

Framingham for Welfare fraud. She was collecting checks from Maine and New Hampshire as well as Massachusetts. She is also the mother of a three and a half year old boy with special medical needs that she has been successfully attending to since his birth. From all reports he is a loving, well adjusted child and he and his mother enjoy a good relationship.

But even in circumstances where the parent has a troublesome history; where there may be alcohol or drug addiction and where their parenting care may be less than ideal, their children too remain loyal, loving and attached to the parent.

Visits allow the child to see the parent and to be reassured that his mother or father has not abandoned or forgotten him. The child can realize that they remain loved and central to that parent's life.

Second, visits help to allay fear. Children worry about the absent parent. Most children know their parent is in prison^(4,5); indeed incarcerated men and women want their children to know the truth about their situation and prefer to tell the children themselves. If youngsters do not have a chance to visit, they worry and imagine all kinds of terrible things, their imagination being fueled by movies, television and comic books. They worry that their parent is hurt, sick, cold or hungry. They may be convinced that the parent is being beaten or mistreated.

Coming to prison, seeing and talking with the parent, learning first hand that he or she is all right is comforting.

In fact, contrary to what may be anticipated, it is the absence or restriction of visiting that creates anxiety and discomfort.