

## VISITATION CHECKLIST

### Initial Written Visitation Plan:

- Who/Which family members have been contacted to be involved in facilitating visitation? Are parents and extended family involved in the initial development of the visitation plan?
- Review the temporary Visit and Contact Plan (CF 0831A).
  - Is the temporary Visit and Contact Plan in writing?
  - Has DHS reviewed the Plan with the parents (and child when appropriate)?
  - Is the first visit scheduled within 48 hours? If not what are the reasons?
- Is the time and location of visits logistically possible for the parents and supportive of the child's needs?
- Do the frequency and duration of visits take into account the child's attachment and developmental needs? Research indicates that for infants and very young children visits as often as two to three times per week are necessary for the well-being of the child and to protect the bond.
- Are sibling visits needed and what is the plan to provide those?
- Are forms of contact other than face-to-face visits included in the visitation plan? (phone, skype, text, e-mail, letters, inclusion in school activities, church and other appointments of the child)
- Does the placement support frequent visitation? Would a different placement better support visitation? Have attorneys encouraged clients to identify family as potential placements or for purposes of assisting with transportation, supervision and documentation during visits?
- Have parents been encouraged to ask other family to be involved by being present at the next hearing?
- After the hearing, has a family meeting been scheduled as soon as practicably possible where logistical barriers to visitation (and other issues) may be discussed and resolved?

- Is the visitation supervised?
    - What level of supervision is required?
- Considerations:*
- Why must it be supervised?
  - Is there a threat of danger that requires supervision of visits? ➡
  - Can the threat of danger be managed with a safety plan?

*Other Considerations:*

- Age of the child. Is the child able to talk about the visit and articulate preferences or concerns?
- Is there concern that the parent(s) may behave in an inappropriate or unpredictable way?
- Is a child visiting with a perpetrator or person of concern?
- Is there a safety plan/safety service provider that could support visits?
- Is significant information about the parents missing? Will supervision of the first few visits allow DHS to obtain more information about the parent(s) to determine whether unsupervised visitation could be provided?
- Make a clear and enforceable written order of expectations for visits. Request that a written on-going visitation plan be developed within the next 30 days and submitted to the court.
- Explain what the parent needs to do to change supervision or change frequency of visitation.

### **Threats of danger that may require supervised visits include:**

- Concern of violence toward the child during the visit;
- The child is intensely fearful;
- Abuse to the child was premeditated;
- The parent has an extremely negative perception of the child;
- There is a likelihood the parent would flee with the child.

**On-Going Written Visitation Plan(s):**

- Are visitation plans reviewed regularly to ensure visitation is meeting the child's parent-child contact needs?
- What are the results of the protective capacity assessment? What type of visitation is indicated by the protective capacity assessment?
- Should visits be supervised? Should the current level of supervision be reduced or increased?
- Is the visitation plan in writing with language that is clear, concise, and written at a level the parent (and child if appropriate) are able to understand? Has the Agency explained to the parent(s) the reasons for arranging supervised or unsupervised visits to the involved parties?
- Does the visitation plan include a list of supportive kith and kin and other resources to support visitation and indicate how they have been (or will be) utilized?
  - Location: are the visits taking place in an office and if so, why?
  - Frequency: can the frequency be increased?
  - Time: Is the time agreeable to the parent(s) and in the best interest of the child?
  - Duration: Can the visits be lengthened, if not, why not?
  - Transportation: Is the transportation arrangement reliable? Are there other alternatives?
  - Tasks & Activities: What activities are included in the visitation and how can they be improved?
- Was the parent/family involved in visitation planning meetings?  
Explain importance of attendance, punctuality, and collaboration:
- Is there a protocol in the visitation plan for handling problems associated with lack of adherence to the visitation plan?
- Does the visitation plan include a protocol for handling emergency situations?
- What other forms of contact are being included: phone calls, e-mails, letters, photos, etc.?
- Do the visitation logs detail the child's reactions to visits and document how the child was supported in coping with the contact?
- Have there been attempts to include the parent in meaningful appointments, tasks, and events? Is the family continually involved in visitation planning meetings?
- When visits have been cancelled, have make-up visits been provided?
- Encourage collaboration between all parties and reiterate goals: [Highlight areas of possible improvement]
- Does the visitation plan include visitation between siblings, significant others, and among other relatives, if not, why not? If so,
  - How have these visits been going?
  - Have the relatives been supportive in the total visitation plan?
  - Have the visits been conducted in the least restrictive setting?
  - Can these visits be improved in any way?
- Identify in the visitation report the hierarchy of the child's attachments and find how the visits were prioritized - did the caseworker consider the preferences expressed by the child or young adult?
- Locate in the plan the barriers to visitation that must be overcome and highlight how those barriers are being addressed.
- If appropriate, request that visitation reports be filed with the court more frequently and reviews/improvements made more frequent than the mandatory 90-day time frame.
- Decide whether on-going visitation is in the best interest of the child and if not, if any other contact is appropriate.