Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	**Effective Date:** May 1, 2009
Section 13: Implementing the Visitation Plan	**Version:** 3

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure the implementation of the Visitation Plan for every child in out-of-home care.

DCS will 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. Change or frequency of interaction (e.g., supervised visits to unsupervised visits);
3. The parent, guardian, or custodian states in writing that he or she no longer wishes to visit; and
4. Visitation disputes by involved parties.

If DCS files a petition for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), visits and services are to cease unless otherwise ordered by the court. See separate policy, 5.10 Family Services.

Code References
    N/A

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:
1. Arrange for visitation;
   a. If the visits are supervised, supervise the visits or refer the family to a contract agency or provider that specializes in visitation, and
   b. If the visits are unsupervised, ensure that a visitation schedule is developed with agreement of all parties.

2. Monitor and document the progress of the visits through:
   a. Supervising visits, and/or
   b. Written communication with the supervising staff/agency.

3. Monitor and facilitate positive interaction and communication if applicable, between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the resource parent(s) according to separate policy, 8.16 Resource Parent(s) Role;
4. Monitor and document any reactions the child is having to separation from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian, siblings, and other persons of significance. See separate policy, 8.10 Minimum Contact;
5. Document all visits, including missed visits, in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) Visitation Log and provide this information to the court;
6. Assess the effectiveness of the Visitation Plan in meeting the identified goal(s);

7. Reconvene the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting as needed to determine if any changes are required or to assist the family in overcoming any barriers to visitation such as:
   a. Transportation issues,
   b. Safety concerns,
   c. Intermittent visitation, and
   d. Failure to visit. See separate policy, 5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings.

8. Update the written Visitation Plan to reflect any significant changes (e.g., location changes, changes in level of interaction, court ordered changes, etc.).;
9. If a parent, guardian, custodian, or other adult with whom the child has a significant relationship disagrees with the Visitation Plan and those disagreements cannot be resolved, notify in writing the person disputing the Visitation Plan of legal rights and options which 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.

10. Notify all parties of any changes to the Visitation Plan; and
11. Do not continue to offer services (including visitation) after TPR is filed unless otherwise ordered by the court. See separate policy, 5.10 Family Services.

[NEW] During Supervised Visitation For Families Experiencing Domestic Violence
The FCM will assure the alleged domestic violence offender does not:
   1. Interrogate the child(ren) as to the location or activities of the non-offending parent. There should be no discussion about past domestic violence incidents or any of the circumstances of the removal;
   2. Discuss or question the child(ren) about their counseling or therapy; and
   3. Use any form of physical discipline or intimidation. There is to be no rough physical contact.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. Visitation Log - Available in ICWIS
2. Tool 8.C - Supervision of Visits
3. Visitation Plan- Available in ICWIS

RELATED INFORMATION

Transportation
The FCM should engage the CFT to help resolve any transportation issues that make it difficult for the parent, guardian, or custodian to visit the child. Sources of transportation may include the

child's relatives, family friends, faith-based transportation services, etc. If alternative transportation can not be acquired and the cost of paid transportation would cause the child's family undue hardship, DCS will pay for the most cost efficient means of local transportation. See separate policy, 5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings.

Noncompliance
The FCM will engage the CFT to discuss the situation (e.g., family's risks, strengths and needs), if the parent, guardian, custodian, or the child does not comply with the Visitation Plan.

> **Note:** Regarding parent, guardian, or custodian "no-shows": 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 can 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.

Visitation When Child and Family Do Not Communicate in Spoken English
In some cases, a child and his or her family may communicate in a language other than spoken English (e.g., Spanish, Sign Language, etc.). 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.