to contact the caseworker and his/her supervisor. You should be notified in a timely manner if your child's caseworker changes.

**Know how to reach your family caseworker,** if that person is different from your child's caseworker.

**Participate in permanency planning for your child** (see reverse side).

**Take advantage of services** to help you address the issues that led to your child's placement in foster care (parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, etc.).

**Participate in meetings about your Family Service Plan** (see reverse side).

**Get information about family visiting** and other services that can help you build a meaningful relationship with your child while you are in treatment and after your release.

**Visit with your child** unless the court orders otherwise. Ask about video/teleconferencing if in-person visits are not possible. If you are not having regular visits with your child or you are dissatisfied with your visits, contact your child's caseworker, his/her supervisor, or your attorney.

**Be kept up to date on your child's health and development** and his/her progress in school.

**Be assigned an attorney** to represent you in your child's Family Court case, if you are financially eligible. Speak with your attorney if you have any issues with the foster care agency or the court. Your attorney is your advocate and should keep you informed about your case.

**Attend Family Court proceedings.** If you know of an upcoming court date, talk to your attorney, caseworker, and treatment provider about making arrangements for you to attend court.

## What is termination of parental rights?

Termination of parental rights (TPR) ends the legal relationship between a parent and child and frees the child to be adopted.

A petition to terminate parental rights can be filed for a number of reasons described in New York State Social Services Law 384-b. For example, when a child has been in foster care for six months or more and the parent has had no significant contact with the child, the foster care agency, or the social services agency, the agency can file a TPR for abandonment.

If a child is in foster care for 12 consecutive months or 15 of the most recent 22 months and the parent has failed either to maintain contact with the child or to plan for the child's future, the agency can file a TPR for permanent neglect if it has made diligent efforts to work with the parent. The agency does not have to make these efforts if the parent moves and fails to provide new contact information to the agency.

The law allows the agency to decide **not** to file a TPR for a number of reasons: that the child is living with a relative foster parent, that there is a compelling reason why TPR is not in the child's best interests, and that the parent is incarcerated or in a residential substance abuse treatment program and has maintained a meaningful role in the child's life. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, with a focus on the best interests of the child.

You can help keep your parental rights by:

- Arranging for an appropriate friend or relative to care for your child while you are in treatment.
- Staying in touch with your child, your child's caseworker, and your attorney.
- Attending planning meetings and court proceedings.
- Visiting with your child as often as possible.



## If your child is in foster care, you have the responsibility to:

**Make regular contact with your child.** Although this can be difficult while you are in a residential treatment program, you are expected to make efforts to communicate with your child unless there is a court order prohibiting such contact. Even if that is the case, you should stay in contact with the agency caseworker. You must be able to show your caseworker and the judge that you have made every effort to stay in contact with your child and/or the foster care agency caseworker. It is a good idea to:

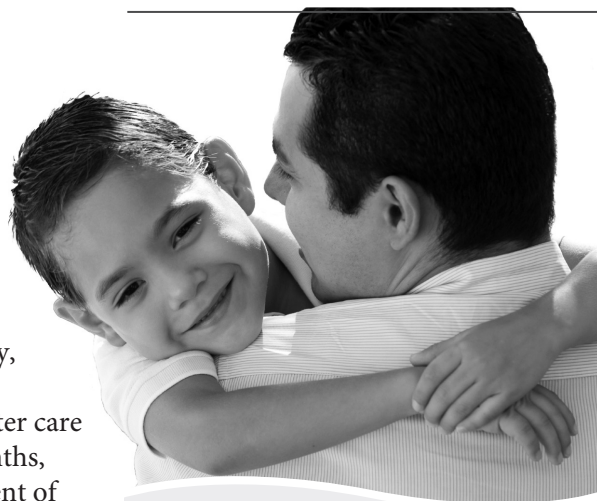
- Keep all the papers you receive about your case.
- Keep a list of all scheduled visits with your child (even if they didn't happen).
- Document all the phone calls you make to the caseworker, your child, and your child's caregiver (even if you left a message or no one answered the phone).
- Make a copy of every letter, birthday card, or other mail you send your child.

**Show that you are planning for your child's future.** Find someone to care for your child while you are away.

**Stay in touch with your child's caseworker, your family caseworker, and your attorney.** Notify the foster care agency if you are released, you are transferred to another facility, or your address changes. If you haven't had contact with the foster care agency or your child for six months, it can be considered abandonment of your child and a petition could be filed to terminate your parental rights.

**Complete any programs your Family Service Plan requires.** Work with the foster care agency to finish the goals stated in your Family Service Plan (see box below).

**Participate in Family Court proceedings.** Contact your attorney if you have questions or concerns and arrange to talk before every court date. Make sure your attorney has copies of any documents relevant to your service plan or to the case. If you can't go to court for an important reason, notify your attorney, your caseworker, and the judge.



### What is permanency planning?

In general, foster care is a temporary arrangement – permanency is a primary goal for every child in foster care. Possible permanency goals for a child include:

- Return to parent(s).
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- Surrender of parental rights or termination of parental rights and placement for adoption.
- Another permanent, planned living arrangement with a significant connection to an adult. This goal may be appropriate for an older child who is ready to live independently.

### What is a Family Service Plan?

The Family Service Plan outlines your child's permanency goal and the services required to achieve that goal. The plan should include steps you are expected to take to achieve that goal.

- Your plan should take into account the special challenges facing you and your family due to your placement in a residential substance abuse treatment facility.
- You have a right to participate in regular Service Plan Reviews (SPRs). SPRs begin 60 to 90 days after the child is placed in foster care and are held every six months thereafter. If you can't be there in person, you can participate via phone or videoconference, if available. This can be arranged through your treatment provider and foster care agency caseworker.
- You should receive two weeks' notice when SPRs are scheduled and you should get a copy of the Family Service Plan within 30 days after the SPR.



New York State  
Office of  
Children &  
Family Services

[www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us)

**Authorization for Release and Disclosure of Confidential Records, including  
Mental Health Records, Alcohol and/or Drug Treatment Patient Records and  
Correctional Facility Records**

I \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby authorize staff from

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of substance abuse treatment facility, correctional facility or OCFS facility)

to provide information to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name and Address of Agency, City, State, Zip Code)

I understand that information pertaining to my attendance and progress in alcohol and other drug treatment is protected by Federal Regulation 42 CFR, Part 2 "Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records", as well as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA@) 45 C.F.R. Pts. 160 & 164); and cannot be disclosed without my written consent unless otherwise provided for in law. I willingly and voluntarily authorize the above named agency to disclose information regarding my treatment history, current and previous substance abuse history, and current need for treatment to the staff of the agency listed above.

I understand that information pertaining to my mental health status, including diagnosis and treatment, is protected by NYS Mental Hygiene Law 33 and CPLR 4507-4508 and cannot be disclosed without my written authorization unless otherwise provided for in law. I willingly and voluntarily authorize that information pertaining to my participation in mental health treatment and other programs and services associated with my incarceration or residential treatment may be disclosed to the staff of the agency listed above.

I understand that the purpose and need to disclose the above information is to assist the agency named above in the development of a family service plan for me and my child(ren) and to monitor my progress in programs and services.

**Please check below if you wish these additional authorizations to apply:**

I authorize the above-named social services/foster care agency to share information regarding me and my child(ren) with the above-named treatment agency or correctional facility to assist in the development of my treatment plan. My consent for release of such information is limited to this purpose.

I authorize the above-named social services/foster care agency to share my treatment information to the \_\_\_\_\_ Family Court for the purpose of informing the court of my progress and to explain if I am temporarily unavailable for other services.

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time except to the extent that action has been taken in reliance on it. I understand that the recipients of this information may not re-disclose it except as provided for in this document or as authorized by law.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Client) (DOB) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Witness) (Date)

Revoked on \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Signature of Client)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Witness)