



Supervised Visitation Parent Handbook

Family Law Clients

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Our Supervised Visitation program provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing home-like environment in which children and their parents can share time together without the conflicts, stress or dangers that may have been a part of their past.

Children can benefit from safe visits or custody exchanges with their non-custodial parent even when their pasts may have included bad experiences or limited contact. Visits may assist in:




- 👨👩👧 Decreasing the child's feelings of rejection
- 👨👩👧 Reducing the child's fear of not seeing that parent again
- 👨👩👧 Lessening the child's self-blame
- 👨👩👧 Resolving of some issues the child may have with that parent
- 👨👩👧 Continuing the very important parent /child relationship

Children's Bill of Rights






- 1.) I have the right to love whom I choose without guilt, pressure or rejection.
- 2.) I have the right to love as many people as I want (step-parents, relatives, etc.) without guilt or being made to feel disloyal.
- 3.) I have the right to be parented by both parents, regardless of grownup wants and wishes regarding convenience, money, or their feelings. I own parenting time; it is my right, not the right of my parents.
- 4.) I have the right to express my feelings about the breakup, such as sadness or fear.
- 5.) I have the right to not choose sides or be asked to decide where I want to live. I can never be forced to choose between parents.
- 6.) I have the right to not make adult decisions.
- 7.) I have the right to remain a child, without being asked to take on parental responsibilities or be an adult companion, friend, or a comforter to my parents.
- 8.) I have the right to be treated as an interested and affected person and not as a pawn or possession.
- 9.) I have the right to receive love, care, discipline, and protection from both parents.
- 10.) I have the right to the most adequate level of economic support that can be provided by the best efforts of both parents.

The purpose of this packet is to prepare you for your future orientation appointment and to provide you with information about supervised visitation.

What to do before your Orientation Appointment:






-  Read the parent handbook about supervised visitation.
-  Complete and sign the Intake Form.
-  Complete the Financial Information Form.

What to expect at your Orientation Appointment:

-  You will be given a tour of the Visitation Center.
-  Policies and Procedures will be explained in more detail.
-  Program forms and releases will be explained and signed.
-  A Financial Screening will be completed to see if the participant(s) qualify for financial aid.
-  There will be time for discussion and clarification as well as any questions you may have.

Please be prepared to be at your appointment for at least one hour. Consultation during intake is private and **only** client listed on referral form will be included in this process. Other adults and their children may stay in waiting room.

What to bring to your Orientation Appointment:

-  Your Driver's License or a State-Issued Identification Card
-  Completed and signed Participation Agreement from Parent Handbook
-  Any questions you have about our supervised visitation program
-  Financially responsible party will need income verification (most recent tax return, pay stubs)
-  The following collateral documents:
 - Copies of referral documents (including court orders or agreements) and endorsements
 - Criminal records and/or orders of protection
 - Probation or bail conditions
 - Assessment reports
 - Current photo identification
 - Proof of income
 - Child health information

We look forward to meeting you at your Orientation Appointment and providing your family a safe and neutral environment for supervised visits. We have attached a frequently asked questions handout with information about supervised visits and exchanges.

Sincerely,
Family Resource Center Staff







PROCEDURES FOR SUPERVISED VISITATION AND EXCHANGE SERVICES

MISSION

Family Resource Center of Northeast Georgia's mission is to support connections between children and non-custodial parents in a manner that is safe physically and emotionally for all family members while being in a neutral home-like environment.

VISITING PARENT & RESIDENTIAL PARENT ORIENTATION

Appointments for each parent will be separate, but with the same goal: to help all parties feel comfortable about the services being provided and to ensure a mutual understanding of what is best for the child(ren).

-  All participants must complete an orientation before any visitation services can be scheduled.
-  All participants agree to sign all program forms and releases.
-  For identification purposes, each party is required to bring a state-issued ID.
-  Visitation Services are for the parties designated by the referring agency.
-  Additional Authorized Visitors participating in supervised visits must be pre-approved by our agency.
-  A financial screening will be completed, and you will be instructed to pay the fee amount required (if any).








CHILD(REN) ORIENTATION

This is the time for the child(ren) to tour, ask questions, get comfortable and relieve any anxiety they may have about the supervised visitation.





PREPARING THE CHILD(REN) FOR VISITS

Help the child(ren) understand that he/she has done nothing wrong and that it is not his/her fault the family is involved in supervised visitation services.

RESIDENTIAL PARENT

-  Maintain a positive outlook about the visitation.
-  Do not say anything negative about the other parent. Children need the freedom to love both parents and enjoy time with each of their parents independently from the other without guilt or shame.
-  Prepare the child(ren) for visits by using an age-appropriate method to explain about supervised visits or exchanges.
-  If you have plans with step-siblings that will take place during visitation it is best to not discuss this in front of the child(ren) that is/are getting dropped off for visitation. Children do not want to miss out on life events and we do not want them feeling as if time with their other parent is punishment by missing an activity.
-  Bring the child(ren) to their scheduled child(ren) orientation prior to the first visit.
-  Be consistent with bringing the child(ren) to their scheduled visits. Consistency will provide the child(ren) time to form and maintain a relationship with the visiting parent.
-  After each visitation do not pump the child for information about their visit, allow the child to share on their own terms. Do not assume that their behavior is related to visiting with the noncustodial parent. Children may need help through therapy in understanding and processing the feelings they are experiencing.


VISITING PARENT

-  Maintain a positive outlook about the visitation. Use the time with your child(ren) to build a healthy relationship and assist the child(ren) to feel comfortable during the visit or exchange.
-  Be consistent with attending scheduled visitation with your child(ren). Showing up to the scheduled visitations will show your child(ren) that you care and love them. The time will allow you to build and maintain a relationship with your child(ren).
-  Concentrate on the present not the past - relax and have fun at the Family Resource Center. Involve everyone in choosing activities.
-  Do not ask the child questions about the other parent or pump children for information, simply enjoy the time doing something constructive together.


SUPERVISED VISITS PARKING, ENTRANCES, ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES and SIGN-IN

RESIDENTIAL PARENT




PARKING

-  Park in the Family Resource Center parking lot located at the back of the center.




ARRIVAL TIMES

-  Arrive on time, where you are ringing the door bell at the scheduled start of visitation

ENTRANCE



-  Only approved and scheduled parents and additional authorized visitors will be admitted to the Center.
-  Center doors will be locked. Use the callbox at the front door to request entrance, after ringing the bell wait patiently for staff to answer the door.
-  Have your picture ID ready to show staff.

SIGN-IN/OUT


-  Sign your name and time you rang the doorbell.
-  Sign in additional child(ren) accompanying adults into the Center or any authorized visitors.
-  After the visit ends, sign out and leave the designated parking area in a timely manner.

VISITING PARENT





PARKING

-  Park in the Clarkesville City Hall parking lot which is located beside the Family Resource Center
-  Do not wait in the parking lot before or after the visit or exchange. People giving you a ride may not wait in this parking lot, they must leave the campus and come back 15 minutes after the end of your scheduled visitation time.




ARRIVAL TIMES

-  Arrive 30 minutes before the visit or exchange is scheduled.

ENTRANCE

-  Only pre-approved visitors and scheduled parents will be admitted to the Center.
 -  Authorized visitors accompanying visiting parent must be pre-approved and this pre-approval is only available to immediate and extended family members. Staff of the Family Resource Center have the authority to grant or deny visitors based on court order, criminal records, and other legal documents and findings. A form is available and must be submitted 1-week prior to the visit.
-  Center doors will be locked. Use the doorbell at the back door to request entrance.
-  Have your picture ID ready to show staff.











SIGN-IN/OUT

-  Sign your name and the time you arrived.
-  Sign in additional child(ren) accompanying adults into the Center or any authorized visitors.
-  After your visit ends, clean the room(s) while waiting the 15 minutes for the custodial parent to drive off of our premises, sign out, collect your belongings and leave the designated parking area in a timely manner.

RESIDENTIAL AND VISITING PARENTS EXPECTATIONS






- 👤👤 The premises are tobacco free. No tobacco products or illegal substances are allowed on the premises (including parking lots).
- 👤👤 No weapons of any kind are permitted on the premises even if you have a Concealed Carry License. This includes guns, knives, box cutters, etc.
- 👤👤 A party is considered late or early if they arrive more than 5 minutes before or after the scheduled arrival time. If either party arrives more than 15 minutes after the scheduled visit or exchange, the visit or exchange may be cancelled, and a late fee of \$15 dollars will be assessed to the late party.
- 👤👤 Please notify staff immediately if you have or suspect lice, bedbugs, etc. Head lice checks on child(ren) are performed by staff after the notification of treatment of lice.
- 👤👤 Purses or personal bags may be checked by our staff at any time.
- 👤👤 All parties agree not to have contact with the other party (including parking areas) while involved in visits or exchanges.
- 👤👤 Respect the privacy and confidentiality of other people using the Center.
- 👤👤 Speak without using foul language or swearing.
- 👤👤 Speak in a tone of voice loud enough for the staff to hear all conversations. The Center is monitored for inappropriate conversations and behavior and it will be documented on the visit report.
- 👤👤 Speak positive about the other parent or party in front of the child(ren).
- 👤👤 Set limits and boundaries for children to keep them safe and know what behavior is appropriate. Any consequences associated with discipline will not follow the children when leaving with the custodial parent.
- 👤👤 To protect the integrity of the visit and provide opportunities for the visiting parent to manage behavior and present various discipline strategies under observation, the custodial parent is not able to put restrictions on the children, center, or visiting parent during supervised visitation at the Family Resource Center.
- 👤👤 Focus your time and conversation on and about the child(ren) and in the present time. Do not discuss the past or future and do not make promises to children about future events you may not have control over.
- 👤👤 Avoid talking about adult related topics such as court, counseling, etc. with the child(ren).
- 👤👤 Avoid questioning the child(ren) about personal information about the other parent or how the visit went.
- 👤👤 Ask staff to communicate questions, activity information, etc. with the other parent instead of sending information or questions through the child(ren).
- 👤👤 All essential needs for the child while at the center are to be provided by the visiting parent.
- 👤👤 For safety purposes, leave all pets at home.
- 👤👤 Unless otherwise prohibited, the visiting parent may take photographs or use cell phone for pictures during each visit.
- 👤👤 Be respectful of staff - no personal comments to or about staff or volunteers. Avoid engaging staff in nonemergency conversations.
- 👤👤 It is your responsibility to keep the Center informed of any address and telephone changes.
- 👤👤 Observation notes will be provided to clients at subsequent visits for their records and to the courts as requested.
- 👤👤 Observation notes **ONLY** will be submitted to each party's legal counsel, each party to the court order, and the court system prior to upcoming hearings upon request by any party to the court order.

EXPECTATIONS DURING SUPERVISED VISITS

-  Notify staff and get permission if you need to leave the room. Once visit starts members are not allowed to leave the visitation center.
-  Parents may use the kitchen for meals during the visit. The type of food preparation must be simple. Parents are expected to clean and put away any equipment that is used as well as clean countertops, tables, etc.
-  Visiting parents are responsible for bringing any snacks or ingredients for meals and must abide by any dietary restrictions for each child.
-  Please notify staff in advance of visit if you plan to bring gifts. Appropriate days for gifts are holidays and special occasions like a birthday. Gifts must be brought in unwrapped, once viewed by staff visiting parent can wrap gifts. Cards have to be unsealed and may be read by staff.
-  Use a non-physical method of discipline. Don't threaten or use spanking or hitting as a form of discipline.
-  When there is 10 minutes left in the visit, guide your children through the cleanup process and help them transition through the end of the visit.
-  Parents, wipe down the table and chairs used during the visit with cleaning supplies located in the rooms. Vacuum, sweep, take out garbage, put away toys both inside and outside to help center feel welcoming for the next family on the visitation schedule.
-  You may accompany a child(ren) to the restroom to assist them as long as the door stays open and the monitor can observe both parent and child(ren). Diaper changes are your responsibility and must be observed by staff or monitor. Staff will inform parents if they are not permitted to assist the child(ren) in the restroom.
-  If you are approved to use the back yard during a visit you must remain within the boundaries of the fence, and a monitor will be present at all times.
-  If Habersham County activates the weather sirens to indicate threatening weather, everyone in the Family Resource Center will be escorted to the basement (a designated shelter). Children will not be permitted to leave the Center with visiting adults. All will seek shelter in basement of Family Resource Center. Staff will not answer the door or the telephone until it is determined the threat has ended. Please seek shelter from severe weather.

TERMINATION OF A VISIT

Your visit may be terminated if:

-  If you arrive suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs,
-  If you make any threat of violence before, during or after the visit or exchange,
-  If you bring a weapon or anything considered to be a weapon (example: knife, box cutter, etc.) to the Center. This includes individuals with Concealed Carry Licenses.
-  If the Center's procedures are not being followed.
-  If staff determines it is in the best interest of the child(ren).

CHILD REFUSAL

Children's behavior or their refusal to visit may not stem from not wanting to visit with the visiting parent. The Family Resource Center will not force children to stay in the visitation room with their visiting parent. Staff will bring the children to a separate room and engage in various age appropriate activities during the remainder of the scheduled visitation time. During these activities staff will attempt to understand the emotions and feelings expressed by the children and provide support to help overcome the child's anxiety related to supervised visitation. If during the remainder of the scheduled visitation appointment the child wishes to interact with their visiting parent, staff will proceed with monitoring the parent-child interaction.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Fees for the visit must be paid in full by cash (exact amount). Personal checks/money orders are not accepted. Clients can obtain a receipt reflecting all fees paid. Failure to make payment for one visit will result in suspension of services. No further visits will be scheduled until the parent pays the balance owed. Accrued balances must be paid no later than one week after the last date of service.

SCHEDULING VISITS, CANCELLATIONS AND NO SHOWS

Before any visit is considered 'scheduled', each party must confirm their availability for the date and time of each visit with the center. A visit cannot be cancelled until notification has been made with the Center. It is each parent's responsibility to ensure that new visits have been requested or cancellations reported through the Center.

If for any reason you are unable to bring the child(ren) or attend the visit with your child(ren), it is your responsibility to notify Family Resource Center. Each party must confirm mutually agreed upon cancellations to Family Resource Center.

****The cancelling party is required to pay the costs for visitation, regardless of reason for cancelling the appointment and the financial party listed in the court order. Cancellation fees are due by the next scheduled visit. Reasons for cancellations are noted by staff and documented for the courts in the observation notes.**

Cancelling more than three visits in a 90 day period may result in suspension or termination of services. Re-enrollment may be possible after families go through an additional orientation process.

There is no money returned if child refuses to visit

We make every effort to maintain consistency with visitation. This process goes best when children can trust that they will be able to visit with their parent every time they are scheduled. 'No shows' will be assessed an automatic fee equal to the amount of the entire visit. This payment must be received by the Center before another visit is scheduled.

OBSERVATION NOTES

Reports are completed for each visit and provided to the client at the subsequent visit. These reports are compiled with factual information about what occurred during the visit or exchange. These reports can be compiled and sent to the agencies representing the parties upon request. To ensure this information is received in a timely manner, provide staff with a lead time of 10 business days prior to court date. Our security cameras are motion sensed and are for protection only, they are not a means of capturing the parent-child contact during supervised visitation. The recordings are not available for review by any party other than Administrators of the agency due to a critical incident or an accident. The trained Monitor that is with the child(ren) and visiting parent(s) takes objective notes during the visit and this documentation is available to all parties to the court order, their legal counsel and the court system.

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Clients who are unable or unwilling to abide by program guidelines will be redirected or reminded by staff and may receive a follow up in writing. Non-compliance with any rule or challenging the authority of staff may lead to termination of Family Resource Center services. When the Center terminates services, we may inform each parent in writing of the reason for termination of services or provide written notice to the court and/or referring source stating the reason for the termination and we will close the case file.

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
SUPERVISED VISITATION PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

1. I have read and agree to the program policies and procedures outlined in the Family Law Parent Handbook, the court order, and any additional requests made by the Family Resource Center to ensure the safety and well-being of all parties.
2. I acknowledge that the observation notes will be made available to each party of the court order, legal representation of each party, and the court system presiding over the case without further written consent of the parties to the court order.
3. I acknowledge that if I cancel a visit I will be charged the agreed upon hourly rate established with the financially responsible party regardless of the reason and regardless of the person named financially responsible in the court order. Cancellation fees are due by the next scheduled visit.

Printed Name	Signature	Date
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Financially responsible party's hourly rate: _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____

-I Understand Why Services May Be Terminated-

The Family Resource Center may decide to terminate services for a family due to the following reasons:

- A. Safety or other issues involved in the case that cannot effectively be addressed by the center.
- B. The case is placing undue demand on the Center's resources.
- C. One or both parties have failed to comply with the program guidelines.
- D. Threat of or actual violence or abuse
- E. One or both parties informs that services are no longer needed
- F. High number of cancellations/ No-shows/ Late arrivals
- G. Ongoing refusal of child to visit with noncustodial party in such a way that it raises concerns that continuation of services may be detrimental to the child's safety and emotional well being
- H. Refusal to pay for services
- I. A case goes inactive after more than 2 months inactivity.

I acknowledge the reasons why the Family Resource Center may terminate services and that all parties will be notified in writing of the termination.

Client Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____