**Assessing Safety in Substitute Care**

**Visitation between Worker and Child**

**Requirements**

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| The PCSA and PCPA are required to make monthly face-to-face visits with the child within the substitute care setting to ensure the child’s safety and well-being, and to assess whether the placement and services continue to meet the child’s need in accordance with the case plan. At least one contact must occur within each month.The minimum frequency of visits shall be as follows, with individual time for the child as appropriate to his or her ability to communicate:* A child placed in a relative or non-relative home or a foster home:
	+ During the first week of placement (not including the first day of placement) in the substitute care setting.
	+ During the first four weeks of placement.
	+ Monthly in the substitute care setting.
* A treatment or medically fragile foster home:
* During the first week of placement (not including the first day of placement) in the substitute care setting.
* Twice monthly, but not within the same week (one of which occurs in the treatment or medically fragile foster home).
* A residential facility:
* One contact within ten days of placement (not including the first day of placement).
* Monthly face-to-face visits within the residential facility.
* An independent living arrangement:
* One face-to-face visit with the child within the living environment within the first week of placement (not including the first day of placement).
* Monthly within the living environment.
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**Purpose**

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| A visit with a child in substitute care is a face-to-face contact within the substitute care setting. It provides an opportunity to ensure children are safe and that their evolving needs are being met. It aides in the relationship building and should allow for quality one-on-one time between the child and caseworker. A substitute care visit should include the ongoing assessment of :* Child’s emotional, physical, and social well-being
* Safety
* Risk
* Services
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**Strategies for Accomplishing**

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| **Techniques for Building Rapport** * Approach each child involved with an open mind.
* Engage the child and ask about his/her likes and interests.
* Actively listen to the child without interruption.
* Clarify expectations and purposes by explaining the caseworker’s role in working together toward solutions.
* Help the child retain a sense of comfort.
* Ask the child if you can speak with him/her and how they would like to be addressed (such as a nickname).
* Use language that is at the child’s developmental level.
* Set aside time at each visit to speak with the child privately.
* Consider the child’s schedule when making visitation arrangements.
* Be consistent, persistent, and follow through.
* Avoid canceling appointments if at all possible.

**Assessing Safety*** Ongoing assessment of safety and risk through observation and information obtained during the visit:
* The child’s current behavior, emotional functioning and current social functioning.
* The child’s current vulnerability.
* The protective capacities of the caregiver.
* Any changes in the substitute care setting or changes in the child’s daily activities.
* Speak privately with the child and address the child’s concerns.
* The Safety Assessment for Children in Substitute Care- Worker and Child Visitation Tool is available on the SACWIS knowledge base for use during visits.
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**Things to Consider**

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| **Frequency and Location of visits**A caseworker is required to have face-to-face contact with the child in substitute care monthly in the following situations:* For a child placed in a relative or non-relative home.
* For a child placed in a foster home.
* For a child placed in a residential facility.
* For a child in an independent living arrangement.

A caseworker is required to have a face-to-face visit twice monthly for children placed in a treatment or medically fragile foster home.  |

**Resources**

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| **Ohio Administrative Code Rule:** * 5101:2-42-65 Caseworker visits and contacts with children in substitute care.
* 5101:2-9-16 Visiting and communications.
* 2151.412 Case plans.

**Ohio Revised Code:** * 5153.16 Duties of agency.
* 5103.03 Rules for adequate and competent management of institutions or associations.
* 5101:2-38-05 PCSA case plan for children in custody or under protective supervision.
* 5101:2-39-10 PCPA case plan for children in custody or under court-ordered protective supervision.
* 5101:2-39-11 Required contents of a private PCPA case plan document

Resources* D.C. Child and Family Services Agency, Out-of-Home Practice Model, 2009 @ [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov)
* Wentz, Rose Marie. Parent Child Visits: Summary of Laws, Research and Best Practices. National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections @ [www.nrcpfc.org](http://www.nrcpfc.org)
* State of North Carolina, Department of Health and Human Services, Child Placement Services Manual, Section on Parent/Child Visitation @ <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/css1201c5-10.htm>
* Child Welfare Information Gateway, Introduction to Parent-Child Visits @ <http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/casework/birth/visiting.cfm>
* Ohio Department of Job and Family Services SACWIS Knowledge Base @ http://jfskb.com/sacwis/
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