

Visitation: Levels of Supervision

Supervised Visits

Supervised visits require that a visit supervisor be present at all times with the child. The supervisor must maintain the child both within hearing and sight. The supervisor has the authority to give direction to the parent and, if not followed, to terminate the visit. Supervised visits should be used in the following circumstances:

- There is a safety threat that is active and present during visits that can be controlled only with a visit supervisor
- There is reason for concern that parents may abduct the child
- There is a concern that the parent may attempt to influence the child's disclosures during visits, especially if there is a criminal or dependency trial pending

Even supervised visits can have some reduction in the restrictiveness of the visit to make it a more comfortable for the parents and children. For example, the visit supervisor may be someone known to the child and/or parent (such as a family friend or relative) or the visit may be in the family home or a community setting. We should always strive to make the visit as comfortable as possible for the children while keeping them safe.

Monitored Visits

Monitored visits occur when the visit location is set and the visit monitor is able to check in on the visit periodically to ensure that the visit is going well. Monitored visits are used when there continue to be safety concerns, but the safety concerns are controlled by the environment and by the periodic observation of the visitation monitor. Given these restrictions, there is no immediate danger to the child.

Again, visit monitors can be family friends or relatives and visits can occur in a family home, the home of a relative, or in a community setting.

Unsupervised and Overnight Visits

Unsupervised visits occur when safety threats have been mitigated and there is progress toward reunification. Parents can care for the children for short periods of time without abusing or neglecting the child. If there are concerns about a parent's risk for relapse in substance abuse or mental health, these concerns can be checked by having the parent check in with a responsible adult before and after the visit.

Overnight visits should be authorized after parents have made significant progress and reunification is expected soon.

When parents are left alone with their children, it is expected that they can meet the challenges of parenting without abusing or neglecting the child and, typically, reunification is the plan. The length of the visit depends on the parents' capacities to parent their children with a safety plan in place.