- 1 Sec. 1. INTENT
- 2 (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Department of
- 3 <u>Corrections ensures gender parity in the access to services and programs that</u>
- 4 <u>strengthen family connections.</u>
- 5 (b) It is the further intent of the General Assembly that the Department of
- 6 Corrections develop a phased plan to expand the application of 28 V.S.A.
- 7 § 128 to all Vermont correctional facilities by 2028.
- 8 Sec. 2. 28 V.S.A. § 102(c) is amended to read:
- 9 (c) The Commissioner is charged with the following responsibilities:
- 10 ***
- 11 (24) To provide and sustain trauma-informed family support services
- 12 <u>and programming pursuant to section 128 of this title.</u>
- 13 Sec. 3. 28 V.S.A. § 128 is added to read:
- 14 <u>§ 128. INCARCERATED PARENTS AND GUARDIANS; FAMILY</u>
- 15 <u>SUPPORT PROGRAM</u>
- 16 (a) Family Support Program. The Department of Corrections shall
- 17 <u>establish the Family Support Program to provide free parenting and family</u>
- 18 support at each correctional facility to all incarcerated individuals who are
- 19 parents and guardians regardless of gender. The Program shall include
- 20 <u>individualized services and programming intended to provide:</u>

1	(1) increased knowledge and skill for incarcerated parents and guardians
2	to address the specific needs of their children;
3	(2) resources to incarcerated parents and guardians to engage in needs-
4	specific planning and communication strategies with their children and their
5	children's caregivers;
6	(3) child-friendly visitation spaces, in consultation with the Department,
7	for in-person and virtual visits between parents or guardians and their children,
8	including establishing safety protocol;
9	(4) outreach and coordination with appropriate services for the children
10	of incarcerated parents and guardians and the children's caregivers;
11	(5) improved cross-system coordination and collaboration to deliver
12	necessary services to the families of incarcerated parents and guardians; and
13	(6) reentry support and preparation for incarcerated parents and
14	guardians.
15	(b) Program support. The Department may support the operation of the
16	Family Support Program established pursuant to this section through grants of
17	financial assistance to, or contracts for services with, any nonprofit entity that
18	meets the Department's requirements.
19	(c) Annual report. Annually, on or before July 1, the Department shall
20	submit a written report to the House Committees on Corrections and

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1	Institutions and on Judiciary and the Senate Committees on Institutions and on
2	Judiciary, concerning:
3	(1) the funding, participation, and outcomes of the services and
4	programming established pursuant to this section; and
5	(2) considerations and any progress towards sustained statewide
6	programming and gender parity.
7	Sec. 4. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; FAMILY SUPPORT
8	PROGRAM; IMPLEMENTATION
9	The Department of Corrections shall first implement the Family Support
10	Program established under 28 V.S.A. § 128 at the Chittenden Regional
11	Correctional Facility and Northern State Correctional Facility.
12	Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE
13	This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.
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20	(Committee vote:)

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1	
2	Representative
3	FOR THE COMMITTEE