

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: CWS 09-40	POLICY TITLE: CHILD AND FAMILY VISITATION AND CONNECTION	EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/06/2020
PROGRAM: All Programs	REVISION DATES:	REFERENCES: Div. 31-340, WIC 362.1

OVERVIEW

Visitation is the most critical element of successful reunification and reduced subsequent child maltreatment. Visitation encourages and supports families connecting and being together, including siblings, extended family, friends, community, and culture.

POLICY

It is the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Welfare Services’ (CWS) policy to provide a safe, nurturing, culturally supportive and community-focused environment for family visitation to occur for children/youth that are placed in out of home care. Visitation shall be as frequent as possible, in the least restrictive environment, and consistent with the well-being of the child/youth.

Visitation goals include minimizing the impact of separation from parents, siblings, community and culture. Visitation planning will seek to maintain and enhance the existing bond/attachment between parents/child/siblings, and to maintain connections to the child’s cultural heritage, Tribe, and communities. The frequency, duration and location of family visitation shall be planned and implemented in a manner consistent with the goal of reunification.

Child Welfare Services’ policy regarding child and family visitation and connection is consistent with the Indian Child Welfare Act (25 U.S.C. Sec 1901 et seq.), the California Welfare and Institutions Code, Division 31 regulations, and any applicable CWS government-to-government Tribal protocols.

[Tribal Protocols](#)

[CDSS Office of Tribal-Affairs/ICWA Resources](#)

[BIA / ICWA Resources](#)

Reference: W & I Code, Division 31 and ACL that guide visitation

[W&I Code, Div. 31](#)

[California Courts - Supervised Visitation](#)

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[California Family Code 3200.5](#)

[California Family Code 3200](#)

[CDSS ACL Sibling Visitation](#)

Policy and Procedure: CWS 18-11 Tribal Collaboration

[Tribal Collaboration](#)

PROCEDURE

1. Planning Visitation

- 1.1. A Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting will be convened by the end of the next business day following removal, whenever possible, and will include development of a robust visitation plan. The parental behaviors that will support the safety of the child will be clearly defined and agreed upon with participants.
- 1.2. During the course of reunification, visitation assessment and planning will be conducted during CFT meetings, which will be held monthly whenever possible.
- 1.3. Visitation planning will be individualized for the family, with consideration focused on:
 - 1.3.1. The family's needs, and maintaining and enhancing relationships
 - 1.3.2. Culturally responsive and normative to include activities that include, for example, sporting events, art and music events, Tribal ceremonial and cultural events
 - 1.3.3. Minimally necessary oversight associated specifically to safety
- 1.4. Visits shall take place in the least restrictive environment needed to support the safety of the child/youth, in order of priority:
 - 1.4.1. In the parent's home
 - 1.4.2. In the home of a relative
 - 1.4.3. In the foster home/caregiver's home
 - 1.4.4. In the community

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- 1.4.5. In the Multi-Family Visitation Center
- 1.4.6. In the Family Connection Center
- 1.5. Visits shall be supervised only as long as necessary to support child safety and any current safety threats for the duration of the visit.
 - 1.5.1. Visitation restrictions will be evaluated on a monthly basis by the CFT, including the Tribal Social Worker (TSW) (if applicable) and those supervising visits, with the intent of moving toward reunification as quickly as is safely possible.
 - 1.5.1.1. In order to assess parent/child interaction, the Social Worker (SW) will supervise a visit at least once per month and will work in partnership with the CFT.
 - 1.5.1.2. The SW, along with the TSW (if applicable), will evaluate the need for supervision at least monthly.
 - 1.5.1.3. If the supervision of visits continues beyond three months from the date of the Dispositional Hearing, the SW must seek Supervisor and Program Manager approval.
 - 1.5.2. Options for Visitation Supervisor – In order of priority from least restrictive to most restrictive:
 - 1.5.2.1. Supervised by a member of the family’s Circle of Support
 - 1.5.2.2. Supervised by the caregiver
 - 1.5.2.3. Supervised by the SW or SSA
- 1.6. Unsupervised Visitation
 - 1.6.1. SW, including the TSW (if applicable) and the CFT determine if supervision is needed. Visits shall move to unsupervised when the CFT has determined parents can support the safety of the child within the specified visitation times. This level of parenting is not necessarily the same level needed for reunification. Current court orders with regard to visitation must always be followed.
 - 1.6.2. Options for unsupervised visitation from least restrictive to most restrictive:
 - 1.6.2.1. At the parent’s home
 - 1.6.2.2. At the home of a member of the family’s Circle of Support

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1.6.2.3. In a community setting

1.6.2.4. In the caregiver's home

1.7. Overnight Visitation

1.7.1. An overnight visitation schedule will be developed by the CFT participants, consistent with the Case Plan, and can be unsupervised or supervised

1.7.2. Options for overnight visitation range from least restrictive to most restrictive (refer to 1.5.2 and 1.6.2 above)

1.8. The CFT will help craft and support visitation activities that are:

1.8.1. Age appropriate

1.8.2. Pertain to the family's interests

1.8.3. Household activities that adhere to traditional/cultural activities such as homework, chores, meals, family traditions, etc.

1.8.4. Include child/youth's medical, dental, behavioral health appointments, parent/child conferences, homework

1.8.5. Other possibilities include sports, festivals, concerts, plays, and community and religious activities

1.8.6. When the child's cultural background is Native American or Alaskan Native, visitation can occur at ceremonies and Tribally sponsored events to ensure ties to the Tribal community

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