

# Promoting Professional Prison Practice



**European Organisation of Prison  
and Correctional Services**

## **Family Relations**

**18 June 2018**

**Johvi, Estonia**

**Pat Dawson**



# Family Relations Expert Group



- Zagreb 2016; Best practice model agreed work on report began.
- Helsinki 2017; Report finalised and launched
- Vienna 2018; Workshop on the Best Practice collection and future work.
- Chair Gabriela Slováková (Czech Republic)

# The 5 Pillar Model

Visits as a Core Element in Rehabilitation

Visiting Facilities  
and Physical  
structures

Community  
Involvement

Communication

Intervention  
Programmes

Staff Training

Security

# Observations of the Expert Group



- Data collection to enable the development of appropriate policy.
- Child centered, age appropriate visits with meaningful interactions.
- Special family visits where all family members can spend more quality time with the prisoner
- Overnight visits inside or outside of the prison.
- Staff training for all staff who interact. Value in dedicated visits staff
- Skype visits
- Inclusion of Parenting and family interventions work in resettlement planning.
- Community involvement including working with local schools
- Providing clear, accessible and consistent information to the family on visiting and prison life

# 800,000 EU Children have an imprisoned parent.

## Goals of “Family Relations”

- Visits as an opportunity for intervention.
- Parental responsibility as a catalyst for change.
- Voice of children heard
- Community involvement.
- Intergenerational Offending

## Legislative Background:

- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the child.
- To be free from discrimination (Art 2)
- Protection of the best interest of the child. (Art 3)
- The right to have direct and frequent with parents from whom the child is separated (Art. 9)

# **Next Steps....**

**Recommendation to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on Children with Imprisoned Parents. CM/RM(2018)5**

**Implementation guide to issue in 2018**

**Challenge for members to adopt standards and action plans coupled with a monitoring mechanisms on the impact of Family Interventions.**

**Opportunity to form expert group to advise on the 56 recommendations**



# PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL PRISON PRACTICE

Pat Dawson

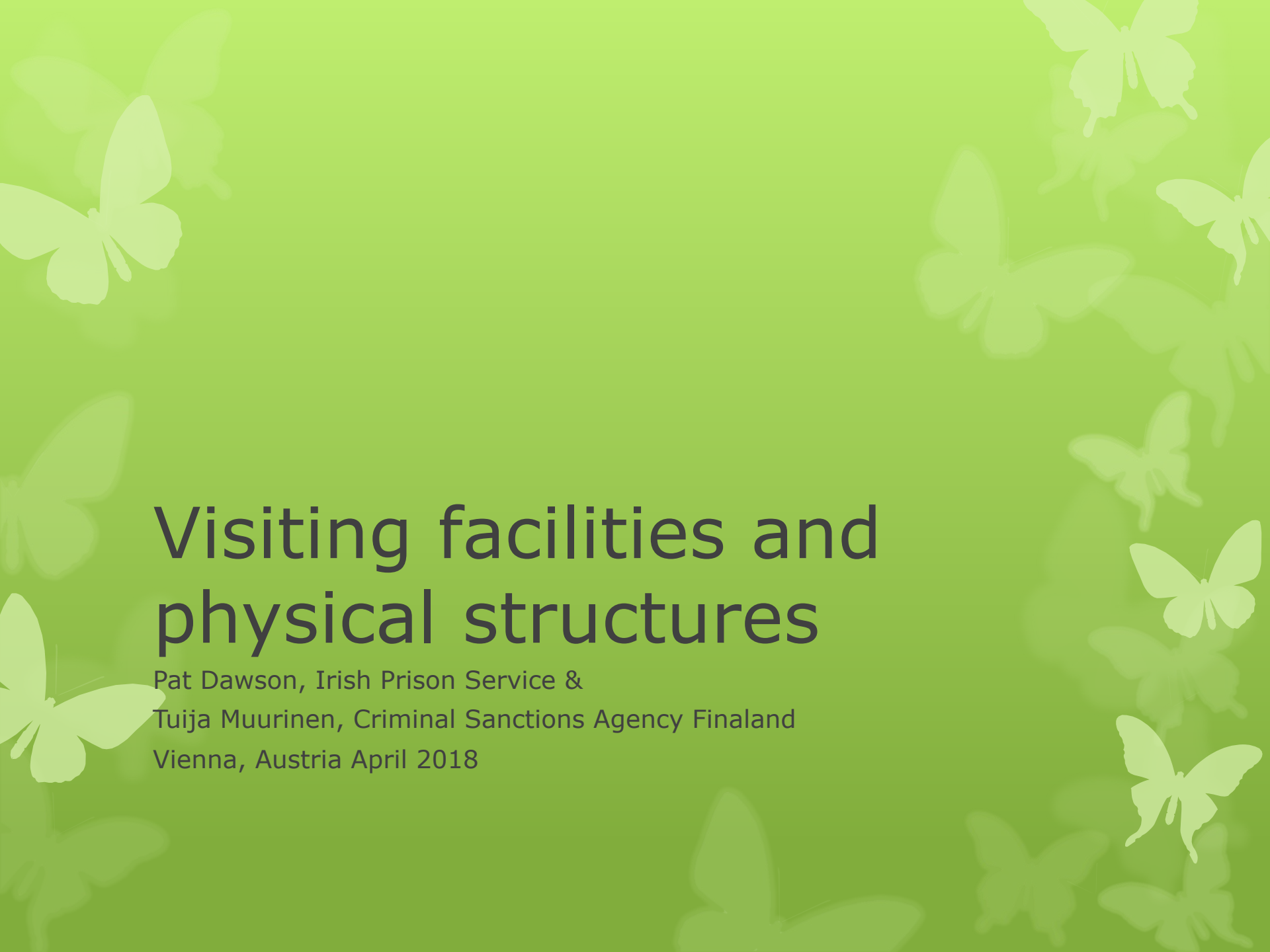
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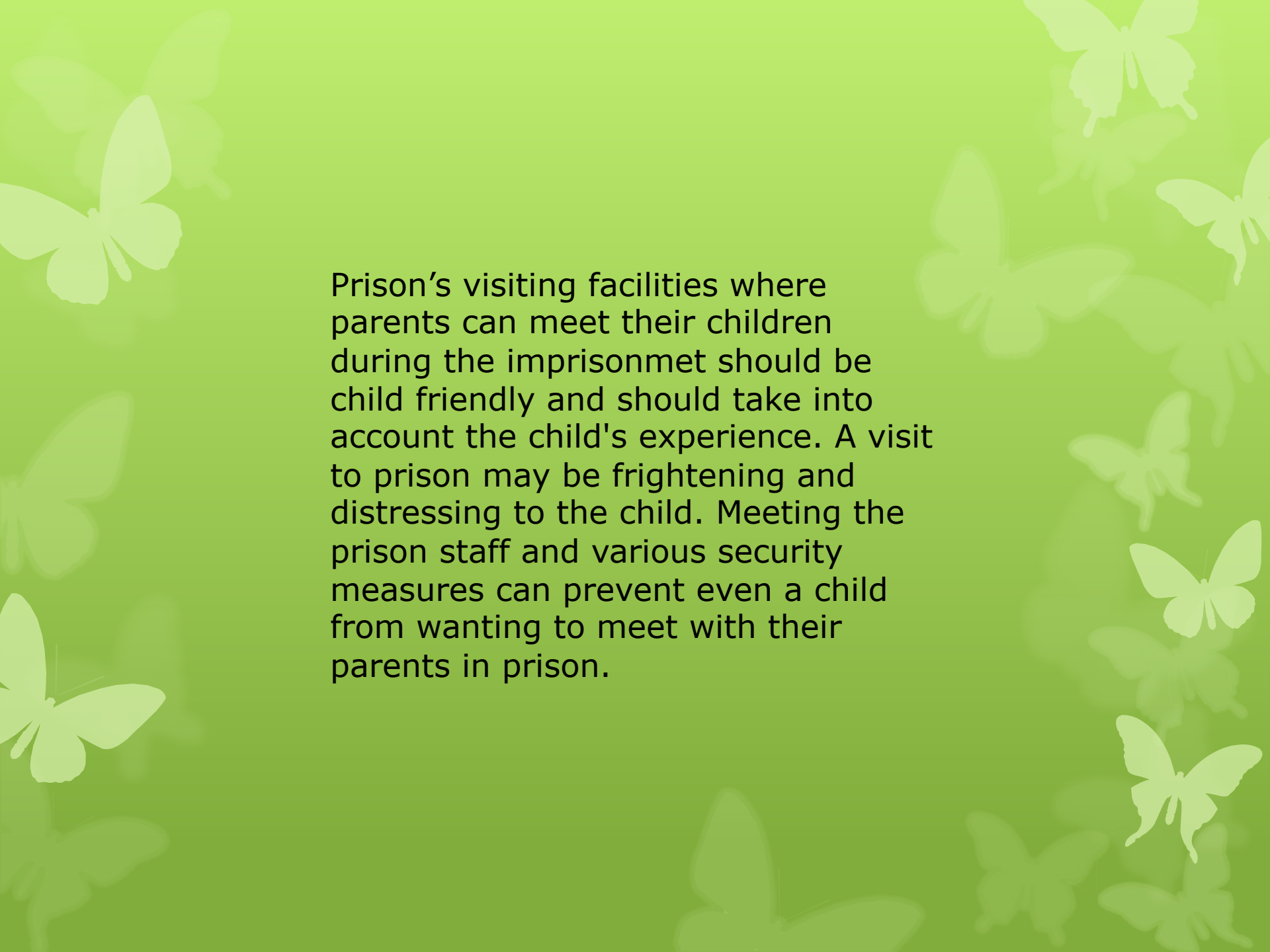
# Visiting facilities and physical structures

Pat Dawson, Irish Prison Service &  
Tuija Muurinen, Criminal Sanctions Agency Finland  
Vienna, Austria April 2018



# Background

- \* The imprisonment of parent affects approximately 800,000 children in the European area each year. Maintaining family relationships during imprisonment is especially important for children whose daily lives have changed due to the parent's imprisonment. Some children may perceive the separation as abandonment by the parent, others can experience anxiety and loss of self-esteem.



Prison's visiting facilities where parents can meet their children during the imprisonment should be child friendly and should take into account the child's experience. A visit to prison may be frightening and distressing to the child. Meeting the prison staff and various security measures can prevent even a child from wanting to meet with their parents in prison.





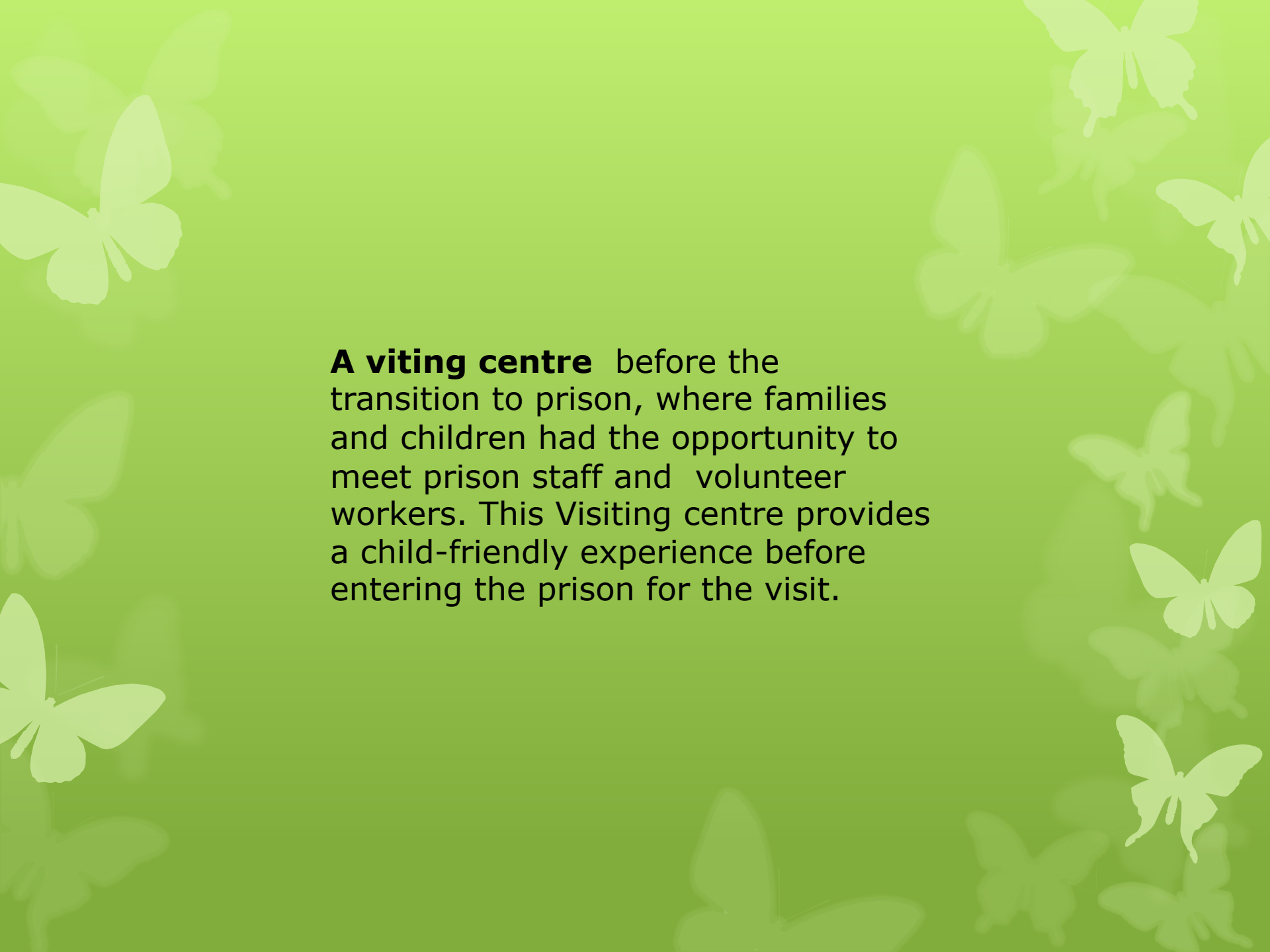
# Some good practices

- Outdoor visiting facilities provide a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Organising family days and special events for families and spend time outside prison with younger children.
- Round table cafe style visits









**A visiting centre** before the transition to prison, where families and children had the opportunity to meet prison staff and volunteer workers. This Visiting centre provides a child-friendly experience before entering the prison for the visit.



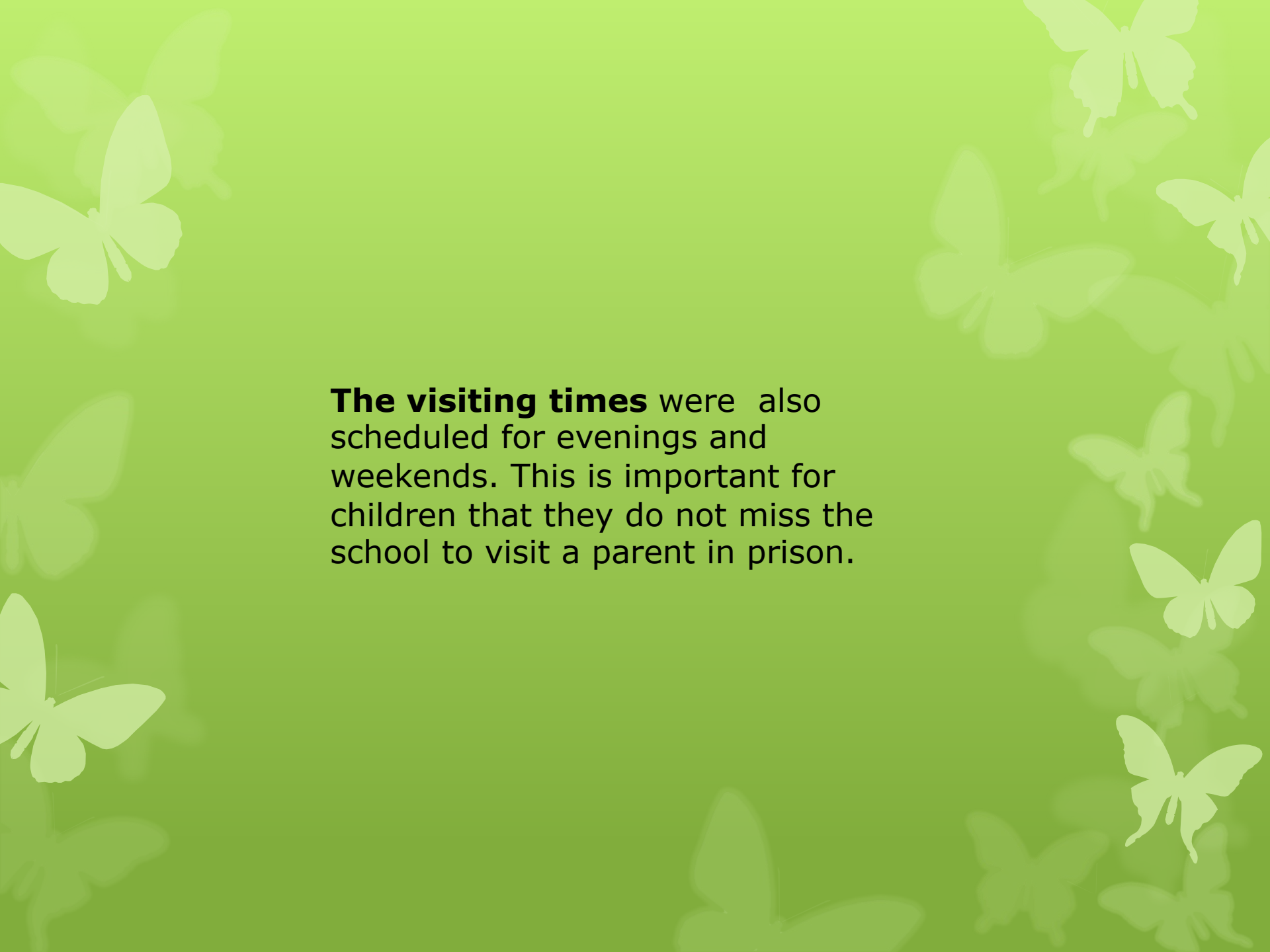













**The visiting times** were also scheduled for evenings and weekends. This is important for children that they do not miss the school to visit a parent in prison.





Many countries have developed **brochures and materials** for children for prison visits, which a child receives at the beginning of a visit to reduce stress and provide them with information about the prison.

# Challenges

- Need for “neutral venues” where family visits can take place when certain security issues are addressed.
- Disabled visitors must also be considered in the physical structures provided.
- Modern technology such as Skype and email to enable family contacts.
- The balance between security requirements and the goal of normalising prison visits for families