

TRUMBULL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD

VISITATION INFORMATION

In attempt to make your visits with your child(ren) here at Children Services pleasant and meaningful, the following information is being provided so that everyone involved will know what to expect when visiting at the Agency. We ask that you enter into partnership with us in maintaining this nurturing environment, so that you and other families can experience the joy of being together.

Q. Where will my visitation with my child/children take place?

A. All visitation scheduled with your child/children will initially take place at the Agency Office and may then move to the Solace Center, a community based visitation site. As progress is made on your reunification tasks, visitation may be increased and/or moved off grounds.

Q. Who transports my child/children?

A. The Agency employs transportation aides that transport all foster children to their scheduled visits. Foster parents also assist with transportation when able.

Q. How can I obtain transportation if I need it?

A. The Agency can provide transportation for you to attend your scheduled visits by transportation aide or by licensed taxi. If you need transportation assistance, you need to advise your caseworker so that it can be arranged. Transportation requests should be given 48 hours in advance. You must give an accurate address and be ready to go when the transportation aide or taxi arrives at your home. If you have a change of address or phone number, you must notify your caseworker within three (3) days. Due to the extensive need for transportation among our families, if you consistently fail to meet your arranged transportation, the Agency will not provide transportation in the future, and it becomes your responsibility.

Q. What will happen if I have to miss my scheduled visit?

A. Parents are expected to be at the Agency on time for each scheduled visit. If you are more than twenty minutes late and have not contacted the Agency, your child(ren) will likely be returned to school or their foster home. You will need to contact the Agency 24 hours before your visit if you are unable to attend, and it may be rescheduled. If the Agency is late in bringing your child to the Agency, your visit could be extended, if possible, or a makeup visit may be scheduled. Visits missed due to a parent's arrest/incarceration, not at home for transportation, over-sleeping, etc., will not be rescheduled.

A Safe Home for Every Child

Q. What happens if I have an emergency and cannot attend?

A. Children Services understands that emergencies arise and cannot be prevented. If you have a situation that prevents you from visiting your child, we will attempt to reschedule, if possible, if in fact your reason for not attending is legitimate.

Q. How often will I be able to visit my child/children?

A. Initially, visitation is usually scheduled for at least one hour every week. As progress is made on case plan objectives, visits may be increased, and then progress to off-ground visitation prior to reunification.

Q. Who is permitted to visit with my child/children?

A. Generally, only persons listed on your court-ordered case plan can be permitted to visit. This generally includes parents, siblings, and grandparents, but can also include other relatives who are being considered as a placement resource for your child/children. Unrelated adults and children are not permitted to visit. Also, it is important to keep in mind that the more people attending your visits, keeps the child/children from interacting primarily with you. Children Services reserves the right to refuse visitors.

Q. What conditions would interfere or restrict visits with my child/children?

A. The following conditions could result in reduction or suspension of visits if the problems go uncorrected:

- not attending scheduled visits regularly.
- failure to treat your child or any Agency staff person in a respectful, nonthreatening manner.
- use of alcohol or drugs prior to or during the visits. (Suspicion of any drug/alcohol usage will require an immediate drug screen.)
- contagious diseases/conditions such as lice, scabies, ringworm, chickenpox, etc.
- sleeping during your visit and not properly supervising your child/children.
- Other, as discussed individually with your caseworker.

Q. May others call me or my child during visits?

A. There are telephones available for use in each visitation room. However, use of these phones is discouraged as it takes away from your time with your child. If you do not have access to a telephone at home, please consult with your caseworker and you can use the telephone after your visit ends.

Q. Is the use of a video camera or camera permitted in my visits?

A. Parents are encouraged to bring their own personal cameras and film in order to photograph their children. If you do not have access to a camera, please consult with your caseworker and make arrangements for using an Agency camera. Use of video cameras is prohibited due to confidentiality constraints for Agency clients.

- Q. How can I make visitation with my child meaningful for both of us?**
A. Separation from your child is difficult for everyone involved. Your child needs your reassurance and comfort that you are supporting them through this difficult time. Children usually know why they are in foster care and need your reassurance that you will do everything you can to get them back home with you as quickly as possible.
- Q. What if I have a concern about the foster parents' care of my child?**
A. If you feel there is a problem or concern about your child/children or their foster parents, discuss it with your caseworker or their supervisor after your visit ends or as soon as possible so it can be addressed. This visitation time is not the time to criticize your child's foster parents as this only increases their anxiety and their feelings of guilt about being away from you. The Agency's Family-to-Family Program is a resource available to enhance communication between you and the foster parents.
- Q. What can I do to ensure that my visitation is quality time with my child/children?**
A. Parents are encouraged to bring appropriate gifts, cards, or treats for your child to enjoy, especially for birthdays and holidays. Talk to your child about what is going on at home and what you are doing on your case plan. Encourage your child/children to behave appropriately in school and in their foster home, and ask questions about activities they're involved in. Ask them for copies of their report cards and see their school work. Other activities can include; reading, playing games, doing puzzles, trading family photographs, etc. Please notify your caseworker if you desire to bring food/drinks to your visit. Assigned rooms for eating are available.
- Q. Can I visit my child outside in the playground area?**
A. Yes. During warm weather many families visit outside. Keep in mind that supervision of your child/children is your responsibility, and they cannot be left unattended. If bringing any food or drinks, you are expected to leave the area in the same condition you find it. Please use the trash containers and ashtrays provided.
- Q. What should I do if my child cries and becomes upset when the visit ends?**
A. Children often cry and become distraught when visits conclude. This is a very difficult transition time for them and for you, and they need your comfort and reassurance. Please attempt to reassure them that they will see you again soon and that you are doing all that you can do to have them returned to you as quickly as possible.
- Q. What happens if my child becomes angry and out-of-control during our visit?**
A. This happens frequently with children in foster care because they do not control when they return home. It is important to acknowledge their feelings and to talk about them. Ask your caseworker for assistance if necessary if you are having difficulty handling the situation.
- Q. What is supervised visitation?**

