

While visiting your parent in prison is not easy, it helps a little that you can still see your parent and know they love you.

Hopefully you read this with someone you trust and know that you can ask questions or tell them how you feel.



Florida Office of the State Courts Administrator

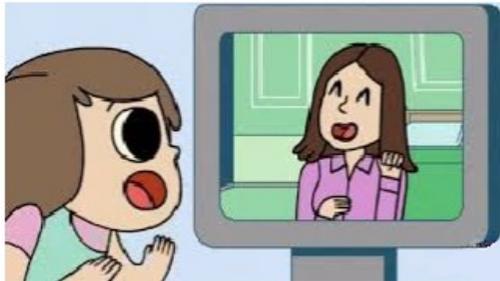
500 S. Duval Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399

“What Will Happen When I Visit My Parent In Prison?”

*Answers to some of the tough questions
kids have, but may not ask.*

My parent is in prison. Will I see my parent again?

Yes, you can see your parent again. Just because they aren't with you right now doesn't mean you won't see them again. Depending on what the rules are where they are, you may get to see them in-person, on the computer, or both.



What if I can't visit?

If you can't visit, it is not because of anything you did or didn't do. Sometimes you can't visit because of paperwork; sometimes it's because your parent feels bad and doesn't want you to see them in prison; sometimes it's because bad things happened and you need to be safe; sometimes it's something else that no one can control.

No matter the reason why, it is not your fault.



What if I get scared or upset?

Tell someone! It's ok to be scared, upset, sad, angry, worried, or even have all of these feelings. It's not ok to keep it inside because that makes you feel worse.

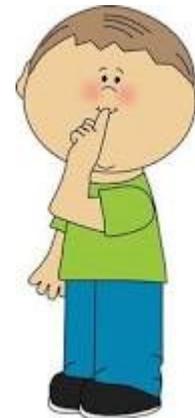
If you tell someone how you are feeling, they can help you if you need it or just give you comfort, like a hug. Sometimes we have questions and don't know the answers. When

you tell someone how you feel, they can answer your questions, which might make you feel better.



How long will it take until I see my parent?

It may take a while. First, there has to be some paperwork. Then, if the prison says the paperwork is good, a visit can be held. Sometimes it takes time for the computer visits to be set up. In-person visits can be done on Saturdays, Sundays, or some holidays. But it may take a long time to drive there and you may have to wait a long time to get in.



Is prison scary?

Prison can look scary. Outside, there is a high fence with sharp curly wire on top. There



may be a high tower. There are a lot of guards in uniforms. Inside, the walls may not be very colorful or have a lot of pictures on them. Everyone

may seem quiet and serious. This is necessary to make sure everyone in the prison and the people who visit them are safe.



What happens when the visit ends?

When it's time to leave you can give your parent a hug and kiss. You will have to wait in the visiting park until your parent leaves the room. Then you will have to walk back out of the building with the adult who brought you.

The good news is that chances are you won't have to go through any searches on the way out (although it could happen). The bad news is that you may feel sad or angry.



What will we do in the visit?

There are games, small toys, and activities to do with your parent. Tell them anything you want to tell them. You can have a snack with your parent if you go to the vending machine.

Whatever you do, make sure you are on your best behavior, because if you don't behave you may have to leave early. But leaving early may also happen if there are a lot of other people waiting their turn for a visit or if your parent says it's time for the visit to be over.



What will happen when I get to the prison?

You and the adult who is taking you to visit your parent will have to leave most of your stuff in the car. Before you can see your parent, you and your adult will have to stop and talk with a guard in uniform who will ask for proof of who you are and ask some questions.

Next, you and your adult will have to walk through a metal detector, which looks like an open doorway. This is to make sure nothing metal is brought into the prison, because it could be used to hurt someone. A guard will be on the other side of the metal detector and will tell you when to walk through.



What happens after I walk through the metal detector?

You and your adult will get a “pat down search.” A pat down search is when a guard pats their hand up and down your body on top your clothes to make sure you aren’t bringing something in the prison that isn’t allowed.

Lastly, you might have to get sniffed by a dog. The dog will be behind a fence and you will stand on the other side of the fence. This special dog can smell if a person has drugs or a cell phone, which aren’t allowed in the prison.



Will my parent look different?

Maybe. Your parent will be wearing blue pants and a blue shirt. They may look a little tired or sad. They may be quiet. But remember, no matter how they look, they still love you.



Will I be able to hug my parent?

Yes! You are able to hug and kiss your parent when you start your visit and right before you leave.

You aren't allowed to bring in anything for your parent, but you are allowed to hold hands on top of the table and may even be allowed to sit on their lap.



What does it look like in prison where I will visit my parent?

It's not pretty. It's a big room with plain walls or a small outdoor area. There are tables with stools attached, like a picnic table or a cafeteria table. There are vending machines if you want to get a snack. This room is called a visiting park.

There is a bathroom outside of the visiting room. An adult will have to go with you to the bathroom because a prison guard will have to do another pat down search on you and your adult to get back into the visitation room.

