



Valuing Families

PbS Data Snapshot October 2023

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Introduction

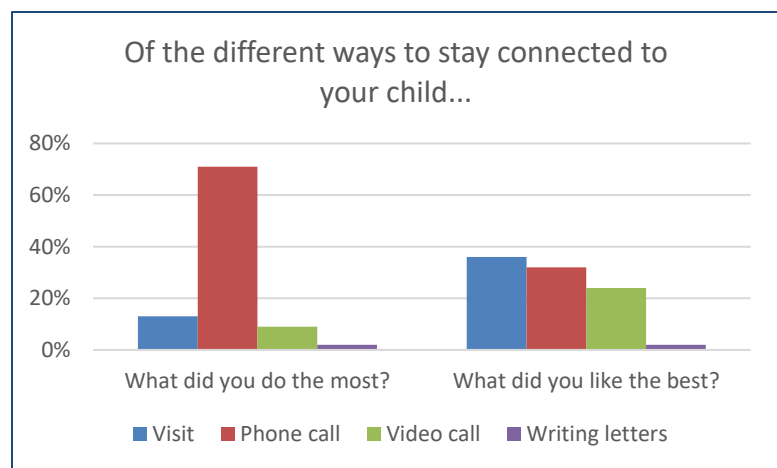
Since the 1970s, juvenile justice practices have been slowly shifting away from excluding and blaming families to increasing opportunities for family members to connect with their children and including family members in treatment and reentry planning. Some agencies opened visitation to seven days a week and helped with transportation, a few offered families a tour and a smaller few routinely solicit family members' input through family councils and/or advisory groups. Agencies participating in the Performance-based Standards (PbS) standards and continuous improvement program survey their families and use the responses to adapt their practices to improve relationships and outcomes for young people and their families.

The efforts around the country received a tremendous boost with recent changes at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice. OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan is embedding the voices and input of both families and young people in the agency, its grant-making process and grantees and as part of the technical assistance offered. Juvenile justice leadership and research agree: We must create environments where the voices of young people and families are heard and respected. Research and experience have identified several practices that bring in those voices and develop partnerships. The PbS Family Survey data presented below tells us how we're doing and what we continue to need to improve.

Keeping Families and their Children Connected

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a re-thinking of how agencies keep young people and their families connected. Visitation was stopped or restricted and video calling was made available and quickly became popular: In April 2023, 24% of family members said video calling was the way they would most like to stay connected with their child. Before COVID, very few family members preferred video calls to visits and phone calls. Visiting continued to be the favorite way for most family members to stay connected to their child (36%) and almost as many preferred phone calls (32%).

However, nearly three-quarters of family members said the primary way they stayed connected to their child was phone calls (71%).





Family members continued to face challenges traveling to see their child. One-third of the family members said they had to travel more than 100 miles and for more than 90 minutes to visit their child; nearly half lived more than 50 miles away and traveled one hour or more. More than half (54%) said they used their own car to travel. The top two ways visiting their children could be made easier were if the facility was located closer to where they live and if they had more flexible job schedules.

Valuing Family Members as Partners

When PbS worked with the Vera Institute of Justice, Family Justice Programs to develop standards for family engagement in 2014, the family members part of our team made it very clear families want to feel valued and that their input was heard and considered. The PbS Family Survey created from that project asks 55 questions about family members’ experiences and takes an estimated 10-15 minutes to complete using the PbS Kiosk. It provides agencies with feedback on the quality of their family engagement practices and suggestions from family members to keep them connected to their child. As example, below are some of the responses from 321 family members with children in correction facilities who responded to the survey Nov. 1, 2022- April 30, 2023:

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed
I felt welcome at the facility.	48%	45%
I had the access to my child that I wanted.	41%	46%
Staff made it easier to stay in contact with my child	49%	45%
The program staff reached out to me with information about my child.	50%	42%
Staff treated me with respect.	56%	40%
Staff valued my opinion regarding my child’s rehabilitation.	44%	48%
I was kept up to date on my child’s progress on their treatment plan.	47%	31%
I feel prepared for my child to come home.	54%	34%
I will be able to access the services and support in my child’s reentry plan.	45%	41%
I am confident I can give my child help and support when they need it.	52%	35%
I want more support from the facility to prepare me and my family for my child’s return.	28%	28%

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