*Visitation is crucial for your child’s well-being and increases the likelihood that reunification will take place.*

**Supervised Visit Guidelines and Tips**

It is important that visits between parents and children occur while the child is not residing in the home. Visitation provides an opportunity for children and parents to reconnect and maintain a relationship.

* Visitation attendance is reported to the court. Parents are expected to attend visits at the agreed upon schedule. Please let the Family Coach know in advance if the schedule needs to change. If the visit is cancelled less than 24 hours in advance, the parent is responsible for a cancellation fee included in the contract.
* Confirmation of the visit on the day of is required before the Family Coach will transport your children to the visit. Failure to confirm the visit the day of via text message or phone call will result in the visit being cancelled and cancellation fee applied.
* If a parent misses or cancels three visits, visitation will be suspended.
* Parents are expected to be on time for visits. If a child waits 15 minutes into visit time, and the parent hasn’t notified the worker they will be late, the visit may be cancelled.
* It’s rare, but visits may be canceled on the spot, if it is not safe. These instances may include parent arrives under the influence of drugs or alcohol, acts aggressively, or makes threats, hits, or threatens their child, blames, shames, or threatens their child in any way, speaks negatively about the other parent/caregiver/family member, or discusses the court process or CPS allegations, can’t calm down after warning or arrives late without calling.
* Cell phone use during visits should be restricted to taking photos of self and child, playing soft music (age appropriate). Contacting others via phone, video chatting, during visits is prohibited unless approved by the court.
* Others are not allowed to visit, unless approved by the court. Requests to bring anyone else are directed to the court in advance.
* Families are expected to clean up the area by the end of the visit. This includes picking up toys, washing dishes, tables, and highchairs, taking diapers out to the dumpster, and sweeping or vacuuming, if needed.
* Parents must stay where the Family Coach can always see and hear them.
* Parents agree to follow the direction of the Family Coach during the visit.

**Parents often have questions and need support while visiting. Here are some tips from parents for handling supervised visits:**

* **Arrive on time for visits.** Call in advance if you are going to be late or must reschedule.
* **Expect your kids to act up.** It’s normal for a child to feel angry or scared about being separated, or to feel sad and confused about being apart from you, and to act up as a result. You might think, “Why is this happening? Is someone hurting my child? You might feel scared that you can’t help your child or be angry. You can help your child by staying calm, reassuring them that you’re working to get them home, and letting them know that you love them even when you are not together.
* **Focus only on your relationship with your child during visits.** Being on your phone or talking about your case can make you seem disconnected. Keep anger or frustration out of time with your child. Try to calm down so you can be loving and playful and help your child feel safe.
* **Don’t make promises you can’t keep.** One of the hardest moments is when children ask, “When am I coming home? Be honest as you can be, while keeping in mind the child’s age. Tell your child, “I wish I could take you home right now, but I can’t. I’m working on it, and I don’t know the answer to your question.” Don’t make promises that you can’t keep. If you say, “You’ll be home next week,” and it doesn’t happen, your child won’t know who to trust.
* **Make visits a time to bond.** Sometimes parents and kids sit far apart, or kids play video games. Visits are a time to strengthen the connection you have with your child or to build a relationship. Get down on the floor, play and talk with your kids. They miss you and they need your full attention. Visit time is not to be used to complain or speak to agency staff. That takes time away from your child.
* **Bring toys and games from home.** Bring games, coloring books, toys, crayons, and books to read to your child. Gifts are great for special occasions, but do not bring gifts to every visit. Most items will need to be taken home and saved for a later date. If you are unsure what the rules are in the visiting room, ask the Family Coach.
* **Keep visiting and it will get easier.** Sometimes parents say, “It’s too hard to visit my child at the agency.” But you and your child will feel better if you spend more time together. Even a week apart can feel like forever to a child because children are having new experiences every day. Do your best with your child and the visits will get easier.
* **Help your child say goodbye.** Parents and children don’t want visits to end. Children don’t understand why they can’t go home. Sometimes they cry, have fits. Don’t let goodbyes go on and on. When it’s almost time to leave, say,” It’s time for us to go now. I will see you soon.” Help your child say goodbye and leave your child with the Family Coach.
* **Take care of you.** Leaving visits can feel lonely and discouraging. Think about what makes you feel good—a phone call or visit with a friend, a walk – and set that up in advance.

I have read, understand, and agree with guidelines for visitation with my child(ren).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_