

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services <b>Section 13:</b> Implementing the Visitation Plan	
	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2023	<b>Version:</b> 9

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## POLICY OVERVIEW

The Visitation Plan is implemented for every child in out-of-home care to support the child's well-being and maintain family relationships and connections.

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## PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will implement a comprehensive Visitation Plan that is developed with the input of all parties. The Visitation Plan will be updated and monitored on a regular basis to ensure any changes to visitation may be addressed in a timely manner.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Develop a visitation schedule which is agreeable to all parties. For cases involving domestic violence (DV) see policy 2.30 Domestic Violence for additional guidance;

**Note:** Visits to the Indiana Department of Correction (DOC) and/or detention facilities shall be supervised by the FCM, resource parent, relative of the child, or another person approved by DCS. Visits shall occur during DOC and/or detention facility visiting hours and conform to DOC and/or detention facility's rules.

2. Convene the CFT to review the Visitation Plan within 30 calendar days of removal or upon the decision to begin concurrent planning. See policy 5.15 Concurrent Planning- An Overview for additional information;
3. Supervise visits or create a service provider referral for visit supervision, if the visits are to be supervised;
4. Monitor the progress of the visits through:
  - a. Supervising visits and documenting visits in the case management system, and/or
  - b. Written communication with the supervising staff/agency and documenting the communication in the case management system.
5. Monitor and facilitate positive interaction and communication, between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the resource parent. See policies 8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement and 8.16 Resource Parent Role for additional information;
6. Monitor and document any reactions the child is having to separation from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian; siblings; and other persons of significance. See policy 8.10 Minimum Contact for additional guidance;

7. Document all visits, including missed visits, in the case management system and provide this information to the court;
8. Assess the effectiveness of the Visitation Plan in meeting the family's identified goals;
9. Reconvene CFT, as needed, to determine if any changes to the Visitation Plan are required and/or to assist the family in overcoming any barriers or situations with non-compliance (see Practice Guidance for more information). These barriers may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Safety concerns,
  - b. Scheduling issues,
  - c. Transportation issues,

**Note:** If alternative transportation cannot be acquired and the cost of paid transportation would cause the child's family undue hardship, DCS may pay for the most cost-efficient means of local transportation. See policy 16.03 Assistance for Family of Origin's Basic Needs for additional information,

- d. A child's fear of visitation,

**Note:** Ensure a child is prepared for visitation in DOC and/or the detention facility, including the security checkpoint.

10. Update the written Visitation Plan to reflect any significant changes (e.g., location changes, changes in level of interaction, and court ordered changes);
11. Notify in writing the parent, guardian, or custodian or another adult with whom the child has a significant relationship of the legal rights and options if the individual disagrees with the Visitation Plan and a resolution has not been found through the CFT Meeting process. The legal rights and options include the ability to:
  - a. Seek representation, and
  - b. File a petition requesting judicial review and modification of the Visitation Plan.

**Note:** Disagreements should be documented during the resolution period. Visitation will continue in some form, unless ordered by the court to discontinue or an interim Visitation Plan is provided to all parties.

12. Notify all parties of any changes to the Visitation Plan; and
13. Cease visitation services with the parent, guardian, or custodian, including the cancelation of service referrals, after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is filed, only if ordered by the court. See policy 5.10 Family Services for additional information.

DCS may seek a court order if changes need to be made to the approved Visitation Plan for the following reasons:

1. Concerns for the child's safety and well-being;
2. Visitation with a parent, guardian, or custodian who is incarcerated. See Practice Guidance for additional information;
3. Change in frequency or supervision of interaction (e.g., changing from supervised visits to unsupervised visits);
4. The parent, guardian, or custodian no longer wishes to visit and states this in writing;
5. The decision has been made to transition to the second permanency plan if concurrent planning. See policy 5.15 Concurrent Planning for additional information; and
6. Visitation disputes by involved parties.
7. TPR petition has been filed, or if the parent has executed a consent to adopt.

## **Visitation with Parents who are Incarcerated**

In addition to the steps above, the FCM will:

1. Contact the appropriate DOC and/or detention facility Case Manager to initiate a visit between an incarcerated parent and a child. The DCS FCM and DOC and/or detention facility Case Manager shall confer with each other prior to initiating visits to define expectations of the visits and exchange contact information.
2. Document all efforts by DCS to set up visitation with the DOC and/or detention facility for the parent or guardian, especially if DCS efforts to set up visitation with the DOC and/or detention facility are unsuccessful.
3. Complete any required detention facility forms prior to the visit;
4. Inform the DOC and/or detention facility Case Manager of the requirements of any court orders regarding participation by parents in the care, treatment, or reunification of children. Any information shared as such must be kept confidential;
5. Notify the DOC and/or detention facility Case Manager of any issues regarding visitation to ensure they are promptly resolved; and
6. Arrange for visitation to occur during regular DOC and/or detention facility visitation hours when possible and discuss arranging "special visits" if necessary.

All correspondence and information provided by the DOC and/or detention facility and DCS shall designate both the name of the child and the parent to whom it pertains. DCS shall use the DOC and/or detention facility number of the parent when available.

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## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

### **Definitions**

N/A

### **Forms and Tools**

- [8.C Tool: Supervision of Visits](#)
- Visitation Plan - available in the case management system

### **Related Policies**

- [2.30 Domestic Violence](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.10 Family Services](#)
- [5.15 Concurrent Planning-An Overview](#)
- [8.10 Minimum Contact](#)
- [8.11 Parental Interaction and Involvement](#)
- [8.16 Resource Parent Role](#)
- [16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [16.03 Assistance for a Family of Origins Basic Needs](#)
- [GA-3 Language Services](#)

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## **LEGAL REFERENCES**

- [IC 31-34-15-4: Form; contents](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 8.13

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

### **Background Checks**

Background checks performed by DCS are sufficient to satisfy DOC and/or detention facility background check requirements for those who will be transporting children to visits with incarcerated parents.

### **Language Barriers for Visitation**

In some cases, a child and/or the family may communicate in a language other than English or utilize an alternative form of communication. In order for the person supervising the visit to understand the conversation and adequately assess the quality of the interaction between the child and the individual, an interpreter may be required. The visit must still occur, even if an interpreter is unavailable. See policy GA-3 Language services for additional information.

### **Noncompliance**

DCS is obligated to continue to offer visits to the parent, guardian, or custodian until a court order is issued stopping visitation. If the parent, guardian, or custodian exhibits a pattern of repeated “no-shows”, the FCM may require the parent, guardian, or custodian to call to confirm shortly before each visit. This measure may avoid false hopes on the part of the child and wasted effort on the part of those providing transportation.

### **Transportation Costs**

DCS shall not be responsible for the act or cost of transporting children in foster care to visits other than those paid for by DCS in the normal course of reimbursement. See policies 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care and 16.03 Assistance for Family of Origins Basic Needs for additional information.

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