



Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Child Development Agency (CDA), Carla Francis Edie, is appealing to parents and guardians to visit their children in child care institutions.

Speaking at a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) 'Think Tank', held Tuesday (January 15) at the agency's head office in Kingston, Mrs. Edie said that parents must use every opportunity to visit, even if they do not have anything to contribute financially.

[RELATED: [\*CDA to help with case work for juveniles in remand\*](#)]

She pointed out that the main issue facing children in State care is "the need to belong, the need to know that I have a mother and the mother cares, even if she has nothing to offer."

"The basic issue for a lot of these children is that their parents do not visit," Mrs. Edie said, relating an incident where a child called her at about 2:00 a.m. one morning and said: "My mother has two of us, and you want to tell me that she doesn't remember that she has the two of us in here."

She noted that CDA monitoring officers would visit the institutions as frequently as possible to speak with the wards and to hear what they have to say.

"They have scheduled and unscheduled visits, including night visits and weekend visits. They have a responsibility as well to speak with the children... the children are very frank, it doesn't matter who it is, they will tell you exactly how they feel and what is affecting them and we try to ensure that we act on the needs of the children," the CEO said.

Apart from those visits, Mrs. Edie noted that there are scheduled 'Parent Days' for parents to

visit their children, as well as Case Conferences, when parents are invited to discuss future plans for their children and to see how they are coping at the various institutions.

The CEO said that during Parent Month, held last November, one of the institutions held activities which focused on parenting. According to Mrs. Edie, the parents who turned up participated in various sessions on how to prepare them to deal with their children when they return home.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Edie implored parents and guardians to take care of their children to reduce the number placed in child care facilities.

“If it is that you need help in anyway, seek help from the guidance counsellors at your child’s school. If that does not help, you can come to the CDA. We have to find a way to deal with the issues affecting our children. We usually say the children are the future, but the children are the now,” the CEO emphasized.