In this training, we will address Transition to Reunification, Visitation, and Planning. By the end of this training you will be able to:

- Identify three characteristics of a visitation.
- Recognize the most homelike environments for visitation.
- Identify alternative forms of contact.
- Identify factors for consideration when planning for visitation.
- Recognize the steps to help families alleviate stress during reunification.
As you view this training, you will complete the Transition to Reunification: Visitation and Planning questions located in the front section of your Permanency Participant Manual. Locate the Permanency Manual now to complete the worksheet.

You will see this icon appear on a slide when the content answers part or all of a worksheet question.
Visitations are an important part of any Reunification Plan.

Each visitation should have three particular characteristics:

- Visitations should have clear objectives.
- Visitations should occur at specific intervals.
- Visitations should occur in the most homelike environment where the safety of the child can be ensured.

Now let us explore each of these characteristics.

**Slide notes**

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Visitations should have clear objectives.

- Objectives should be agreed upon by both the FCM and the family (during the CFTM process).
- Visitation objectives should support the goal of reunification.
Visitation objectives to support the goal of reunification might include:

- Establishing and/or strengthening the parent-child relationship.
- Reinforcing appropriate parenting skills.
- Helping parents gain confidence in meeting their child’s needs.
- Identifying and assessing potential stressful situations between parents and their children.
- Providing parents the opportunity to decide whether they want to pursue reunification.
Visitation Intervals 1

Visitations should occur at specific intervals.

- The timing of the visits depend on the age of the child and the relationship of the visitor to the child.
- Face-to-face visitations between the child and his or her parent, guardian, or custodians should occur at least once per week and at least twice per week if the child is an infant (age 0-1) or toddler (age 1-2), unless the court has ordered otherwise.
- Visitation should not be taken away as a form of discipline or because of parents’ lack of participation in services (can be requested through court, if needed).

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- Face-to-face visitation should occur between the child and his or her siblings once per week, unless the court has ordered otherwise.
- Face-to-face visitations can occur between the child and other adults with whom the child has a positive and significant relationship at the FCM’s and court’s discretion.

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- Can be requested through court, if needed.
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For further information about determining the most appropriate, least restrictive visitation locations, please refer to policy 8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan and 8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan.

Slide notes
Visitations should occur in the most homelike environment, where the safety of the child can be ensured. For further information about determining the most appropriate, least restrictive visitation locations, please refer to policy 8.12, Developing the Visitation Plan, and 8.13, Implementing the Visitation Plan.
Slide notes

Visitations should occur in the most homelike environment where the safety of the child can be ensured. Locations should be selected in this order:

- In the home of the parent.
- In the home of a relative.
- In the resource home.
- In a community setting.
- At the local DCS office or service provider’s office.
The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

Ensure that the written Visitation Plan includes the following:

- A visitation goal
- Parameters of contact
- Supervision
- Visit logistics
- Appropriate activities during visitation
- Alternative forms of contact
- Provisions for contact with the non-custodial parent, if appropriate
- Provisions for face-to-face contact and/or other forms of contact

For more information on Visitation Plan policies, follow this link to Policy 8.12.
The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

- Supervise the visits or refer to a service provider, if the visits are supervised.
- Develop a visitation schedule which is agreeable to all parties, if the visits are unsupervised.
- Monitor and document the progress of the visits.
- Monitor and facilitate positive interaction and communication, if applicable.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Visitation Plan in meeting the identified goal(s).

Policy 8.13

Transition to Reunification: Visitation and Planning

Slide notes

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- Develop a visitation schedule which is agreeable to all parties, if the visits are unsupervised.
- Monitor and document the progress of the visits through supervising visits, and or written communication with the supervising staff and agency.
- Monitor and facilitate positive interaction and communication if applicable, between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the resource parent according to separate policy.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Visitation Plan in meeting the identified goals.

For more information on implementing the Visitation Plan, follow this link to Policy 8.13.
Slide 14 - Implementing the Visitation Plan 2

DCS will seek a court order, if changes need to be made to the approved Visitation Plan for the following reasons:

- Concerns for the child’s safety and well-being
- Visitation with a parent, guardian, or custodian who is incarcerated
- Change or frequency of interaction
- The parent, guardian, or custodian states in writing that he or she no longer wishes to visit
- Visitation disputes by involved parties

Policy 8.13

For more information on implementing the Visitation Plan, follow this link to Policy 8.13.
When face-to-face visitation is not possible (e.g., parental incarceration), alternative forms of contact should be explored between the child and his or her parents.

**Alternative forms of contact include:**

- Phone calls,
- Cards and Letters,
- Photographs,
- Recordings,
- and Skype.
It is also important to consider these factors when planning for visitation:

- Transportation,
- Time Zones,
- Schedules.
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- Even if the child and family have maintained contact during the separation, the child’s reintegration into the family will create stress for family members.

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Helping Families Alleviate Stress During Reunification

To help the family alleviate the stress that reunification causes, ensure that the family is working towards reunification and meeting their case plan objectives. As an FCM there are actions you can take to help the family alleviate the stress of reunification.

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Helping Families Alleviate Stress During Reunification

- Increase the length and number of visitations in the child’s home in weeks prior to reunification, including announced and unannounced visits by the child’s FCM.
- Gradually decrease the supervision level for visits.
- Allow the child and family to have several overnight and weekend visits prior to reunification. During this time the FCM should make announced and unannounced visits to the home.

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Helping Families Alleviate Stress During Reunification

- Facilitate a CFTM to assess child’s safety and well-being when reunified.
- Determine transitional services and update the child’s case plan to include services relating to the child’s transition home.

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Helping Families Alleviate Stress During Reunification

- Complete a Risk Assessment and Strengths and Needs Assessment for the family to ensure their service level has decreased.

- Complete a safety plan with the parent(s) to address potential risk factors for the child, how the family will manage these risk factors, and what supports the family will rely upon.

- Recommend trial home visitation for supervisory and court approval.

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- Recommend trial home visitation for supervisory, and court approval.
Reflective Questions

• What are potential barriers FCMs might face when arranging visitation between a family and the child(ren)?

• How can FCMs incorporate the biological parents in visitation planning to prevent potential barriers?

• As an FCM, what kinds of things should you take into consideration when developing a visitation plan?

Slide notes

Reflective Questions

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• How can FCMs incorporate the biological parents in visitation planning to prevent potential barriers?
• As an FCM, what kinds of things should you take into consideration when developing a visitation plan?
Thank you for taking the Case Planning & Intervening for Performance: Transition to Reunification, Visitation, and Planning training!

ELM will reflect your completion of this training within 24-48 hours.

Developed and presented by the Indiana Child Welfare Education and Training Partnership

Designed by: Crystal Offutt

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