

BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: 4.9	SUBJECT: VISITATION
OAC: 5101:2-39-08, 10	EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/1/01
PCSAO: 3.13	REVISION DATE: 1/27/04, 9/27/05, 6/26/08, 2/12
	REVIEW DATE: 3/22/05, 9/27/05, 6/26/08, 2/12

PURPOSE:

It is critical to the health and well being of the child in out-of-home care that regular and frequent visitation occurs with their family. Visitation maintains attachments between the family members and the child. It is the goal of the Butler County Children Services that visits with children are a positive experience for all involved. The visitation plan shall fully support the goals of the case plan.

POLICY:

VISITATION PLAN

- 4.9 The worker shall solicit the input from the child, family, caregiver and key individuals when developing the visitation plan. The visitation plan is recorded in the case plan.
1. The visitation plan shall:
 - A. Assure the safety of the child and identify situations and persons who pose a risk to the child. This shall be documented under the restriction of visitations.
 - B. Shall identify who may visit, frequency of visits, duration, time and location, transportation responsibilities and the level of supervision required.
 - C. Shall document what other forms of approved communication will occur (i.e. telephone or written correspondence).
 2. In accordance with OAC rule 5101:2-39-10 and 2-39-05, the caseworker shall document the written visitation plan between siblings that are not placed jointly for children in agency custody and under protective supervision.
 3. The worker shall use the FRS Request form to refer a family for supervised visits at Family

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Connections or other approved location.

4. Children should not be removed from school for visits if at all possible. Arrangements should be made for children to visit after school.
5. If a visit is canceled for good cause, the worker and the child's family should make all efforts to reschedule as soon as possible after the canceled visit. For parent canceled visits where siblings attend from different placements, the visit shall still be held.
6. Supervised Visitation shall occur as outlined in the Guide for Children Services Caseworkers, Families, and Community Providers.
7. The Helpful Hints Visitation Guidelines shall be issued to each parent and/or approved person visiting prior to the commencement of the initial visitation. This document shall be signed by the parent and/or approved visitor and the Family Resource Specialist. Copies shall be provided to the parent and/or approved visitor, the Family Connections Specialist, and one to the permanent case record.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. B. [unclear]', written over a horizontal line.

Supervised Visitation Levels at Family Connections Center

A Guide for Children Services Caseworkers, Families and Community Providers

The attached document is a guide for families involved with Children Services' Supervised Visitation, as well as Caseworkers, GALs, and Community Providers.

Key Points:

1. This Visitation Guide pertains to all families receiving supervised visitation services with BCCS and CDC at any and all locations.
2. The overall goal is to provide clear information to everyone involved with supervised visits as to what is expected, and how to move to less intense supervision and eventually to reunification.
3. Re-evaluation of levels will be accessed monthly with Caseworker.
4. All interactions and observations are documented throughout all levels of visitation.

LEVEL 1 – ALWAYS SUPERVISED:

1. Staff will remain with the family at all times, actively interacting, providing constant guidance, support and encouragement to help parents understand their role and expectations
2. Staff will monitor and guide the family on how to talk to their children, how to listen, how to discuss problems the child may bring up, how to handle the child's emotions, how to manage their own emotions, etc. These suggestions can be considered a road map on how to best interact with the child.

LEVEL 2 – MOSTLY SUPERVISED:

1. Parent(s) are visiting consistently and following all general visitation guidelines.
2. Parent(s) are beginning to speak and interact positively with their children.

An example of this is:

- Parent (s) using age-appropriate language with their children with a calm tone and volume.

3. Parent(s) improving their ability to maintain control of their children and monitoring their activities.

An example of this is:

- Parent(s) being aware of their children's behaviors. Parent(s) identifying age-appropriate solutions to their concerns and problems during the visits.
- Parent(s) engaging their children all together in a family activity, while encouraging their children to participate in the activity.
- Staff will assist with activities when needed, re-direct, model and teach parenting skills when necessary.

4. Parent(s) are making progress with BCCS case plan goals.

An example of this is:

- Parent(s) have no new criminal or child abuse/neglect charges.
- Parent(s) showing no active behavioral signs of substance use.
- Parent(s) maintaining control while working through family issues or conflicts.

LEVEL 3 – INTERMITTENT SUPERVISION

1. Parent(s) are following consistently with Level 2 guidelines plus:

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- Parent(s) are engaging in positive interactions with their children by encouraging and supporting them.
 - Parent(s) are using their learned parenting skills more independently to plan for and engage their children in structured activities during the visit without regular assistance and directions from FC staff.
2. Parent(s) are more routinely able to maintain control of their children.
 3. Parent(s) must be actively participating in BCCS case plan goals, as indicated on the court order.
- Examples of this include:
- Individual and/or family therapy, educational classes, anger management, parenting, substance abuse treatment.
 - Maintaining attendance at scheduled appointments.
 - Receiving positive reports from service providers.
 - Showing improvements in parenting skills during visits.
 - Showing improvement in anger management skills.
 - Refraining from use of substances or alcohol, etc.
4. Family Connections staff will touch base with the family to monitor progress every 20-30 minutes.

LEVEL 4 – MINIMAL SUPERVISION

1. Parent(s) are following consistently with Level 3 guidelines plus:
 - Parent(s) are independently parenting their children at all times, needing minimal support from staff throughout their visitation.

Examples of this include:

- Parent(s) are aware of their children’s behaviors and resolve problems that arise during their visits.
 - Parent(s) are involved in age-appropriate activities and conversations with their children by showing improved communication and appropriate parent/child behaviors.
 - Parent(s) are showing an increased understanding of their children’s needs.
 - Parent(s) are able to discuss stressful issues and concerns that led to the removal of their children and recognize how their behaviors affect their children.
 - Parent(s) remain calm by using their anger-management and communication skills to better resolve frustrating/ stressful situations and communicate without using inappropriate language or being hurtful towards their children.
2. Parent(s) have made solid progress with case plan goals.
- Examples of this include:
- Parent(s) actively participating in individual and family therapy services, as recommended.
 - Parent(s) attending all educational classes, anger management, parenting, etc. as recommended.
 - Parent(s) are showing no signs of substance use, and are presenting negative drug screens.
 - Parent(s) have no new criminal or child abuse/neglect charges.
3. Family Connections staff will check in with the family at the beginning and end of each visit.
 4. Visitation is encouraged to be moved to the home or community, as approved by the BCCS worker with staff available to assist during the visit as needed.

REUNIFICATION:

1. BCCS worker and GAL are prepared to recommend reunification to the court.
2. Parent(s) have completed case plan goals and are actively using skills learned.
3. Parent(s) are exhibiting a willingness and ability to provide for and protect their children.
4. BCCS has no concerns about illegal behaviors, violence, substance abuse, or abuse/neglect of the children in the home.
5. Court has reviewed the case, as scheduled (usually every 3 months), and orders reunification.

Helpful Hints-Visitation Guidelines for Parents

Our goal is reunification, but most importantly, for each visit, our goal is for you and your children to develop new positive memories.

1. Please try to leave the outside world at the door; this time is all about your visitation with your children.
2. Your cell phone will be locked up upon arrival. During special occasions; such as birthdays, Christmas etc., staff will help you take pictures with your camera or cell phone so you have pictures of this special event.

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3. We encourage you to bring healthy snacks, breakfast, lunch or dinner to your visit.
4. Please refrain from talking about stressful topics when your children are present. It is difficult for children to hear information about the BCCS case, court hearings, future living arrangements, and stressful family issues.
5. Children do best when they get to do fun activities with you during your family visitation. Examples of this are:
 - Playing games, doing arts and crafts, and reading books.
6. Parents are expected to assist in keeping the visitation area in a neat, orderly condition.

Examples of this are:

- After eating, throw garbage away, wash table off, sweep general area and return chairs to proper place. Toys shall be picked up.
7. Tell your children about the positive things going on in your life so they are assured that you are doing okay.
 8. Please do not talk negatively about foster parents and other caregivers.
 9. It is okay to let your child know that you miss them, while supporting your child's placement by letting them know that everything is okay and they are safe.
 10. Ask your children about how they are doing in school, about their favorite classes, sports, hobbies, extracurricular activities etc.

General Visitation Guidelines

1. Any visitation changes including changing the location or having additional visitors must be approved by BCCS. Notification must be provided to the staff at Family Connections prior to the visit.
2. Arriving late to your visit may result in the cancellation of that visit on that day. If parents do not arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled visit start time, Family Connections staff will consult a supervisor to decide if the visitation will be canceled or will continue.
3. After two (2) unexcused absences (no show, no call to caseworker to cancel, etc), your caseworker may attempt an intervention with you to keep your visitation schedule the same.
4. After four (4) consecutive unexcused absences you may be taken off the visitation schedule. You will have to work with your caseworker to get put back on the visitation schedule.
5. In order to ensure everyone's health and safety, visitation may be rescheduled if you or your child are experiencing a communicable illness (Tuberculosis, Flu, Strep Throat, etc.) or experiencing problems with an infestation (bed bugs, lice, etc.).
6. Visitation may be rescheduled due to bad weather. The Family Connections Center may be closed when your child's school district and/or Hamilton School District is closed due to bad weather. When unsure please contact the Family Connections Center at (513) 785-6250 or contact your case worker.
7. Parents are expected to dress appropriately. Remember that you are here to play and engage with your children. Your outfit should not be a distraction to others.
8. In order to ensure everyone's safety:

Visitation

- Your child’s well-being is our number one priority. The visit may be ended if your actions or statements become harmful to your child.
- Any direct or indirect threats against the safety of Butler County Children Services staff or others may result in immediate termination of visits.
- No person shall be permitted in the visitation while in the possession of any substances or objects that may cause harm.

Example of this are:

- Knife, firearm, etc.

Encouraged Behaviors for Visitation

We consider Family Connections a safe place for you and your children. Please respect everyone and focus your attention on spending time with your children.

1. In order to work towards reunification, you are encouraged to look at the Family Connection’s staff to aid you and your family.
2. Work with the Family Connections staff to identify positive ways to parent your children.
3. If you have concerns or questions, you should discuss those with your BCCS worker prior to or following the visit.
 - If you need to communicate with your BCCS worker about your case, we can schedule a time to meet outside of your family visitation.

I have read and understand the visitation guidelines

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

FRS REQUEST

<input type="checkbox"/> Supervised Visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
CASE NAME:	SACWIS ID:	DATE REQUESTED:

CASE WORKER:	OFFICE #: CELL #:	SUPERVISOR:	OFFICE #: CELL #:
DAY(S) OF VISITS	VISIT TIME(S):		<input type="checkbox"/> NON-CUSTODY
LEVEL OF VISIT: Please discuss levels with the FRS worker throughout the duration of the visits. The level should be decreased over time as the parent	LEVEL 1 (two options) <input type="checkbox"/> Close supervision, must be at the table/area of visit at ALL times. Cannot leave the visit. <input type="checkbox"/> Close supervision,	←This would be necessary if you feel the parent will say or do things to harm the child. ←This would be necessary if	LEVEL 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Check on every 15 minutes LEVEL 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Check on every 30 minutes

Visitation

increases their parenting ability. If you want a level 1 to assess parenting for the first time only, please note that in your email.	must be in the room at all times to observe all interaction. Cannot leave the room.	there is a newborn, you need parenting assessed, and/or parents are often under the influence.	LEVEL 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Usually unsupervised, will start and end visit with random checks throughout the visit.
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CHILD(REN)'S NAME	AGE	D.O.B.	CHILD(REN)'S NAME:	AGE:	D.O.B.

FOSTER PARENT / RELATIVE NAME		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	
FOSTER CARE NETWORK		PHONE	
PERSONS VISITING			
MOTHER'S NAME		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	
FATHER'S NAME		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	
OTHER APPROVED PERSONS			

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/PROBLEMS:

Violent History _____

Mental Health _____

Sexual Predator _____

Other _____

PICK UP LOCATION: Day Care School

Home Other _____

RETURN LOCATION:

Day Care School _____

Home Other _____

SUPERVISION ASSIGNED TO: _____ **TRANSPORTATION :** _____

INFANT SEAT NUMBER NEEDED: _____ **TODDLER SEAT NUMBER NEEDED:** _____

SUPERVISORS SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____