

Tips For the Visiting Parent

Being with your child in the presence of someone else may be uncomfortable for you, at least in the beginning. You probably have many questions and concerns, and that is perfectly understandable. During tough times you may want to talk to a mental health professional or find a support group to help you with your feelings. Do your best to focus on your relationship with your child. Your patience and commitment will pay off. Here are some suggestions that might be helpful to you:

- Read the court order
- Arrive and depart on time
- Avoid discussing the court case or terms of the visit with your child
- Avoid quizzing your child about the other parent's activities and relationships
- Avoid making your child a messenger to the other party
- Say brief and positive good-byes to your child when the visit is over

Tips for the Custodial Parent

Supervised visitation can also be a challenge for you. Typically you have been taking care of your child's everyday needs and have a routine for yourself and your family. Supervised visitation can sometimes feel like one more responsibility. Of course you also have concerns and questions about the visits and how they will affect your child. This is understandable. In difficult times you may also want to talk to a mental health professional or find a support group where you can talk about your feelings. Here are a few suggestions that might help you in the process:

- Read the court order
- Explain to your child where and when the visits will take place
- Have your child ready on time and be prompt
- Reassure your child that you support him or her in having a pleasant visit
- Avoid quizzing your child about the visit
- Avoid making your child a messenger to the other party

To Both Parents

If you need to change the visitation schedule, the provider cannot do that for you. To assist you in filing the proper paperwork, contact your attorney or the Family Law Facilitator.

If you cannot agree on how to modify the court's order and you are both willing to meet with a Court Mediator to assist you in reaching an agreement that can then be filed in court and become an order, call your Family Court Services office to schedule an appointment.

Supervised visitation can be difficult and uncomfortable at times. Often there are hurt and angry feelings toward the other parent, and it seems impossible to have a positive attitude about supervised visitation. Remember that both of you care about your children, and that, if possible, children benefit from having two parents in their lives.

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For additional copies or more information about this booklet, please call the Center for Families, Children & the Courts at 415-865-7739, or write to:

Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts
Center for Families, Children & the Courts
Attn: Access to Visitation Grant Program
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102-3688



Questions and Answers for Parents



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS

CENTER FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN
& THE COURTS



What is Supervised Visitation?

The public policy of the State of California is to protect the best interests of children whose parents have a custody or visitation matter within the family courts. Sometimes, based on issues of protection and safety, a judge will decide that in order for a child to have contact with a parent, a neutral third person must be present during any visitation. A judge may make these orders on a temporary basis in order to give the visiting parent an opportunity to address specific problems or when contact is being reestablished after a prolonged absence. The court order will specify the time and duration of the visits. Sometimes, the court order will also specify who the provider is to be and where the visits are to take place.



What is the Job of the Supervised Visitation Provider?

The provider is there to make every effort to keep your child safe and support your child in enjoying the visit with the supervised parent. Whether a paid professional, family member or friend, the provider's job is to make sure that the children involved in the visits are safe and free from any unnecessary stress. The provider must be present at all times during the visit, listen to what is being said, and pay close attention to the child's behavior. If necessary, the provider may interrupt or end a visit. All providers are to report suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1 (800) 540-4000.



Where Do I Find a Professional Provider?

The insert in this brochure has current information on how to locate a professional provider. Prior to entering into an agreement with a provider, get his or her name and California Driver's License number and call TrustLine at 1-800-822-8490. If the provider is cleared by TrustLine it means that no disqualifying child abuse reports or disqualifying criminal convictions exist in California. You may want to call from time to time to see that the provider is still in good standing. If a provider is not listed on the TrustLine, contact another provider.



Who is a Supervised Visitation Provider?

There are two types of supervised visitation providers: the professional provider, who has agreed to follow the Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation and usually charges a fee for services, and the non-professional provider who is typically a family member or friend. Your court order will generally specify which type of provider you are to use to supervise these visits.



How Do I Select a Non-Professional Provider?

Parents will usually ask a family member or friend that cares and is concerned for the children and family. This person must speak the same language as the visiting parent and child. The parents should ask someone they feel will be impartial, will follow the court order and will comply with A Guide for the Non-Professional Provider of Supervised Visitation. If you will be using a non-professional, get a copy of this guide from the Court Clerk's Office.

It is available in several languages. Look through this guide. It will help you select the right person and determine if they are qualified. Then give the guide to the person you wish to supervise the visits so they can make an informed decision.



How Do I Select a Professional Provider?

The relationship you have with a professional provider will be more of a business relationship in which services are performed for a fee. Before you begin supervised visits, the provider must meet with you in person and discuss certain topics about the visits with you. These topics include:

- Terms of the visits
- Method of payment
- Safety procedures
- Reasons for interrupting or ending a visit

You will also be asked to sign an agreement about these conditions. If you would like to review the qualifications and guidelines that the provider must follow, the provider will give you a copy of the Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation. Prepare for the interview as you would prepare for a business interview. Make a list of questions you have for the provider and make sure you understand what services will be provided and what is expected of you. This will help you feel more comfortable during the visits and allow you to focus on your child.



Are There Rules and Qualifications for a Supervised Visitation Provider?

YES. Guidelines and minimum qualifications have been written for both professional and non-professional providers.