



VISITATION INSPECTIONS – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and findings are derived from eight Visitation Inspections over more than 40 hours by 14 Probation Oversight Commission (POC) staff, Commissioners, and volunteers, with interviews of more than 100 parents, youth, and on-site county employees. The observations of visitation were conducted between August 10, 2025 and September 28, 2025. The POC is issuing these preliminary recommendations based on these observations and is working with the State of California Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) to offer an improved visitation policy and training recommendations that reflect best practices.

While there were a myriad of issues identified during Visitation Inspections at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, Probation did get it right some days, and observations that took place at Barry J. Nidorf-Secure Youth Track Facility had neutral to positive findings. This only proves that Probation can choose to conduct visitation in a respectful and accommodating way while simultaneously maintaining a safe and secure environment.

To promote progress toward improving visitation, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Once Probation's Visiting Policy is revamped, distribute it widely and follow it consistently.

Parents repeatedly told us, and it was observed, that rules changed from day to day, week to week, and between facilities. The posted dress code differed from the offered dress code handouts. Inconsistent and subjective application of policy caused the majority of visitor rejections. Dogs were observed inspecting visitors and visitors were also required to remove their shoes, while Probation Officers walked by with no requirement to do the same level of screening.

2. Policies for visitors should be up to date, relate only to safety and security, and be simple, fair, and clear.

This includes abandoning current rules that allow visitors to be subjectively turned away due to any visible tattoos, knee length shorts, shirts with unobjectionable logos, white t-shirts, red or blue shirts, or more than one item of jewelry. What constitutes "gang-related" clothing or tattoos should be updated, clarified, clearly defined, and consistently applied.

3. Probation should strive to create a culture of customer service at visitation.

Every interaction that visitors have with Probation employees and security contractors should communicate that they are welcome and encouraged to visit their detained loved one while following the rules of the facility. While parents reported that the treatment they received from Probation employees improved over the course of the month, which they attributed to the presence of POC, numerous visitors shared that their experiences in visitation led them to believe that Probation aimed to discourage parents from visiting. Some parents reported that they felt like Probation employees and contracted security demonstrated bias, racial profiling,



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and treated visitors as though they had committed a crime simply for coming to visit their child. Simple solutions could be employed by Probation to improve the visitation experience including working with public-facing staff on customer service expectations, the provision of loaner clothing, and consistently providing locks for already installed and largely unused lockers.

4. Probation should share information about visitation in a variety of accessible formats.

Probation should have a 24-hour telephone line with pre-recorded visitation information in English and Spanish that families can call at any time. They should also offer visitors an opt-in to receive a texted link to the dress code and visitation parameters every Friday, in addition to making the policy easily available online. Some family members reported receiving only partial information of visitation rules prior to their first visit, resulting in rejection from visitation. Others reported that when they tried to advocate for their visit, they were repeatedly presented with new rules barring them from entry.

5. Supporting family connections should be a requisite function of a Department tasked with providing rehabilitation, therefore Probation should amend visitation policy to maximize the number of youth receiving visits, including allowing additional approved adults to visit, expanding visitation hours, and contacting families who do not visit to understand why and to help remove barriers.

Seeing adult family members turned away despite having approved special visits was concerning and these visitors expressed frustration about the inflexibility of the policy when their loved ones were not receiving any other visits. One interview included the report that Probation denied a court-ordered adult sibling escort for a visually impaired visitor. Youth interviews emphasized their need for connection with siblings whenever possible.

6. To better support parents coming to visitation, the County should contract parent partners to help visitors navigate visitation on site.

Visitors deserve access to third party advocacy and support, especially when encountering Probation for the first time or when communication breakdowns occur. Many parents stated that they needed information regarding visitation, how to make a complaint, and about who to contact when they felt they needed to advocate for their child and that they had difficulty getting that information clearly and consistently from the Department.

7. A list should be kept of all youth who did not receive an in-person visit each week and they should be offered a virtual visit.

Youth reported that commutes from the Antelope Valley and other distant parts of Los Angeles County, as well as family living out of state, were barriers to visitation. Youth reported that video calls with family were rare and treated as a tool to gain



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compliance rather than a regular support for family connection. Once Probation identifies which youth get no visits, extensive family finding and permanency options should be a focus of Probation's services for that youth while they are in detention.

8. Probation should notify visitors of resulting changes to visitation in a timely way when youth are moved units.

Parents reported being turned away after Probation did not alert them to changes in their child's housing assignment that changed their visitation day or time. During some inspections, exceptions were made to allow the visit anyway, however this did not occur at every inspection.

9. If visitors do need to be turned away, documentation should be provided to them and monitored by facility leadership. Youth should be alerted immediately when their family has not been allowed entry.

During some inspections, extensive accommodations were made to help get parents in to visits, but during others, no help was provided, and people were turned away citing issue that others were allowed in with, including similar clothing, tattoos, etc. Youth interviewed reported having family members turned away from visiting and learning of it only when their family alerted them during phone calls.

10. The POC should continue to do unannounced sporadic visitation inspections at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall and continue issuing recommendations until an acceptable culture is consistently observed.

Various parents remarked that the way they were treated at visitation improved due to the presence of observers and many suggested that the best way to support parents is to show up and remind Probation that people are watching. Whether this work is done exclusively by the POC or shared amongst trusted partners, continuing to support young people in getting visits is worthy of ongoing prioritization.