

Important Information for Parents about Visitation:

This information is provided to assist you in having pleasant and meaningful visits with your child

- ❖ **It is very important for you to attend every visit on time.** If you do not do this, your child will be disappointed when they are at the visit and you are not. If you have a problem getting to the visit or know that you are likely to be late, contact your caseworker as soon as you can to inform the caseworker you will be late or are having a problem getting to the visit.
- ❖ It is best not to make promises to your child during visitation, but if you do make a promise, such as “next time I see you I will bring your favorite book from home,” make sure you fulfill that promise.
- ❖ You can bring toys, clothes and pictures from home to the visit. If you have questions about the appropriateness of an item, contact your caseworker prior to the visit.
- ❖ Show your child affection (i.e. hugs and handholding) during the visit unless you have specifically been ordered not to by the court or your caseworker.
- ❖ The visit will be observed and there are two reasons for this: to ensure the safety and well-being of your child, and to gather information that will help improve future visits.
- ❖ Your child may ask difficult questions such as “when can I come home?” You should not respond with a specific date because that can change along the way and you don’t want to disappoint your child. A good response could be “I hope it is soon, but I’m so glad I get to see you now.” Your child will probably ask this several times and possibly every time they talk to you.
- ❖ Your child may also not behave in a way you expect. If your child is fussy or upset, it may be because so much change is happening in your child's life or your child is tired or had a bad day. Take this opportunity to positively comfort, support and talk to your child about what is going on in their life.
- ❖ If your child talks to you about their foster parent or family, you should listen and respond in a positive way. Although it may be difficult that your child cannot be with you right now, you should be as supportive as possible of the foster parent or family because they are taking care of your child and it is important that your child not feel bad about that. If you do have a concern about the foster parent or family, do not discuss it with your child or in front of your child. Inform the caseworker of your concerns after the visit, and if you have a lawyer, you may want to discuss with him/her as well.
- ❖ If you have questions about the visit or what was observed during the visit, you should feel free to ask the person observing you. If the person observing your visit uses a visitation observation form to document what happens at the visit, you should be given a copy of that form.
- ❖ If you have questions about your case or future visits, ask your caseworker after the visit.
- ❖ Don’t talk to your child about your CPS case or caseworker during the visit. Use this opportunity to spend time with your child and enjoy your child's company. If your child asks questions about your case, suggest that the child ask the caseworker. If your child has an attorney ad litem or a CASA volunteer, you might also suggest that your child ask them any case related questions.
- ❖ You may have a difficult time after and between visits. Talk to people in your life about how you are feeling. It might even be a good idea to tell them about the visit ahead of time so you can have support ready for you. At the end of your visit, goodbyes can be difficult for you and your child. During the last 5 minutes, plan what you will do on your next visit together. Try putting it on paper and letting the child take it home with them. During the visit you can give your child something from home or draw a picture with them so they have something to hold onto in between visits. Do not prolong the goodbye as it will make it harder for you and your child.
- ❖ If the visit didn’t go as you had hoped or planned, don’t be hard on yourself! Learn about what you need to improve and remember that there are no perfect parents. You just need to keep trying to be the best parent you can be for your child!

