

Organizational Self Study on Parent-Child and Sibling Visits

This survey is intended to help determine the core principles as well as current practice and policy of parent-child and sibling visiting. The tool is designed to review overall agency readiness, assess administrative policies, and identify strengths and challenges in your parent-child and sibling visiting practice.

Administrative

1. Does CPS have a practice model or a policy that directs caseworkers in articulating the purpose and importance of visits between children and youth in foster care and:

- Their parents or primary caregivers? Yes No
- Their siblings? Yes No
- Extended family? Yes No
- In post permanency situations? Yes No
- Other significant people in the child's/youth's life? Yes No

If yes, to all or any of the above, please provide an example or cite to the policy that guides caseworkers in this regard.

CPS Handbook Policy: 6315, 6315.2, 6415.1, 6415.2, 6123.1, Rights of Children in foster care; Basic Skills Development Training for workers includes a ½ day training on visitation

2. Does CPS have a practice or a written policy regarding the following?

- Placing children and youth close to the child's community to support visits and family connections? Yes No (4120, 4121)
- Defining family visitation as a required part of "reasonable efforts" to safely reunify children/youth and their parents? Yes No
- Visits among siblings when they are not placed together? Yes No (6315.2)
- Visits between siblings without parents being present? Yes No (6315.2)
- A visitation model that moves from highly-supervised and structured to less supervised, unsupervised, and finally to overnight visits? Yes No (practice)
- Recognition of a right of parents to visit their children/youth unless the court has ordered otherwise Yes No (6415.1)

If yes, to all or any of the above, please provide an example or cite to the policy.

3. Are visitation plans written? Yes No

4. If visitation plans are written, please answer the following questions:

- Is the family involved in developing the visiting plan?

Yes No

- Are older youth involved in developing visiting plans for themselves?

Yes No

- Is the initial visiting plan written at time of placement?

Yes No

- Are parents and siblings provided with a copy of the visiting plan?

Yes No

- Is the plan documented in the case record or filed with the court?

Yes No

- Is the visiting plan incorporated into the service plan?

Yes No

- Is there a process for modifying the visiting plan?

Yes No

- Is the timing of the first visit or contact documented?

Yes No

If visitation plans are not written, is there a practice model that incorporates these elements?

5. Although the following may vary by jurisdiction, **does CPS have a policy** regarding:

- When the first visit should occur? (2552)
 - Yes No
- Frequency (6415.2)
 - Yes No
- Length of visit
 - Yes No
- Do these vary according to age of child/children?
 - Yes No NA
- Optimal length of time for the visits?
 - Yes No
- Preferred location?(6315.2)
 - Yes No
- Transportation (Residential Contract Chapter 17)
 - Yes No
- Supervision (6315.2)
 - Yes No
- Visit Coaching
 - Yes No (children under 2) 6252.3
- Ending visits early
 - Yes No
- Limiting visits (6415.1)
 - Yes No
- Terminating visits(6415.1)
 - Yes No
- Increasing visits
 - Yes No
- Lowering supervision

Yes No

- No supervision (6415.2)

Yes No

- Extended (overnight)

Yes No

- Involvement of foster parents in arranging/supervising visits (6415.2)

Yes No

- Involvement of others (coaches, religious and community leaders, extended family members) in arranging/supervising visits

Yes No

- Post-visit work with children, siblings, birth parents, and foster parents

Yes No

- Review of visiting plans during supervisory sessions

Yes No (1491-review case plan-- which the visitation policy is a part of)

6. Do you provide the following individuals with copies of the agency's visiting policy?

- Parents Yes No
- Kin Yes No
- Caseworkers Yes No
- Foster parents Yes No
- Youth Yes No

Policy is made publically available on the website. Also in the publication "While Your Child is in Our Care" and the document "Rights of Children in Foster Care"

7. Do the courts in your state review visiting plans? Yes No

If yes, do parents, children and youth have the right to present recommendations or evidence to the court about the visiting plan? Yes No

8. Does the agency use visits as a factor in making the final permanent planning decision? Yes No

If yes, how?

Through supervision of the parent- child visit staff assess parent/child attachment, parenting skills, safety threats and protective capacity. Parent-visits are also a way for staff to observe the skills and knowledge that the parent has gained through

services and other interventions. Additionally, staff would consider constructive abandonment as a ground for termination if a parent does not attend visits when they have been made available to them.

Responsibilities in Parent-Child Visiting

9. Who has each of the following responsibilities? Please check the appropriate box and provide the information requested.

Responsibility	Yes, the case worker has the responsibility	No, the case worker does not; this is the responsibility of:	Responsibility is not clear in our policy and practice
Preparing the child for visits	x		
Preparing birth parents/siblings for visits	x		
Preparing foster parents for visits	x		
Developing the visiting plan	x		
Coordinating the logistics of visits	x		
Transportation to visit	x	Foster Parents are contractually obligated to transport to sibling visits and family visits (Residential Contract- Paragraph 17, 21)	
Consulting with other professionals regarding ensuring safe visits based on the parent's or child's condition or special needs	x		
Post visit work with the child	x		

Post visit work with the birth parents	x		
Post visit work with sibling(s)	x		
Post visit work with foster parents	x		

Professional Development

10. What type of professional development activities are used to build staff's knowledge, skills and abilities about parent-child and sibling visiting practice? Check all that apply.

- Classroom training
- Online training
- Teleconferences
- Webcasts
- Supervision
- Clinical consultation
- Technical assistance
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Other (please specify): [ongoing basic skills development](#)

11. On which of the following are case workers trained? Check all that apply.

- Preparing children, birth parents, and foster parents for visits([Core BSD](#))
- Encouraging parents to visit and using non-office locations for visits
- Developing visiting plans
- Supervision of visits([Core BSD and Supervision and Mentoring](#))
- Progressive visit planning
- Using visiting in permanency planning decision making ([Core BSD and supervision](#))

12. Are supervisors trained in visiting policy and practice? Yes No

If yes, how are they trained? [see above professional development activities](#)

13. Do foster parents receive training on parent-child and sibling visiting?

Yes No

If yes, what is covered in the training? Check all that apply. ([PRIDE training](#))

- Importance of parent-child and sibling visits
- Helping a child prepare for a visit
- Roles and responsibilities in visits
- Helping a child after a visit
- Other (please specify): _____

Agency Strengths

14. Based on the above self-assessment, what do you see as your agency's strengths in visiting practice? Check all that apply.

- Practice and policy commitment to visits between children/youth and their parents, siblings, extended family and other significant people in the child's life
- Development of visiting plans
- Implementation of visiting plans
- Supervised visiting
- Use of a progressive visiting model
- Casework/clinical skills in preparing children/youth, parents, siblings, foster parents and others for successful visits ([Core Basic Skills Development](#))
- Casework/clinical skills in post-visit work with parents, children/youth, siblings, foster parents and others
- Use of visiting in permanency decision making
- Use of innovative visiting practices (examples: visit coaching, icebreaker meetings)

Agency Challenges

15. Which of the following challenge your agency in developing and implementing strong visiting policies and practices? Check all that apply.

- Organizational culture
- Inconsistent or incomplete visiting policies
- Lack of a clearly defined visiting practice
- Caseload size/workload demand
- Transportation
- Staff turnover
- Lack of professional development opportunities
- Limited supervisory skills in providing staff with on-the-job training in visiting practice
- Lack of coordination with the courts on visiting plans
- Cultural competence issues
- Other (please specify): [lack of resources to aid in assisting with increased visitation, court and other legal stakeholder input and attitudes around visitation planning.](#)

16. What do you need to overcome these challenges? [Clearer policy, subsequent and enhanced staff training on visitation, stakeholder buy-in and commitment, assistance with transportation, supervision.](#)