

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

**ONGOING PROTECTIVE SERVICES STANDARDS**

**3.13 VISITATION**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards S21 (Foster and Kinship Care Services) and S21.7 (Services to the Child's Biological Parents) link to and support Standard 3.13 *Visitation*.

**Administrative Code**

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-42-92 (Visitation for Child in Temporary Custody) addresses Standard 3.13 *Visitation*.

**I. Philosophy**

Critical to the health and well being of the children in out-of-home care is the need for regular and frequent visitation with their family. Visitation maintains attachments between the family members and the child, including siblings, and increases chance for reunification. All individuals who play a significant role in the life of the child should be involved in the visitation process. CFSA's are obligated to work with the caregivers to assure that the scheduled visitation is implemented and maintained. The visitation location should be flexible and held in the least restrictive and most suitable environment for the well-being of the child.

**II. Outcome**

Children maintain connection with their family members and significant others.

Reunification occurs more rapidly and often.

**III. Evaluation**

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the number of visitation plans created and updated at case reviews with family involved focusing on time and location, duration, frequency, and structured activities;
- the number of visits between child and family;
- the number of visits between child, siblings and/or parents;
- the average duration for visits (recommended 3-4 hours/week if reunification is goal);
- the median length of stay for children prior to returning home, emancipation or prior to adoption finalization;
- the number of out-of-home placement moves;
- the number of children reunified with their family.

#### IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) Input should be sought from the child, family, caregiver, and key individuals when developing the visitation plan. This is recorded on the case plan document.
- 2) The visitation plan should clearly define all parameters to assure the safety of the child and address situations and persons who pose a risk to the child. Persons approved to provide supervision when indicated may include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. caregiver(s);
  - b. family members;
  - c. community professionals;
  - d. significant others;
  - e. CFSA staff.
- 3) All persons providing supervision should comply with the goals of the visitation plan. The level of supervision should decrease as the family demonstrates the ability to provide for the protection and safety of the child.
- 4) The visitation plan should define frequency of visits, duration, time and location, transportation responsibilities and the level of supervision required.
- 5) As long as the goal is reunification, routine visits should occur at least three to four hours a week, depending on the needs and age of the child. Taking into account parents' schedules, visits may need to occur more or less frequently while still maintaining an overall level of contact. Exception to the routine visits should be documented in the case plan document. Frequency and duration of the visits should increase as the family demonstrates the ability to provide for the protection and safety of the child.
- 6) When appropriate, the CFSA and foster family should make the parent aware of medical appointments, school appointments, extra curricular activities and other appointments or activities that the child's family could participate in and spend quality time with the child. The foster family should be encouraged to be present during these appointments and activities.
- 7) In between visits, phone and mail contact should be established and supported by all, if at all possible. A worker may need to review the mail contact as noted on the case plan.
- 8) Children should not be removed from school for visits if at all possible. Arrangements should be made for children to visit after school or on weekends.
- 9) Visits should be held in a setting which best meets the needs of the child and family. CFSA's office space should be seen as the most-restrictive setting.
- 10) The worker should discuss with the individuals visiting with the child how to provide planned/structured activities, which promote parenting, communication, and building of attachments between children and their family in accordance with the case plan.

If a visit is cancelled for good cause, the CFSA and the child's family should make all efforts to make the meeting up as soon as possible after the cancelled visit. For parent cancelled visits where siblings would be attending from different placements, the visit should still be held.

- 11) CFSA should have face-to-face contact with family members who are not visiting consistently. The worker should discuss barriers to visitation; explain the effects on the child when visits are cancelled, how future visiting arrangements will be addressed and if there is a need to change the visitation plan.

#### **V. Financial Implications**

Costs associated with Standard 3.13, *Visitation* would include some preparation, family contact, child contact and any follow-up that is needed. If the worker has to transport, transportation may factor into overall cost as well. If the worker has to supervise, that is an additional cost.

4.5 hours (without supervision) x \$81.21/hour = \$365.45 per visit

7.5 hours (supervision) x \$81.21/hour = \$609.08 per supervised visit