

## BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: 4.9	SUBJECT:  VISITATION – DEVELOPING A PLAN AND VISITATION RULES
OAC: 5101:2-39-08.1	EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/1/01
PCSAO: 3.13	REVISION DATE: 1/27/04 9/27/05
COA: S21.7.02, S21.7.03	REVIEW DATE: 3/22/05 9/27/05

### PURPOSE:

It is critical to the health and well being of the child in out-of-home care that regular and frequent visitation occur with their family. Visitation maintains attachments between the family members and the child. It is the goal of the Butler County Children Services Board that visits with children are a positive experience for all involved. The visitation plan shall fully support the goals of the case plan.

### POLICY:

#### VISITATION PLAN

4.9.1 The worker shall solicit the input from the child, family, caregiver and key individuals when developing the visitation plan. The visitation plan is recorded on Part II, Section 2 of the case plan.

4.9.2 The visitation plan shall:

- Assure the safety of the child and identify situations and persons who pose a risk to the child. This shall be documented under the restriction of visitations.
- Shall identify who may visit, frequency of visits, duration, time and location, transportation responsibilities and the level of supervision required.
- Shall document what other forms of approved communication will occur (i.e. telephone or written correspondence).

- 4.9.3 Unless visits are held in the home of the caregiver, relative or other approved person, visits shall be held at the Family Connections. Visits may be held at the Butler County Children Services Office under special circumstances.
- 4.9.4 As long as the goal is reunification, routine visits should occur at least two to four hours a week, depending on the needs and age of the child. The worker shall take into account parents schedules.
- 4.9.5 Frequency and duration of the visits shall increase as the family demonstrates the ability to provide for the protection and safety of the child. Visitation may move to the home of the caregiver as continued progress on the case plan is made.
- 4.9.6 Children should not be removed from school for visits if at all possible. Arrangements should be made for children to visit after school.
- 4.9.7 The worker shall engage individuals visiting with the child on how to provide planned/structured activities, which promote parenting, communication, and building of attachments between children and their family in accordance with the case plan.
- 4.9.8 When appropriate the worker shall make the parent aware of medical appointments, school appointments, extra curricular activities and other appointments or activities that the child's family could participate in and spend quality time with the child.
- 4.9.9 If a visit is cancelled for good cause, the worker and the child's family should make all efforts to make the meeting up as soon as possible after the cancelled visit. For parent cancelled visits where siblings would be attending from different placements, the visit should still be held.
- 4.9.10 The worker should have face-to-face contact with family members who are not visiting consistently. The worker should discuss barriers to visitation, explain the effects on the child when visits are cancelled, how future visiting arrangements will be addressed and if there is a need to change the visitation plan.
- 4.9.11 The following visitation rules shall be issued to each parent and/or approved person visiting prior to the commencement of the initial visitation. Once the acknowledgement is signed by the parent and/or approved person visiting, and the assigned caseworker, a copy shall be provided to the parent and/or person, the Family Connections worker, and one to the permanent case record.

## VISITATION RULES

1. The approval of the BCCSB is required if parents bring another individual(s) to the visit other than persons listed on the visitation plan. It is recommended that such requests should be submitted to the agency no later than five (5) working days prior to the visit. The worker shall discuss additional visitors with the Guardian Ad Litem and final approval shall rest with BCCSB.
2. Video or Audio taping must have prior approval of the Guardian Ad Litem, BCCSB, and/or the court. BCCSB staff shall assist parents with any formalities accompanying a request to tape an event in the best interest of the child, i.e. birthday party or special event. Photographing or video taping of staff members is prohibited unless the employee grants permission.
3. Parents and other approved visitors should arrive 10-15 minutes ahead of time and leave immediately after the visit has ended. BCCSB staff shall wait fifteen (15) minutes after the start of visitation for the parent or other approved visitor arrival. If a parent or visitor fails to appear within the allotted grace period, the visit shall be cancelled.
4. If a visit is cancelled for good cause all efforts shall be made to make up the visit as soon as possible after the cancelled visit.
5. All visits shall be documented even those that have been cancelled. Documentation shall be placed in the case file.
6. The visitation building is smoke free, therefore, there will be no smoking in the building or rooms. Since the visits are time limited, parents and approved visitors should make an effort to smoke either before the visit begins or after the visit has ended.
7. No person shall be permitted to visit if they appear to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
8. No person shall be permitted to visit if they display obvious signs of communicable illness or are under the care of a physician for a communicable illness or infestation. Should such a condition arise, the person should contact the caseworker to re-schedule the visitation or provide a physician's statement indicating their condition is not directly communicable or indicating such necessary precautions as may be required.
9. No person shall be permitted in the visitation while in the possession of a knife, regardless of size or type, firearm, dangerous ordinance, pyrotechnic an/or explosive device, chemical agent, electronic agent, electronic device or other instrument determined to cause incapacitation or control.
10. Any direct or indirect threats against the safety of Butler County Children Services staff or others, verbal or physical abuse, violent behavior, shouting, or other inappropriate activity as determined by BCCSB shall result in immediate termination of the visit. At any time any of the above occur law enforcement shall be contacted and/or the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

11. Parents or visitors shall not follow or harass another party before, during or after the visit.
12. Parents shall not use physical punishment or threaten to use physical punishment with a child. If the child makes any statements or reference to any alleged or confirmed abuse, the parent shall not deny the statement and listen to what the child has to say.
13. During the visit there shall be NO discussion regarding the case, any investigation of the case, or any court hearings. There shall be no negative comments regarding foster parents or BCCSB personnel whenever children are present. There shall be no questioning about foster parents and their whereabouts or activities. There shall be no discussion with children regarding future living arrangements. If there are concerns or questions , they should be discussed with the worker prior to or following the visit.
14. Visitation will be cancelled if an emergency report of inclement weather has been issued for Hamilton City Schools and/or the school district where the child resides.
15. Visitors are expected to assist in keeping the visitation area in a neat, orderly and safe condition. Toys shall be picked up and chairs returned to the proper place prior to the end of visitation. Food shall be kept in the designated areas. There shall be no hard candy or chewing gum permitted during the visit.

The following has been determined the required level of supervision for this visitation per the case plan. BCCSB reserves the right to change levels of supervision dependent upon the safety of the child.

- |          |   |       |
|----------|---|-------|
| Level 1: | Monitoring in the room with family at all times;              | _____ |
| Level 2: | Monitoring outside/nearby room, checking in every 10 minutes; | _____ |
| Level 3: | Monitoring outside/nearby room, checking in every 30 minutes; | _____ |
| Level 4: | Monitoring outside/nearby room if needed.                     | _____ |

I have read and understand the visitation rules and the required level of supervision for my visitation. I understand that a violation of any of the visitation rules may result in the immediate termination of my visit and possibly future visits. I also understand legal action may be taken against me for certain violations of these rules.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Approved Visitor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Caseworker

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date