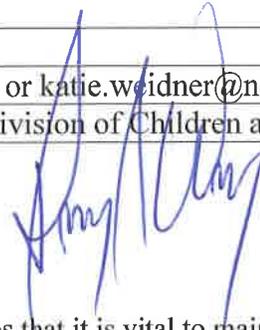


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| Division of Children and Family Services Protection and Safety Procedure #28-2016 | |
| Regarding: | Parenting Time Requirements |
| Date Effective: | 09/20/2016 |
| Rescinds: | AM #07-2011, PM #05-2005 |
| Contact: | Katie Weidner at (402)-471-9700 or katie.weidner@nebraska.gov |
| Issue by: | Douglas J. Weinberg, Director, Division of Children and Family Services |



Philosophy:

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) believes that it is vital to maintain a child’s connection to his/her family while the child is in out-of-home care. Ensuring regular and quality parenting time maintains and supports the parent-child relationship. The importance of continuing the parent-child attachment and preserving the child’s sense of belonging as a part of their family, community, and culture is necessary for the child and family’s well-being.

Procedure:

- A. **Parenting Time:** When the child is placed outside the custodial parent’s home, the CFS Specialist will develop an individualized parenting time plan with the parent(s). The Parenting Time Plan will be developed within 48 hours of the child’s removal from the home. When a child experiences a change in placement, the Parenting Time Plan will be reviewed (and updated if necessary) within 48 hours of the change of placement. The plan may also be updated as needed during the case, even if no placement change has been made. Family Team members may be involved to assist in development, implementation, and update of the plan as appropriate. This can include the child, non-custodial parent, out-of-home care provider, and other members of the family team.

NOTE: When a district court order establishing parenting time with either parent is in place, the CFS Specialist will follow this order unless there is an identified safety threat with that parent.

1. The CFS Specialist will determine parenting time based on the child’s age, best interests and needs (mental health, educational, medical, or school/extracurricular).
 - a. If there is a conflict between the best interest of the child and the needs, desire, or interest of the parent(s), the best interest and well-being of the child will take precedence in developing and implementing the parenting time plan.
 - b. Supervisory approval of any parenting time less than the “parenting time guidelines”, will be documented by the supervisor (or designee) in N-FOCUS-Visitation Plan-Other Issues.
2. The “parenting time guidelines” are as follows:
 - a. Birth to Eighteen Months: Five times per week, daily visits optimal;

- b. Eighteen Months to Three Years: Four times per week;
 - c. Ages Three to Eight Years: Three times per week; and
 - d. Ages Eight to Nineteen Years: Two times per week.
3. The Parenting Time Plan will be documented in N-FOCUS-Visitation Plan.

B. Supervision of Parenting Time

1. The CFS Specialist will determine the supervision level of parenting time based on an active safety threat and orders from the court.
2. The CFS Specialist will make efforts to safely decrease the level of supervision based on assessment of the child's safety and the child's needs. The CFS Specialist will utilize information from the safety plan or parenting time sections of the SDM® Reunification Assessment to evaluate supervision of parenting time.

C. Parental Contact Outside of Scheduled Parenting Time

1. The CFS Specialist will encourage parent(s) to have contact with the children outside of parenting time based on child safety and best-interests of the child. Discussions of appropriate parent contact outside of parenting time will occur during family team meetings and other contacts with the parents.
2. The CFS Specialist will inform the out-of-home care provider of all approved types of contact the parent may have with their child outside of the scheduled parenting time. The CFS Specialist will inform the out-of-home care provider and parent(s) of whether the parent can be left alone with the child, the current safety threats, and any other parameters to ensure child safety. Expectations of the out-of-home care provider to supervise or monitor parenting time or contact outside of scheduled parenting time should be clearly communicated to the provider.
3. The CFS Specialist will document parent contact outside of scheduled parenting time in N-FOCUS--Required Contacts or Family Team Meeting. This documentation will include dates of all contacts with the child outside of parenting time.
4. Contact outside of scheduled parenting time can be made in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Attendance at school events (sports, concerts, conferences, fun nights, etc.);
 - b. Attendance at medical and psychiatric appointments;
 - c. Letters/emails;
 - d. Phone calls;
 - e. Informal get-togethers (picnics, family reunions, bar-b-ques, birthday parties, etc.); and/or
 - f. Attendance at cultural events (pow-wows, church events, festivals, holiday celebrations, etc.)

References:

None