

Visitation Guide

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Quick Reference Table

Visit Type	Time Frame	Location Requirements
FSW and Child/Youth placed in a DCS Foster Home	First visit should occurs within three (3) business days following placement; two (2) visits per month during the first two (2) months; and one (1) visit monthly for ongoing contact; If the child/youth is in custody five (5) days or less in the calendar month, only one (1) face to face is required.	First visit is in the foster home, half of the visits during the first two (2) months are in the foster home, and one (1) visit must occur in the foster home for ongoing contact.
FSW and Child/Youth placed in a Contract Agency Foster Home	First visit within three (3) business days following placement; one (1) visit monthly for ongoing contact.	First visit is in the foster home, one (1) visit must occur in the foster home at least every other month for ongoing contact.
FSW and Child/Youth placed in a Congregate/Residential Setting	One (1) visit monthly.	One visit must occur in the facility every month.
Child/Youth and Contract Agency Worker	First visit occurs within 24 hours of placement six (6) times in the first two (2) months; and two (2) visits monthly for ongoing contact	First visit is in the foster home, half of the visits during the first two (2) months are in the foster home, and one (1) visit must occur in the foster home for ongoing contact.
Birth Parent and Child Visitation	Visits should occur weekly and last at least one (1) hour in duration.	
Child and Sibling Visitation	If siblings are not placed together, they should visit with each other at least one (1) time per month.	
Foster Parent and Birth Parent	As frequently as necessary.	
FSW and Foster Parent	Within three (3) business days of the placement; at least one (1) time monthly for ongoing contact.	For DCS foster parents, the visit is in the foster home every month. For contract agency foster parents, the visit occurs in the foster home at least every other month.
Child/Youth from Another State (ICPC)	One (1) visit monthly.	
Foster Parent and Foster Parent Support Worker	One (1) visit monthly with active placements =/> 15 days of the month; at least one contact type of phone or email/text/correspondence if active placements <15 days of the month; if active placements < 15 days of the month for three consecutive months then a quarterly visit is required.	All visits should occur in the foster home.
Trial Home Visit (THV)	First visit must occur the day following placement and two (2) additional visits must occur within the first thirty (30) days and at least two (2) visits per calendar month for the remainder of the THV; for children/youth who leave custody within the first five (5) days of the month, a second monthly visit is not required.	First visit should occur in the family home; at least one (1) visit should occur in the home monthly; during the school year at least one (1) visit should occur in the school setting.
Trial Home Visits with Child/Youth served through Contract Agency Continuum	First visit must occur the day following placement; one (1) visit monthly to the remainder of the THV.	First visit should occur in the family home; at least one (1) visit should occur in the home monthly.
FSW & Birth Parent(s) (Unless Termination of Parental Rights has occurred)	Within two (2) weeks following a new placement for the child/youth, one (1) visit monthly for ongoing contact.	Visits should occur in the family home quarterly.

Time Frames

For most required visits, the time frame and location for the visit type is prescribed. These can be found within the Quick Reference Table and under each type of visits within these guide. In some cases, the FSW or their supervisor may determine that more visitation is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child/youth. If this determination occurs, the Team Leader (TL) should document this in case conference notes in the child/youth's electronic record.

Documentation

All contact related to cases should be documented in the electronic record. The form *CS-0594, Visitation Observation Checklist* should be used to document specific events and behavior related to the visit. This document is uploaded into TFACTS in the Document section. A case recording is entered into TFACTS to reflect a visit occurring but can reference form *CS-0594, Visitation Observation Checklist* for details regarding the visit. Any visit specific additional documentation is listed in the guide under the visitation type. Policy *16.38 Face-to-Face Visitation with Dependent/Neglected/Unruly Children in DCS Custody* and Policy *31.14 Documentation of TFACTS Case Recordings* outline timeframes related to entry of documentation.

Visitation Types

FSW and Child Placed in a DCS Foster Home

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- FSW and Management Staff (DCS Team Leader or Team Coordinator)

Time Frames

- The DCS FSW visits the child/youth in the foster home within the three (3) business days following a new placement. This requirement is not fulfilled by a visit in the home on the placement date as the intent is to follow up with the child/youth and foster family shortly after the placement is made to ensure safety, assist with adjustment, and promote placement stability.
- During the first two (2) months of placement, the FSW visits the child/youth two (2) times per month with at least one monthly visit occurring in the foster home.
- Following the first two months, visits will occur once per month in the foster home.
- If the child/ youth is in custody five (5) days or less in a calendar month, only one (1) visit is required for that month.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure the initial and ongoing adjustment of the child/youth to their placement.
- Monitor and ensure the child/youth is receiving appropriate services.
- Determine that the child's needs are being met and service goals are being implemented.
- Assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are being taken to support the timely achievement of the permanency goal.

Other Requirements

- All visits shall include a private meeting between the DCS FSW and the child/youth out of the presence of the foster parent or other caregiver, except in those cases in which the child is an infant. During the private meeting, the FSW should encourage the child/youth to discuss how they feel about their placement, school setting, family, friends, visitation, and permanency. The private meeting should be documented within the case recording associated with the contact.
- At least half of the monthly visits between the FSW and the child/youth should occur in the child/youth's placement. When visiting the child/youth in their placement, the FSW should observe their living space as much as possible including, but not limited to, where the child/youth eats, sleeps, and bathes.
- Face-to-face visits may take place in a variety of settings. The FSW should consider which setting is most appropriate to conduct the visit beyond the prescribed locations listed above. In most cases, visits with children at school should be associated with pre-scheduled meetings and should not be a common visitation environment.
- Efforts to build the Child and Family Team should be ongoing. During regular face to face contact, children and youth should be asked who else can be added to their team.

FSW and Child Served by a Contract Agency Provider

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- FSW and Contract Agency Provider

Time Frames

- The DCS FSW visits the child/youth in the foster home within the three (3) business days following a new placement. This requirement is not fulfilled by a visit in the home on the placement date as the intent is to follow up with the child/youth and foster family shortly after the placement is made to ensure safety, assist with adjustment, and promote placement stability.
- The DCS FSW will see the child/youth face to face monthly. This visit should occur in the foster home at least once every other month.

- The contract agency case worker shall accompany the DCS FSW to these visits at least once every three (3) months in order to have discussions with foster parent/caregiver, the child, and each other about issues pertinent to the case.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure the initial and ongoing adjustment of the child/youth to their placement.
- Monitor and ensure the child/youth is receiving appropriate services.
- Determine that the child's needs are being met and service goals are being implemented.
- Assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are being taken to support the timely achievement of the permanency goal.

Requirements

- All visits shall include a private meeting between the DCS FSW and the child/youth out of the presence of the foster parent or other caregiver, except in those cases in which the child is an infant. During the private meeting, the FSW should encourage the child/youth to discuss how they feel about their placement, school setting, family, friends, visitation, and permanency. The private meeting should be documented within the case recording associated with the contact.
- The DCS FSW sees the child/youth every other month in the foster home.
- The DCS FSW makes monthly contact with the contract agency provider to discuss treatment goals and work collaboratively towards permanency.

FSW and Child Served in a Congregate/Residential Setting

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- FSW and Management Staff (DCS Team Leader or Team Coordinator)

Time Frames

- The DCS FSW sees the child/youth face to face monthly in their placement.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure the initial and ongoing adjustment of the child/youth to their placement.
- Monitor and ensure the child/youth is receiving appropriate services.

- Determine that the child's needs are being met and service goals are being implemented.
- Assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are being taken to support the timely achievement of the permanency goal.

Requirements

- All visits shall include a private meeting between the DCS FSW and the child/youth out of the presence of facility staff unless conducting the private meeting creates an imminent safety risk. In those senarios, the lack of a private meeting must be approved by the Regional Director (RD) and documented in TFACTS. During the private meeting, the FSW should encourage the child/youth to discuss how they feel about their placement, school setting, family, friends, visitation, and permanency. The private meeting should be documented within the case recording associated with the contact.
- The DCS FSW makes contact with the assigned facility staff monthly to discuss treatment needs and progress of the child/youth.

Child and Contract Agency Worker

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Contract Agency

Time Frames

- The first visit occurs within twenty four (24) hours of a new placement.
- Face to face contacts occur six (6) times during the first two months the child is in a new placement. At least three (3) of those visits should occur in the foster home.
- Following the first two months, visits will occur two (2) times a month following for the duration of the placement with at least one (1) visit in the foster home monthly.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure the initial and ongoing adjustment of the child/youth to their placement.
- Monitor and ensure the child/youth is receiving appropriate services.
- Determine that the child's needs are being met and service goals are being implemented.
- Assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are being taken to support the timely achievement of the permanency goal.

Other Requirements

- All visits include a private meeting between the contract agency worker and the child/youth out of the presence of the foster parent or other caregiver, except in those cases in which the child is an infant.

Birth Parents and Child Visitation

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Assigned FSW, Management Staff (DCS Team Leader or Team Coordinator), Parent, other Child and Family Team Members, and Contract Agency Worker, if applicable.

Time Frames

- As frequently as possible for parents who have parental rights.
- Opportunities for visits between children/youth and their family occur for at least four (4) hours per month.
- The child/youth should visit with each parent at least once per week.
- Each visit should last a minimum one (1) hour in length unless the visit is shortened to protect the safety or well-being of the child/youth.
- Visits can be modified by a court order specific to addressing visitation. All court orders addressing visitation limitations should be uploaded in the documents section of TFACTS.

Purpose of Visit

- Visits are important to reduce child/youth's trauma due to separation from the parent and family.
- Visits help to build and/or maintain the parent-child relationship.
- Visits are essential to the success of reunification and other forms of permanence.
- Parents whose rights have been terminated are not entitled to visits.

Other Requirements

- Supervised visitation is often needed to ensure the safety of the child/youth during the visit. If at any time the visit becomes unsafe, the FSW should end the visit immediately and contact their supervisor. If someone outside the agency is supervising the visit, they should end the visit immediately and contact the FSW or Team Leader assigned to the case.
- Younger children may need more frequent visits with their parents to build or maintain their attachments and reduce separation anxiety.
- Denial of visitation is not used to manage behavior. However, modifications in the visitation plan may be therapeutically necessary.
- Visits occur in as home-like a setting as possible.
- See Policy *16.43.Supervised/UnsupervisedBetween Child/Youth Family and Siblings*.

- If the child/youth is a victim of severe abuse, the Severe Abuse Review is completed before unsupervised visitation begins. See Policy *16.12 Severe Abuse Review* for more information.

Note: All visitation plans must comply with any applicable court orders. If it is believed that a court order was violated by any party, legal is consulted as soon as possible. If DCS receives knowledge that a foster parent from a kinship placement allowed contact between a parent and a child that could constitute a violation of a court order, DCS must notify the court within ninety-six (96) hours of receiving this knowledge.

Documentation

- The individual supervising the visitation should complete form *CS-0594, Visitation Observation Checklist*. The completed form is scanned into the Documents section of TFACTS and a case recording is completed providing the same information or referencing the completed form location.
- If someone outside of the agency is providing the supervision, the FSW will ensure that person has access to the form. After the visit is completed, the FSW will debrief with the supervisor of the visit and ensure they receive a copy of the completed form.
- Following the visit, the FSW debriefs with each participant of the visit and documents that information in case recordings.
- When a contract agency worker supervises the visitation, they also document their observations in a case recording in addition to completing form *CS-0594 Visitation Observation Checklist*.

Child and Sibling Visitation

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Assigned FSW, Management Staff (DCS Team Leader or Team Coordinator), Parent, other Child and Family Team Members, and Contract Agency Worker, if applicable.

Time Frames

- For children/youth not placed together, sibling visits occur no less than one (1) time per month regardless of parental visits, unless directed otherwise by a court order.
- Sibling visits should occur as frequently as possible.
- Visits can be modified by a court order specific to addressing visitation. All court orders addressing visitation limitations should be uploaded in the documents section of TFACTS.

Purpose of Visit

- Visits are important to reduce child/youth's trauma due to separation from the parent and family.
- Visits help to maintain the sibling relationship.

Other Requirements

- Supervised visitation is often needed to ensure the safety of the child during the visit. If at any time the visit becomes unsafe, the FSW should end the visit immediately and contact their supervisor. If someone outside the agency is supervising the visit, they should end the visit immediately and contact the FSW or Team Leader assigned to the case.
- Denial of visitation is not used to manage behavior. However, modifications in the visitation plan may be therapeutically necessary.
- Visits occur in as home like a setting as possible.

Note: All visitation plans must comply with any applicable court orders. If it is believed that a court order was violated by any party, legal is consulted as soon as possible.

Documentation

- Sibling visitation is documented in case recordings. If the visit occurs simultaneously with a parent/child visitation, the documentation requirements for parent/child visitation should be used.
- Following the visit, the FSW debriefs with each participant of the visit and documents that information in case recordings.

Foster Parents and Birth Parent

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Assigned FSW, Management Staff (DCS Team Leader or Team Coordinator), Foster Parent, Birth Parent, and Contract Agency Case Worker, if applicable.

Time Frames

- As frequently as necessary.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure parent involvement, information sharing, and mentoring when necessary.
- Provide the birth parents with an opportunity to inform the foster parent(s) of their child/youth's specific needs, likes, dislikes, and goals.
- Provide a learning environment for the birth parents so they can learn the positive parenting skills and alternate ways to discipline from the foster parents.
- Strengthen the ability to work as a team in finding permanence for the child/youth.

Other Requirements

- These visits can occur in the home of the birth parent(s), the home of the foster parent(s), or in the community.
- In some cases, the FSW may want to be present to help facilitate building a relationship between the birth parents and foster parents.

FSW and Foster Parent

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Assigned FSW, Management Staff, and Foster Parent.

Time Frames

- When a child/youth first enters a new foster home, the FSW must meet with the foster parent within three (3) business days of the placement. Following the initial visit, subsequent visits occur as often as necessary, but no less often than once a month.

Purpose of Visit

- Develop a “helping relationship” between the FSW and the foster parent(s).
- Ensure the foster parents have the ability to meet the needs of the child/youth.
- Monitor service delivery and effectiveness and to assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Support the foster parent(s) in their care for the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are being taken to support the timely achievement of the permanency goal.

Other Requirements

- The FSW contact with the foster parent(s) can substitute for the Foster ParentSupport/assessment worker’s face-to-face visit with the foster parent(s) every other month with the approval of the Regional Director.
- If the FSW is completing the visit for the Foster Parent Support/assessment worker, then documentation will be entered into the Electronic Record, and the FSW will click the button to allow the entry to be copied to the foster home file.

Child/Youth from Another State (ICPC)

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- FSW and Management Staff.

Time Frames

- Supervision of the child/youth in a foster placement from another state includes face-to-face visits with the child/youth at least once a month.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure adjustment to placement.
- Monitor and ensure the child/youth is receiving appropriate services.
- Determine that the child/youth's needs are being met and service goals are being implemented.
- Assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- Ensure actions that promote permanency are taken timely and professionally in order to support the expedited achievement of the permanency goal.

Other Requirements

- May take place in the child/youth's placement, at school, in the FSW's office, or other appropriate setting.
- Quarterly documentation is provided to the other state through progress reports.
- See the *ICPC Practice and Procedures Manual* for additional information.

Foster Parent and Foster Parent Support Worker

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- Foster Parent Support Worker and Foster Parent(s)

Time Frames

- Once monthly face-to-face contact with the foster parent(s) in their home when active placements occur for 15 days or more during the month.
- At least one contact type of phone or email/text/correspondence when active placements occur for less than 15 days during the month.
- If active placements occur for less than 15 days during the month for three (3) consecutive months the Foster Parent Support Worker will visit the foster home quarterly.

Purpose of Visit

- To ensure home remains compliant by assessing home safety and well-being of foster parent and children/youth.
- To provide support to foster parent(s) regarding care of children/youth placed in the home.
- To re-assesses the home biannually.
- Share all relevant and legally permissible information concerning the child/youth.
- Monitor service delivery and effectiveness and to assess the safety and well-being of the child/youth.
- To assist the foster parent(s) in arranging for any services the foster parent(s) may need in order to adequately and safely provide a home for foster children/youth. These services may include referral to mental health counseling services, medical doctors, or other supportive services.

Other Requirements

- Upon the approval of the Regional Director, the Foster Parent Support/assessment worker can visit the foster parent(s) every other month and the FSW can complete the face to face contact with the foster parent(s) on the alternate months.
- If the FSW is completing the visit for the Foster Parent Support/assessment worker, then documentation will be entered in the Electronic Record, and the FSW will click the button to allow the entry to be copied to the foster home file.

Trial Home Visits (THV)

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- DCS FSW, Child and Family Team, and Contract Agency, as applicable.

Time Frames

- An initial face to face visit is made in the home on the day following placement to confirm safety.
- Two (2) additional face to face visits during the first thirty days (30) of the trial home visit, for a total of three (3) visits within the first thirty (30) days , with at least one (1) visits occurring in the family home per month.
- Following the initial thirty (30) days, a minimum of two (2) face to face visits per calendar month is required, with at least one (1) of these visits occurring in the family home. If the child/youth exits custody within the first five (5) days of the month, only one (1) visit is required.
- One (1) face to face visit with the child/youth should occur at their school each month that school is in session. The FSW will interview the child/youth's teacher to evaluate progress.

- When a child/youth enters a trial home visit and is still being served through a contract agency continuum, the contract agency staff will be responsible for completing the required visits and the DCS FSW will visit the child/youth in their family home one (1) time per month.

Purpose of Visit

- Ensure that the conditions that led to the child/youth's custody have been addressed.
- Confirm that the child/youth is safe in his environment.
- Ensure that progress in school remains appropriate.
- Ensure that all services needed by the child/youth and family are arranged and are effective.

Other Requirements

- All visits shall include a private meeting between the DCS FSW and the child/youth out of the presence of the parent or other caregiver, except in those cases in which the child is an infant. During the private meeting, the FSW should encourage the child/youth to discuss how they feel about their placement, school setting, family, friends, visitation, and permanency. The private meeting should be documented within the case recording associated with the contact.
- If the child/youth is a victim of severe abuse, the Severe Abuse Review is completed before the THV begins. See Policy *16.2 Severe Abuse Review* for more information.

FSW and Birth Parent(s)

Person Responsible for Ensuring Visit Takes Place

- DCS FSW and the Birth Parents

Time Frames

- Whenever a child/youth has a new placement, the DCS FSW meets with the child/youth's birth parent within two (2) weeks of the child/youth's placement.
- The FSW makes one (1) face to face contact per month with all parents.
- At least one (1) visit must be in the birth parents home quarterly.

Purpose of Visit

- Monitor progress of birth parents on the action steps listed on the Family Permanency Plan.
- Observe and monitor ongoing progress of the birth parents/caregiver within the home setting, including but not limited to, the condition of the home, safety issues, domestic abilities, and alcohol and drug (A&D) issues/exposure.

- Discuss ongoing needs and services of the child/youth.
- Assist in arranging services, if needed.

Other Requirements

- If the FSW is not meeting with the birth parent(s) once per month, and the whereabouts of the birth parent(s) is known, efforts to meet with the birth parent(s) are documented in the record at least one (1) time monthly.
- If the birth parent(s) whereabouts are not known, the FSW conducts ongoing diligent search and ensures this is documented in the record at least quarterly.
- Efforts to build the Child and Family Team is ongoing and the FSW should explore informal supports and identify any additional resources to join the child and family team.
- The birth parents are updated on the child/youth's progress, services, and assessments.
- The birth parents' opinions about the effectiveness of services being provided to them or the child/youth is discussed.
- These visits encompass ongoing discussion with the birth parents about their progress toward the identified permanency goals.
- Only birth parents who have parental rights require visitation by the FSW. If a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) or surrender has occurred on a parent, that parent no longer requires monthly face to face contact.

Glossary

Contract Agency Worker- Any employee of a Private Agency that has been contracted by the Department of Children's Services to provide Case Management services and functions in the role as a DCS Family Service Worker.

Infant- This is a child twelve (12) months of age and younger.

New Placement- Either the child/youth's entrance into custody in a foster home or facility operated by DCS or under a Contract Agency Provider agency or any placement that is different from the immediately prior placement.