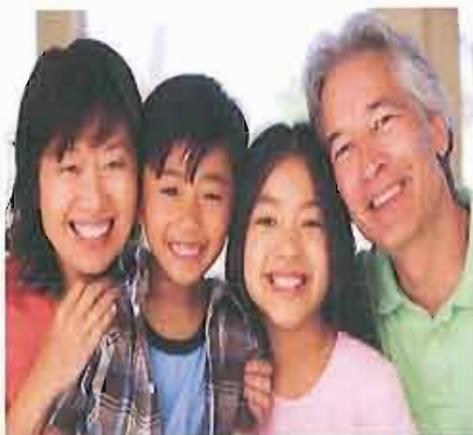
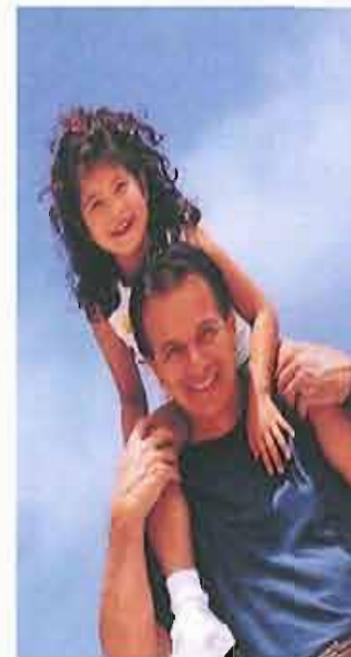


Parent/Child Visitation

DOCUMENTATION



frequency



Quality



Action Step 2A.2.1 part 12
KY 2nd QR PIP report
September 30, 2010

Visitation - Why is it Important? SOP 7E.1.14

Visitation promotes bonding and attachment.

Children separated from their families are at significantly high risk for the development of emotional and behavioral disturbances.

Even when removal is necessary, the separation can interfere with a child's development.

It gives the parents an opportunity to practice and demonstrate what they have learned in their treatment/services to enhance their parenting skills.

It gives the worker the opportunity to assess the parent/child interaction and make informed recommendations regarding reunification.

Why do we do Visitation Agreements?

- Visitation agreements enhance and support the case plan.
- Visitation agreements reduce conflict and provide structure to visits.
- Visitation agreements hold all parties accountable and promote the importance of consistent visitation with the parents.

Visitation Agreements Are Negotiated During Family Team Meetings

Participants

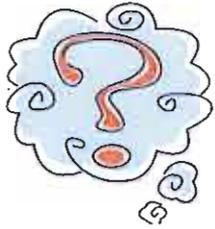
- Parents
- Children
- Family
- Foster Parents
- Relative Caregivers/Kinship Care Providers
- Significant Individuals in Child's Life



Who Can Visit/Who Cannot Visit ?

- Grandparents
- Aunts/Uncles
- Cousins
- Family Friends
- Prior Caregivers

- * Has the child made these requests?



Should the Visits Be Supervised? If so, by Whom?

This should be a discussion between SSW and FSOS....

Who can supervise?

- SSW
- Social Service Aide
- Contracted Agency Staff
- Foster Parents
- Approved Relatives

When Requesting Transportation Team/SSA assistance...

Complete and provide the following:

- Request form
- Current visitation agreement
- Any applicable court orders regarding supervision.
- If the visit is to occur in the DCBS office, the approval memo should also be included.

Visitation Agreements

- Visitation agreements should be written, signed by all parties and filed in the case record.
- Agreements must include all parties that are permitted to visit, who will be supervising the visit and the expectations for appropriate parenting and interaction/activities with the children.
- If applicable, document why visits are not being held in the home or other neutral location.
- If changes are needed, complete a revised written agreement, obtain all signatures, and file the new visitation agreement in the case record.
- Complete the DPP 154A when necessary (i.e. reduction)
- Document in service recordings whether or not the visits are occurring as outlined by the written agreement.

What if there is a conflict?

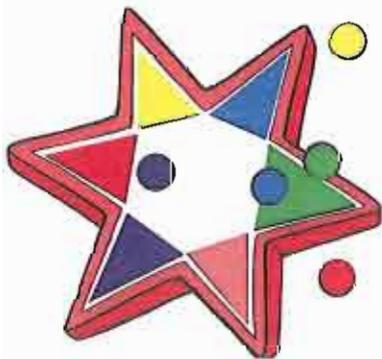
When the parent's right to visit with a child conflicts with the preference's of the substitute caregiver, the conflict should be solved in a way that **preserves and protects** the parent's right to visit.



When there is a disagreement over family members and friends that should be allowed to visit, the **child and parents' preferences** should be considered over substitute caregivers or extended family members.

Developmentally Appropriate Visits

- Parents should be encouraged to bring age-appropriate games or toys to the visitation.
- Visits should reflect age-appropriate interactions between the parents and children.
- The SSW should facilitate the parents' knowledge and use of age-appropriate activities before, during and after visitations.
- If the family does not appear to be interacting appropriately, the SSW should intervene to coach the parents with suggestions for activities.



Frequency



- The Child Welfare League recommends that a visit occur within the first 48 hours of placement to reassure children that they have not been abandoned by their parents.
- Every effort should be made to schedule visits once a week.
- At a minimum, visits are scheduled once every 2 weeks with parents.
- More frequent visitation is recommended for infants (2-3 times per week) to promote positive attachment.

DURATION

Visits should give the parent and child sufficient time to interact and practice skills as well as work on the issues that resulted in the child entering care.



Visits should increase in frequency and duration as the family makes progress on their case plan.

Consultation in Visitation

- Supervisors and Workers should engage in discussion around the progressive and transitional nature of visitation agreements as families make progress toward reunification.
- Incremental changes to the agreement should be made in writing based on the family's progress. Workers should recognize that all families will not progress at the same rate and agreements must be individualized to meet the needs of the family.
- Workers should not make independent decisions regarding visitation changes, but rather seek out consultation and guidance from their supervisor.

Supervised 2 hrs/wk → **Unsupervised 2 hrs/wk**

Day Visits → **1 Over Night** → **All Weekend**

2-3 days a week → **Week** → **Trial Home Visit**

Allow at least 2-3 weeks between transitions to ensure progress

Trial Home Visitation SOP 7E.3.18

SSW **must** have a specifically written and agreed upon visitation agreement for a trial home visit for any child in the custody of the Cabinet or it is considered a return home.

Trial Home Visits should be:

Time Specific/Relatively Short.
Outlined on a Visitation Agreement.

Agreed upon and signed by the:
Worker, Child, Family, and
Other Involved Parties.

- Federal guidelines prohibit a trial home visit exceeding 6 months without prior court authorization.

- SSW and Family establish guidelines for trial home visit and a prevention plan is negotiated.
- Prevention Plan includes: Supervision Issues, School Attendance, Substance/Drug Issues, Daily Routine Care, Physical/Mental Health Needs.

- Enter/Exit Screens must be accurately reflected in TWIST as a “trial home visit” but not an exit from OOHC until the child is released from Cabinet custody.

- Within 48 hours, the SSW completes the DPP-1292 informing the Regional CBW and Billing Specialist of the Trial/Relative Visit or change in placement.
- SSW should advise the parents to apply for a change of payee for benefits to the Social Security Administration.

As long as the child is on a “trial home visit” and it is documented on the visitation agreement and signed, it is not necessary to file a petition to remove the child from the home if the visit proves unsuccessful.



Home

LOCATION



COMMUNITY



Neutral Site



Least Restrictive Environment as Possible





Visits in the Office

Written prior approval is needed from the SRA or Designee (Regional Protocol, SRAA) for a visit to take place in the local DCBS office.

Visits should only occur in the office when it is court ordered or a safety concern exists.



DOCUMENTATION



ALL notes from each supervised visit should be entered into TWIST.

Staff are encouraged to utilize the contact template to ensure all information is documented.

Visitation Checklist

- ✓ The SSW uses the visitation checklist to document observations when supervising a visit.
- ✓ The visitation checklist provides a guideline of behaviors the SSW should be assessing during the visitation.
- ✓ The visitation checklist should be used during EVERY supervised visit that occurs.
- ✓ Once the visitation checklist is completed, it is to be filed in the hard copy case file.

- Document each visit that occurs.
- Document each visit that is missed, canceled or rescheduled.
- When a visit is rescheduled, note the change on the written visitation agreement.
- If visits are not required to be supervised, the SSW should occasionally supervise a visit and document their observations.
- Distribute copies of agreements and any revisions to all parties, including the court.



Visits cannot be canceled or rescheduled based on worker's absence, schedule or convenience.

Cancellation of Visits

Visits canceled by parents, with good cause or in the event of an emergency, should be made up if possible, if advance notice is given.

Barriers to Visitation

Transportation

- Parents living out of town still need to be provided visitation.
- Utilize Transportation Team to assist with visitation.
- Enlist assistance from foster parents/PCC staff when possible.

Time Management and Coverage

- In the event of a conflict in your schedule, make face to face contact with peers to obtain assistance with visits.
- Sending an email does not always result in needed assistance.
- Negotiate trades with peers

Incarcerated Parents

- SOP 7E.3.3 Mandates services to incarcerated parents.
- This includes monthly “home” visits.
- This also includes visitation.
- When working with an incarcerated parent, contact the facility to arrange visitation.



- In some situations the court has ordered no visits to occur in prison while the parents are incarcerated.
- In some situations, the parents have refused visitation, and provided that request in writing.
- These are the two exceptions to visitation while parents are incarcerated.

Incarcerated Parents

- It is important to recognize that visitation can be detrimental to some children if it were to occur in the prison setting.
- A therapists letter is required, documenting the detriment, and then provided to the court for the court to stop visits.



This should only be considered in extremely rare situations and reassessed on a continual basis.

Suspending Parent/Child Visitation – When should this be considered?

Visits Should Continue

- When a waiver of reasonable efforts is granted.
- Even if the children act up after visits or if they have a negative reaction during the visit.
- The parents have tested positive for substances earlier in the week, but appear to be clean and sober at the visit and there is no court order that prohibits visits if the parent tests positive in a specified period of time.
- After a parent has signed a voluntary TPR or after a TPR hearing, while awaiting a judgment.
- Post TPR visits must occur for family members who have a circuit order to have visits, unless the court that granted the visits suspends the order.

Request Visits be Temporarily Suspended

- Ill with a contagious disease. If in doubt, consult with management and request that the parent provide a statement of health from a physician or clinic.
- The parent comes to the visit clearly impaired by drugs or alcohol. The parent should be asked to cancel the visit. The worker should also assess the parent's ability to drive themselves home from the visit, if they are driving.
- If there exists reasonable cause to believe that visitation between a child and a parent or sibling is detrimental to the child's health, welfare, physical, or emotional condition, then the case worker should consult the child's therapist and share the concerns. If the therapist agrees, and will make a recommendation in writing, then a motion should be filed in court to review visitation.

The Cabinet must comply with all court orders that stop visitation – This issue should be revisited at each court hearing.



How to request a visit be suspended

- Seek written approval from the SRA or Designee (Regional Protocol, SRAA) to suspend a visit.
- The SSW documents the circumstances regarding any suspension including:
 - The person(s) involved;
 - Their relationship to the child;
 - The reason for the suspension; and
 - The length of the suspension request.



“GOODBYE” VISITS SOP 2.1.2



- 30 days after TPR has been granted, if an appeal has not been filed.
- Planned with support from SSW, birth family members, foster/adoptive parents, and mental health providers.
- If parents are unable to attend, SSW attempts to obtain a goodbye letter for the child.
- If it is recommended that the goodbye visit be delayed, the SSW must request approval in writing from the SRA or designee, (Regional Protocol, SRAA).
- If the adoption has been finalized, a goodbye visit is at the discretion of the adoptive parents.

Sibling Visitation



Sibling relationships

- 80 percent of Americans have at least one.
- They outlast marriages, survive the death of parents, resurface after quarrels that would sink any friendship.
- They flourish in a thousand incarnations of closeness and distance, warmth, loyalty and distrust.



Erica E. Goode

When do we start thinking about sibling visits?

5-day Out of Home Care Case Conference

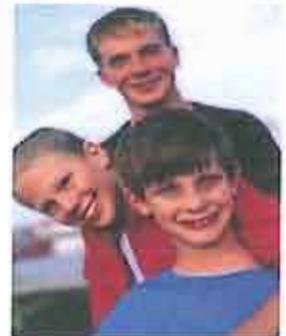
- Identify ALL siblings (include ½ siblings)
Complete a genogram and the DPP 1275, Relative Exploration Form.
- Where are the siblings?
Obtain contact information, including address and telephone numbers!



SOP 7 E.1.14 VISITATION

Visitation agreements are negotiated during Family Team Meetings

- Visits are scheduled no less than once every four (4) weeks with siblings.
- It is desirable for siblings, when age appropriate to have some visits separate from parents.
- Visits are no less than one (1) hour, although the allotment of additional time is encouraged depending on the needs of the child.



VISITATION AGREEMENTS

- INPUT FROM ALL PARTIES – NEGOTIATED
- A CLEARLY OUTLINED SCHEDULE
Dates – Times – Locations – Who is Visiting
- WHO WILL BE TRANSPORTING/SUPERVISING?
- INCLUDE A CONTINGENCY PLAN
In the event of an emergency – who will call and how can parties be reached?
- COPIES PROVIDED TO ALL PARTIES

Documentation



- Document visits as they occur per the visitation agreement in TWIST.
- Changes and modifications to the visitation agreement should also be documented in TWIST.
- Workers are responsible for documenting contacts in TWIST when visits are supervised by the transportation team.

Suspension of Sibling Visitation

- If there exists reasonable cause to believe that visitation between a child and a parent or **sibling** is detrimental to the child's health, welfare, or physical or emotional condition, the SSW seeks **prior** written approval from the SRA or Designee (Regional Protocol, SRAA) to suspend a visit. The SSW documents the circumstances regarding any suspension, including:
 - The person(s) involved Their relationship to the child
 - The reason for the suspension The length of the suspension



It should be noted that granted suspensions are time limited and must be reassessed.

Structured Visitation

Plan Age Appropriate Activities

(Don't Leave it Up to the Children..Talk About It In Advance)

Location:	Neutral Sites	School	Playground	Library
	Mall	Restaurant	Park	Community Center

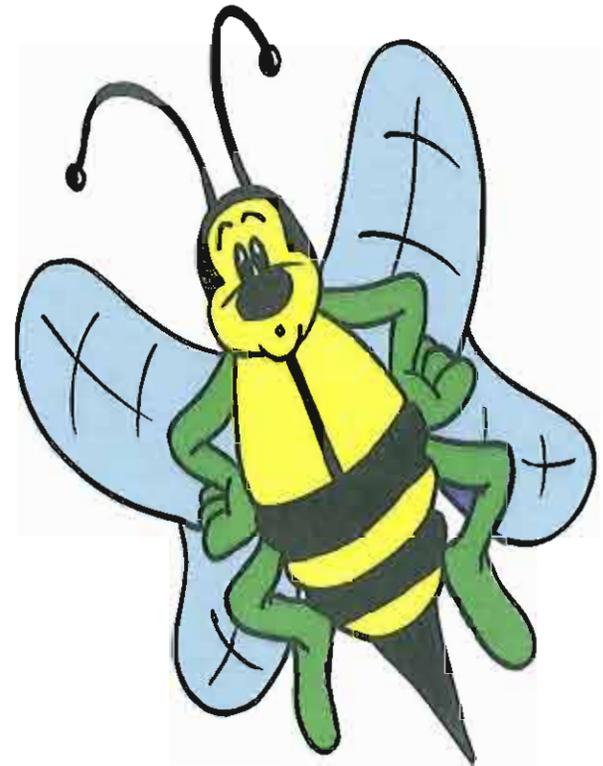
Coloring
Reading Books
Games
Educational Flash Cards
Birthday Parties
Lifebook Parties
Ice Cream Socials
Play Dates
Dinner Dates



Walking
Sports
Movies
Fishing
Listen to Music
Dance
Explore State Parks
Picnic
School Events

Be Creative

- Encourage foster parents/relatives to meet in the middle.
- Encourage foster parents to be exchange respite providers for siblings.
- Encourage Seasonal Activities.
- Remind adults to pack snacks for visits occurring in or around meal times.
- Remind children to dress appropriately for the planned activity.



Don't Forget – Modern Sibling Communication

E-Mail

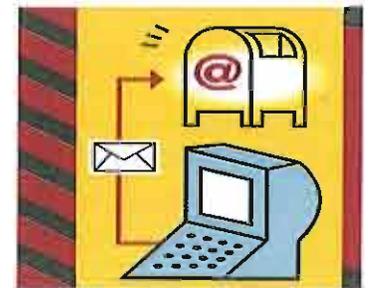


Letters

Supervision Is Key...

Incorporate in the Visitation Agreement...

Set Boundaries



PHONE CALLS

Text Messages

Frequently Asked Questions



Can we supervise a sibling that is not committed to the Cabinet?

No. The other responsible party has to stay unless we are court ordered to supervise the other child. We cannot assume responsibility for a child not committed to the Cabinet. In addition, we cannot transport a child that is not in the state's custody.

What do we do if a parent or custodian of a sibling not committed to the Cabinet will not allow their child to visit with a child in care?

We explain to this individual the importance of maintaining sibling attachments. We document our efforts to engage this individual in sibling visitation in TWIST. We report our efforts to the courts and the guardian ad litem.

What do we do if the other party does not show up for a visit?

Attempt to contact the individual using the provided contact information. If you are not able to reach the other party, wait 15 minutes past the scheduled visitation time and if they still have not arrived, document the attempted visit and return home.



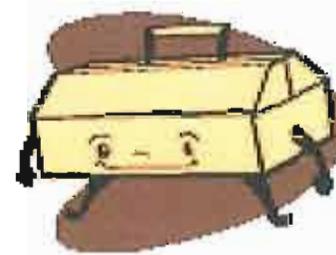
SOP Resources/Tip Sheets/Handouts

- [SOP 7E.1.14](#)
- [Visitation Agreement](#)
- [Visitation Checklist/Summary](#)
- [Developmentally Age Appropriate Activities Chart](#)
- [Tip Sheet for Visitation between Parents and Children](#)

- [SOP 2.1.2](#)
- ["Preparing for the Goodbye Visit" tip sheet.](#)

- [Resources](#)
- [Attachment of Child\(ren\) in Out of Home Placement](#)

- [Handouts](#)
- Contact Template
- Transportation Team Request Form
- Sample Memo Request for Visits in the Office
- Sample Memo Request to Suspend Visits



Tools For Your Tool Box



Thank you for participating in this presentation.



As we continue with our CFSR efforts, we will be assessing our progress with regard to quality parent/child and sibling visitation. We hope this presentation has been helpful and stressed the importance of documenting the quality work you are providing.

We will utilize the CQI supervisor reviews as well as 2nd and 3rd level reviews to evaluate our progress in this area. We look forward to sharing that information with you in the coming months!



Thanks so much for all you do!!

