**GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

**What is supervised visitation?**

Sometimes a judge or court will decide, or parties mutually agree that when a parent is visiting with their child that it is best that a neutral third party is present to supervise and monitor the interaction between the child and the parent.

**Why supervised visitation?**

Supervised visitation may be appropriate for many reasons:

* To help reintroduce a parent to a child after a long absence from the child’s life.
* To help introduce a parent and child when there has been no prior relationship between the parent and the child.
* When there are issues of mental illness, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, or drug or alcohol abuse.
* When there are parenting concerns.
* When there is a threat of kidnapping.
* To give the non-custodial parent a chance to show they are capable of appropriate parenting.

**REMEMBER THE GOALS:**

Improved parenting skills for the visiting parent

Improved parent-child relationships

Conflict-free experience for everyone

A safe and secure setting where the child and their parents visit under trusted guidance

The child feels emotionally and physically safe during the visit

Improved levels of trust between the parents

Reduced conflict and hostility between parents

Increased time between the non-custodial parent and the child in the future

Progress towards non-supervised visitation

and most importantly……

**HAPPY AND HEALTHY KIDS!Tips for the Custodial Parent:**

* Create a positive and relaxed environment. You likely have the most influence over your child—use that influence to make your child as comfortable as possible. Always reassure your child.
* Have your child on time for their visit. Be prompt.
* Understand that the supervised visit is stressful for everyone—do your best not to make things worse.
* Recognize that despite the stress on everyone, these visits are for the best interest of your child.
* Recognize that your child may ask difficult and important questions surrounding a visit and try to understand how they will affect your child.
* Always reassure your child and let them know that YOU support them having a pleasant visit with the other parent.
* Do not linger and create an emotional, stressful drop off. Be sweet, positive, and quick. It’s going to be fine.
* Do not quiz your child about the visit.
* Do not attempt to make your child a messenger.
* Do not ask questions about child support or other obligations of the other parent—these are adult matters and are not for children to have to worry about.
* Children may think the visits are being supervised because of something they did wrong—reassure them they have no fault in any of these adult matters.
* Many children have been overburdened by being told too much and need help to establish boundaries and distance from parent’s disputes—Lola’s House is where they can be children and not worry about adult matters.
* Do not tell the child about an upcoming visit if you are not certain the non-custodial parent will show up. Being “stood-up” is a terrible feeling and no child deserves to feel that way. (Our staff do our best to head off no-shows and we have some tips we can discuss with you if you anticipate this may be a problem).

**Tips for the Non-Custodial Parent:**

* Be on time for your visit.
* Interact with your child during the visit.
* Make each visit a good, positive experience with your child.
* Be engaged with your child. Make the best possible use of your limited time with your child.
* Understand this may not be the most comfortable situation for anyone, do your best not to be frustrated or to feel like you have to force things—relax.
* Recognize that being with your child in the presence of someone else may be uncomfortable but it will get easier.
* Listen to your child.
* Just focus on being a good parent to your child during the visit—nothing else matters during this time. For this reason, cell phones are deposited in the basket by the door at the beginning of the visit.
* If your visit occurs around a meal time, feel free to bring a meal to share with your child (unless prohibited by the court order)
* Do not quiz your child about the other parent or their life, activities, or relationships.
* Do not ask your child to be a messenger to the other parent.
* Do not make promises to your child about future gifts, trips, visits, or changes in custody.
* Please understand, no corporal punishment is allowed during the visit.
* Say brief and positive good-byes.
* Understand that your love, patience, and commitment will pay off and help you have a better relationship with your child in the future.

**RULES FOR VISITS**

(It seems like a lot but they’re very simple and they are in place to make for a safe and happy visit!)

**Rules for Non-Custodial Parents:**

* Arrive and depart on time (late arrivals will only shorten your visit)
* Do not use profanity
* Do not smoke or use any tobacco products on premises (leave them at home or in your car).
* The visit will not be permitted if anyone is suspected or appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This includes apparent recent use, despite level of impairment. Discretion is always that of the supervisor.
* All cell phones and cellular devices will be deposited in the basket by the door—do not use during the visit.
* Do not attempt to take photographs or videos—it will not be permitted unless allowed by court order.
* Do not attempt or threaten to administer corporal punishment or physical discipline.
* There are to be no inappropriate demands for physical contact, foul language, shouting, threats of violence or abuse, or attempts to move the child(ren) out of sight or hearing of the monitor. Any attempts to do so will immediately end the visit and result in written notification of the court.
* In the case where there have been issues of sexual or physical abuse, there is a rule that all touching during the visit can only be initiated by the child.
* Do not attempt to have the child pass messages of any kind to the other parent.
* Do not bring knives or weapons of any kind—do not bring onto the premises.
* Do not bring other guests to the visit—only those allowed by the court order or the written parental agreement will be allowed. Guests will NOT be allowed to wait on site.
* Do not make any disparaging remarks or comments about the child, the custodial parent or the custodial parent’s family or friends.
* Make no threats or negative remarks about anyone. Any threat of violence will be taken seriously—the visit will be terminated and law enforcement notified.
* Do not discuss custody, divorce, or child support issues.
* No whispering or attempting to have conversations outside of the hearing of the supervisor.
* All visits will be conducted in English.
* Anyone attempting to subvert the rules or attempting to enable and/or cause conflict or confrontation with the other parent or supervisory staff will be asked to leave immediately. Any time this happens, the supervisor will report the violations to the judge in writing the next business day.
* Any time the supervisor feels the visit is unsafe for any party, the visit will be terminated.

**Rules for Custodial Parents:**

* MOST IMPORTANTLY—BE ON TIME! Whether it’s to drop off or pick up.
* Be an advocate for your child, but put any personal feelings you have about the situation aside.
* The supervisor is an independent party—they are not on one “SIDE” or the other. They are there to supervise, protect, and advocate for your child.
* **All of the same rules regarding weapons, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc apply to the Custodial parent as well.**

**VISITATION PROCEDURES**

1. Visit supervisor will be present at all times during visitation and is monitoring from the moment of arrival.
2. All contact between child(ren) and the non-custodial parent shall take place within the monitor’s hearing and sight at all times.
3. Fees for services will be paid in full, in cash or by Paypal 48 hours prior to the start of each visit. A visit will not be scheduled until it has been paid.
4. Fees are not refundable and there are very few exceptions to this rule. It is important that we follow-through on our visits.
5. Cancellations require at least 24 hours advance notice and refunds will only be given in the event of a medical reason and only with a physician’s note that the party was unable to attend the visit.
6. If the custodial parent fails to arrive with the child without sufficient prior notice to the supervisor (see above), then the custodial parent will pay for the missed visitation and the supervisor will still be paid as if the visit occurred.
7. Failure of visiting parent to arrive within 10 minutes of the designated time of arrival without notification by phone will result in the cancellation of the visit, and the supervisor will be paid as if the visit occurred.
8. Visitation will be canceled if a parent is suspected of being under the influence of any altering substance and no refunds will be given.
9. Custodial parent is to have the child in the vicinity of the facility approximately 5 minutes prior to the start of the visit and once in the vicinity will text the supervisor (all phone contact info will be exchanged during the registration) and let them know they are close. We recommend waiting some place close like the Family Dollar, Brookshire Brother’s or the courthouse square.
10. The non-custodial parent will arrive to the facility at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the visit. They will park at the rear of the facility from the Lone Oak Street entrance and park in the carport area. They will enter the facility at the “backdoor.” Upon entering they will deposit their cell phones in the basket and sign in.
11. Once the NC parent is signed in the supervisor will text the custodial parent who will deliver the child to the front steps on the E 7th Street entrance. The supervisor will meet the child at the vehicle and escort the child into the facility via the front door.

PLEASE NOTE:

The supervisor will only convey information between parents regarding the child(ren)’s medical needs and/or visitation and exchanges.

Unless specifically ordered by the court, with specific written medical instructions, dietary requests are not monitored or enforced.

Custodial and visiting parents are required to meet the needs of the child during the visit (i.e. diapers, baby food, extra clothes, etc).

At no time during the visits or exchanges will the child be left unattended with the supervisor.

All communication, correspondence, texts, and any issues/incidents regarding a family will be recorded in the family file and will be made available to the court upon request.

**MONITORED EXCHANGE PROCEDURES**

1. Fees for services will be paid in full, in cash or by Paypal 48 hours prior to the scheduling of the exchange.
2. Fees are not refundable and there are very few exceptions to this rule.
3. Cancellations require at least 24 hours advance notice and refunds will only be given in the event of a medical reason and only with a physician’s note that the party was unable to attend the exchange.
4. If the custodial parent fails to arrive with the child without sufficient prior notice to the supervisor (see above), then the custodial parent will pay for the missed exchange and the supervisor will still be paid as if the exchange occurred.
5. Failure of visiting parent to arrive within 10 minutes of the designated time of arrival without notification by phone will result in the cancellation of the exchange, and the supervisor will be paid as if the exchange occurred.
6. The exchange will be canceled if a parent is suspected of being under the influence of any altering substance and no refunds will be given.
7. If the parent picking up the child arrives and appears to be impaired the delivering parent will be notified prior to the drop off of the child. The exchange will not occur and not refunds will be given.
8. Custodial parent is to have the child in the vicinity of the facility approximately 5 minutes prior to the start of the scheduled exchange and once in the vicinity will text the supervisor (all phone contact info will be exchanged during the registration) and let them know they are close. We recommend waiting some place close like the Family Dollar, Brookshire Brother’s or the courthouse square.
9. The non-custodial parent will arrive to the facility at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the visit. They will park at the rear of the facility from the Lone Oak Street entrance and park in the carport area. They will enter the facility at the “backdoor.” Upon entering they will sign in.
10. Once the NC parent is signed in the supervisor will text the custodial parent who will deliver the child to the front steps on the E 7th Street entrance. The supervisor will meet the child at the vehicle and escort the child into the facility via the front door where they will be delivered to the non-custodial parent and they will be allowed to leave through the exit of the facility.

I certify by my signature below that I have received and read the “Guide For Parents.” I agree to abide by all rules outlined therein. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered.

Printed Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_