Ethics in Action: Responding to a Crisis for Children

Over two million children have a parent who is currently incarcerated in the United States. Rikers Island, New York City’s largest jail, houses over 14,000 people, the majority of whom are parents. In most cases, children will benefit from ongoing contact with an incarcerated parent. Although they are currently separated, they still love and miss their parent.

Research shows—

A healthy connection with a parent may:

- Prevent or reduce a child’s behavioral, emotional, or school problems
- Lessen separation trauma and preserve a child’s secure attachment
- Promote a healthier family transition after release

Televisiting provides opportunities to:

- Reassure and comfort children during separation from a parent
- Strengthen and maintain a healthy parent-child relationship
- Read together, play games, & create art
- Celebrate special moments and milestones together

Supportive Televisiting Services is Supported by

The New York Society for Ethical Culture

NYSEC has worked for more than 130 years, to put Ethics into Action through its SSB affiliate, incorporated as United Social Services, Inc. It hosted a on-site, in-person visiting program for children of court-mandated non-custodial parents for 24 years.

The Social Service Board

SSB today is dedicated to helping the most vulnerable members of our community by supporting empowering programs across the lifespan, including Empowering Ethical Elders, La Liga Youth Soccer Program, the Creative Arts Success Academy, Dr. Maria Friedman Women’s Shelter, an Online Educational Exhibit of the 1911 First Universal Races Congress. SSB is affiliated with the All Healers Mental Health Alliance and the Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York & Associates.

Be The Evidence Project, Fordham University

BTEP provides social justice-related technical assistance, program development, and evaluation.

Cisco/Tandberg Systems

Cisco generously provides equipment to NYSEC/SSB

The Osborne Association

The Osborne Association is a NY-based non-profit that provides family, employment, education, and treatment services to individuals, families, and children affected by crime and incarceration.

How Can I Help?

To learn more, call us at (212) 874-5210 x143 televisiting@socialserviceboard.org

Support the Supportive Televisiting Program

Putting Our Ethics into Action
Supportive Televisiting Services

The Social Service Board at NYSEC offers innovative Supportive Televisiting Services which enable children who are separated from their parent to video-visit through secure, live video and audio in a child-friendly space conveniently located in Manhattan on Central Park West and 64th Street.

Our concern for children with incarcerated parents

Televisits supplement face-to-face visits between a child and a parent. They empower children by increasing their opportunities to spend meaningful time with a parent. They empower parents by affording them opportunities to interact with their children in more consistent and active ways with support from a televisiting specialist.

How Supportive Televisits Work

- Staff visits correctional facilities to introduce televisiting, conduct screening, and select parent-participants.
- Contact is made with child’s caregiver to establish eligibility for participation.
- Once enrolled, the first televisits are scheduled. The child comes to our televisiting room and the parent will be on a big screen television!

Supportive Televisiting is expanding to connect more children with their mother or father. We currently provide services at:

NYC Department of Correction
- Rikers Island
- Brooklyn House of Detention
- Manhattan Detention Complex

NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
- Albion Correctional Facility
- Clinton Correctional Facility

Federal Bureau of Prisons (2014)
- Metropolitan Detention Center, Brooklyn

Televisiting Rooms
- Manhattan
- New York Society for Ethical Culture
- 2 West 64th Street at Central Park West, 10023
- Brooklyn
- The Osborne Association
- 175 Remsen Street, Suite 800, 11201

Special Resources

Televisits between children and their parents are enriched by special resources made possible by collaborative partners. Current partnerships:

- New York & Brooklyn Public Libraries’ Daddy & Me, Mommy & Me Workshops
- Sesame Workshop’s Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration Kits
- Carnegie Hall’s Lullaby Project for children and moms and our collaborative associate
- The Osborne Association of New York

Other Services

Televisiting enables Social Service Board to offer these additional services:

- Friendly televisits for home-bound Seniors
- Caring committee calls for NYSEC Members unable to attend programs
- Low-fee, private Televisiting Services
- TeleBirthdayParties

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SocialServiceBoard.org/Televisiting