

# Child Support Access & Visitation Assistance



## **What is the Access and Visitation Program?**

The Access and Visitation Program is designed to help parents with active Child Support Enforcement cases to understand that their children should come first. Our overall goal is to support healthy relationships by increasing the involvement of fathers and mothers in the emotional development of their children. Healthy connections with both parents reduce the risk of early parenting, poor academic achievement, substance abuse, and juvenile delinquency.

Assistance is available for qualified applicants seeking visitation to improve relationships between non-custodial parents and their children. An Access and Visitation attorney will mediate, attempt to reach a voluntary agreement, or if necessary, ask the court for reasonable visitation.

## Benefits of Cooperative Parenting:

Cooperative Parenting gives children a strong family bond and a family support system that includes positive influences and emotional, as well as financial, support from both parents. Children need both parents for guidance throughout childhood and into adulthood. It is vital that children have access to and visitation with both parents because of the increased risk for children in single parent families to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as:

- poor academic performance;
- not graduating high school;
- juvenile delinquency;
- low self-esteem;
- drug use;
- attempted suicide; and
- teenage pregnancy

## Who May Apply For Help?

Any non-custodial parent:

- with an active Child Support Enforcement case;
- who does not have a current or prior visitation order;
- whose child support order originates in one of the parishes covered under the program; and
- who does not have a history of domestic violence or abuse

## Are There Any Fees Involved?

No. There is no application fee.

## Will the Access and Visitation Attorney Be My Attorney?

No. As always, parents are free to hire their own attorneys to ask the court for custody or visitation. If it is in the best interest of your child, the Access and Visitation Program can assist you with visitation; however, we cannot assist you in seeking custody. The attorneys employed by the State represent the State in the best interest of minor children.

## Confidentiality

Any identifying information that you provide will be held in strict confidence and will be used only by persons engaged in and for the purpose of Access and Visitation, except as required by law.

To find out if DCFS provides access and visitation services in your parish, call  
**1-888-LAHELP-U (888-524-3578)**  
or visit **[www.dcf.la.gov/visitation](http://www.dcf.la.gov/visitation)**.



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