

Supervised Visitation



A parent's guide



COUNTY of
VENTURA
Human Services Agency

Supervised Family Visitation

Spending time with your child is very important. This booklet outlines requirements and offers suggestions to help make your visits a positive experience for you and your child.

What is supervised visitation?

Based on issues of protection and safety, a judge may decide that in order for a child to have contact with a parent, a neutral third person must be present during any visitation. This type of third-person visitation arrangement is called **supervised visitation**. Children & Family Services (CFS) arranges visits that are easy on the child and the parents, keeping the child's safety a priority. Visitation is an important part of a family's case plan and may contribute to a timely reunification.

During a supervised visit, the parent will not be left alone with the child. A CFS case aide will be present at all times and the visit will take place at a Children & Family Services office.



CFS case aides are visitation professionals with CPR and first aid certification. They are trained to assist with basic parenting skills and will guide and redirect interaction if needed during visits. CFS case aides are there to ensure the safety and well-being of your child before, during, and after the visit. They will explain the policies and procedures to parents as well as observe and document both physical and verbal interactions during the visit.

Questions or strong feelings

Sometimes children have questions or express strong feelings during a visit. Children may express sadness or anger. Encourage communication by accepting your child's feelings - and use a calm, interested tone of voice when responding. This helps your child build trust and increases problem solving abilities. If your child says, "You make me sad/angry," you may try replying, "I'm sorry I do that." If your child says something hurtful, you may say something like, "I'm sorry you're feeling that way." It may be difficult to acknowledge your child's feelings, but it is necessary to do so. Children may ask about when they will be going home, or when a parent is getting a house. It is important to answer without making promises.

Take advantage of this special time with your child. Be sure to talk to your social worker if you have questions or concerns about your visits.



Suggestions for successful visits

Greeting your child

- Wait for your child to approach you if he or she is acting shy
- Smile, hug your child
- Tell your child you are happy to see him or her

Spending time with your baby

- Hold and soothe your baby
- Feed your baby if it's time to do so
- Burp and change your baby when needed, and before your visit ends
- Talk to your baby
- Look for your baby's new skills and growth changes



Spending time with your child

- Help your child select a game or toy
- Be sensitive to your child's needs - if your child is not interested in the current activity, ask "What else would you like to do?"
- Encourage your child with statements such as, "I'm proud of you," "You are taking turns nicely," "You did a good job."
- Avoid talking about adult problems. Children need to be free from worry about parents' issues.
- Bring a healthy snack or meal for your child if it is meal or snack time
- Provide positive guidance if your child needs to be redirected or needs help sharing

Saying goodbye

- Help your child prepare for the end of the visit
- Clean and put away the toys with your child
- Smile, hug your child
- Help your child feel better by being supportive of the CFS case aide, foster parent, or relative caregiver taking care of your child. At the end of the visit, you may say, "Have a good time with _____."



Age appropriate activities

Newborn to 2 years

Sing, play patty-cake, roll a ball, visual toys, noisy toys. Encourage motor skills and physical touch by holding and consoling. Note: Some children born premature or with drug/alcohol in their systems are sensitive to sounds, color and touch. Talk to your social worker about your child's special needs and responses.

Age 2-4 years

Color (markers should be non-toxic and water soluble), put together simple puzzles, read picture books, sing, play with blocks and ride-on toys

Age 4-6 years

Read, color with big chalk and markers, play board games, practice writing, roll or toss a large ball

Age 6-8 years

Play board and card games, color with big chalk and markers, do homework, or read

Age 8-10 years

Read, do arts & crafts, play board and card games, action figures and dolls, do homework, ask about daily activities

Age 10-12 years

Talk, read, do craft projects and homework

Age 12-14 years

Discuss sports, social events, fashion and the "mall," read, do homework, do craft projects

Age 14-16 years

Talk about school, do homework, play board and card games, discuss sports, social events, fashion, read

Age 16-18 years

This is a good age for parents and youth to plan activities together

Visitation rules

Visits are for the benefit of you and your child. The CFS case aide will assist in making your visit safe and focused on your child's needs.

Confirm each visit

- Visits must be confirmed by calling the CFS case aide no later than 8 a.m. on the day of the visit.
- No one but the visiting parent can confirm the visit.
- If the visit is not confirmed on time, the visit will be cancelled for that day and will not be rescheduled.

Arrive on time

- It is important to your child, and to the next family on the schedule, for parents to arrive on time.
- The visit will not occur if the parents are more than 15 minutes late. Arriving more than 15 minutes late is recorded as a failure to participate.

Before the visit

- A visit will be terminated if anyone present is under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.
- Weapons, or anything that could be used as a weapon, are not allowed at visits.
- Prior approval from the social worker is required before bringing anyone with you to the visit.
- Prior approval from the social worker is required before bringing gifts. If your child has a birthday or other special celebration coming up, contact your social worker ahead of time.

During the visit

- All parties must be within the CFS case aide's hearing and sight distance at all times.
- The court case cannot be discussed in the child's presence.



- Negative talk about anyone, including the child, child's siblings, other parent, judge, caregiver, social worker, or CFS case aide is not allowed.
- Use polite language. Avoid swear words or name calling.
- Do not use the child or CFS case aide to communicate with the other parent.
- In supervised visitation, all verbal communication must be understood by the CFS case aide; whispering, passing notes, or using hand signals is not allowed.
- If your child seems uncomfortable with physical contact, such as tickling, hugging, kissing or holding, please stop immediately. You may discuss your child's reaction with your social worker.
- It is important for you to manage your child's behavior during the visit. Positive forms of discipline are to be used if discipline is needed. Redirecting your child or brief time outs are recommended. If you want more parenting help, see your social worker to review available services.
- Observation of your interaction/participation will be used at the hearing and recommendations will be written into the court report.

At the end of the visit

- Visits end at the scheduled time.
- It is the parent's responsibility to begin cleaning up the visitation area 5 to 10 minutes before the visit is over. Clean up includes picking up any trash from the visit and using disinfectant wipes provided to clean the toys.
- Goodbyes begin immediately after clean up.
- Help make goodbyes easier for your child by making them positive.

Cancel in advance

- Call the CFS case aide at least 24 hours in advance to cancel a visit. Leave a voice mail message if the CFS case aide is not available. This will provide the CFS case aide adequate notice so that your child will not be disappointed at the last minute.
- Canceled or missed visits cannot be rescheduled.

Suspended visits

- Failure to participate for three pre-arranged visits in a row will result in the suspension of visits. You must contact your social worker to be placed back on the visitation schedule.

If a visit is canceled by the department

- If the department cancels a visit, or your child is sick, make-up time will be mutually arranged between you and the CFS case aide. Make-up time may mean more time given to a future visit. Visits supervised by CFS case aides are not available during evening hours, weekends, or on holidays.

All visits end at the scheduled time

- All visits end at the regularly scheduled time, even if the parent was late.



CFS case aide

Name _____

Phone _____

Visit place _____

Visit time _____

Signature _____

Date _____



The County of Ventura Human Services Agency provides public services that promote self-sufficiency, health and well-being. Our programs help ensure the protection of children, the elderly, and dependent adults, and provide a safety net for individuals and families who need assistance with basic necessities, such as food, housing and health care. Additionally, we help people secure employment through education, training, job search skills, and job placement.



Referral line for health, human and community services.



Toll-Free: 866-904-9362
vchsa.org