



PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SUPERVISED VISITATION AND EXCHANGES

United Families services are available to assist DSS in supervising interaction between adults and children and assuring the safety of the children. Services are also available to those seeking court ordered supervised visitation or for neutral child exchanges between parents. The guidelines set forth are not negotiable and if they are not followed it will be grounds to terminate services with United Families.

Services: United Families offers “Observational Supervision”- on site visitation conducted by trained staff and volunteers. United Families also offers a neutral grounds for exchanges between parents. Visitations are recorded. Both audio and visual recordings are kept for **only six (6) months** and then will be deleted.

Hours of Operation: Business hours are from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. We are open on holidays according to staff availability and visits are scheduled according to staff discretion.

Weather Alerts: If the agency is closed due to inclement weather, a mass text message will be sent out to all clients having a visit that day.

PROCEDURES

1. Intake Procedure: In order to begin services at United Families, ALL parties must complete the intake and orientation process. All intake meeting must be completed by 5:00 p.m. at least 48 hours before a visit can occur. Intake meetings occur Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff may make exceptions to this rule according to staff availability or if appropriate under certain circumstances.

During the intake process information regarding the parties will be obtained and a client file will be created. The parties need to provide United Families with current contact information and at least one emergency contact. At this time the parties will have a chance to discuss their concerns and expectations. All safety concerns will be addressed including special needs of the child. The parties will go through the United Families’ service agreement and initial each paragraph acknowledging that they have read and understand the information.

Children may NOT be present during the intake appointment as it covers adult information, which is not appropriate for children. During the intake, there will be time for questions regarding United Families services.

Once the intake and orientation process has been completed by ALL parties, notice will be given to the parties as to the time of the first visitation or exchange. Notice will be given either by email, text, or phone call to the parties.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

2. Scheduling Visits: United Families will do its best to schedule visits during times that work well for all parties' involved; however, the parties must be flexible and accommodating when it comes to scheduling. If you are with DSS, your caseworker determines how often you get visits and how long each visit will be. If you have court ordered visitation, the court determines how many and how long visitations are but you are responsible for seeing that you get those visits. The schedule may be adjusted by United Families at any time during services. United Families prefers to arrange a consistent visitation schedule. **AT LEAST 24 HOURS NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL A VISIT.** We will do our best to reschedule the visit.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

3. Additional Visitors: If you are with DSS, your caseworker must approve all third party visitors. You need to give United Families at least **three (3) days notice** if you would like to have a third party visit, which allows us enough time to get the person approved by your DSS caseworker. United Families has the right to require the visitor(s) to complete an intake meeting before attending visits. If a third party does not follow the rules and standards set forth by United Families they will not be permitted to attend visits.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

POLICIES

Interactions During Visitations

1. Separation of Child: The noncustodial parent should promptly say goodbye to the child(ren) at the close of the visit and refrain from a long emotional separation. If a child is refusing to leave, the noncustodial parent should encourage the child to go with staff and assist staff.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

2. Discipline: Parties are expected to take care of and be responsible for supervising the children's behavior during visits and exchanges. Parties are expected to set limits and discipline appropriately when needed; however, physical discipline of any types (spanking, "swatting," pinching, or any other type of corporal punishment) is not allowed. Children are not be allowed to interfere with other visits or exchanges, harm other people or property, or engage in other inappropriate behaviors. If the child's behavior becomes too difficult for the parent to handle, staff will intervene to help resolve the problem. If the child's behavior becomes too difficult for the staff to handle, United Families has the discretion to call the custodial parent and end the visit early.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

3. Physical Contact: Visiting parents are NOT permitted to engage in rough play with children, which include but are not limited to instance, wrestling, throwing infants in the air, etc. Staff members have the discretion to determine if contact with the child is inappropriate.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

4. Clean-Up: Families must pick up toys, clean up after themselves, and throw away all trash from their visit before leaving.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

5. Bathroom Usage:

- a. Visiting Parent: If the visiting parents needs to use the restroom, he or she needs to verbally communicate with supervising staff. A staff member will come into the visitation room and relieve the visiting parent so that he or she may use the restroom. You need to request a key.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- b. Child(ren): Whether or not a visiting parent may escort the child to the restroom or change a diaper is determined by your DSS caseworker.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

6. Verbal Communication with Children:

- a. Positive Interaction: While at United Families, parties must have positive and supportive interactions with the children. Any communication or behavior that is emotionally or physically threatening to the child is not allowed.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- b. Profanity and/or Derogatory Comments: Profanity is not allowed. Derogatory comments or comments that paint DSS or the Foster Family or any other party in a negative light are not allowed.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- c. Interrogation: Interrogation by the parties is not allowed. Interrogation includes using the child to gather information about the child's Foster Family or other party or leading the conversation in such manner that encourages the child to reveal information.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- d. Promises to Children: Conversations should focus on the present rather than the future possibilities. This includes any discussion of potential future issues that are not currently authorized by the court, such as "when you get to come home," "when you get to see other family members or friends," "when this is all over..." etc.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- e. Discussion of Litigation with Children: Discussion of the litigation, the current legal situation, or issues involving the court with the child or other adults during visitation is not permitted.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

- f. Conversations: All conversations between the parties and the child must be audible to the person providing the supervised visitation. Unless a staff member is available who understands another language, the conversations between the child and the parties must be in English.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

7. Threats: Threats of physical violence towards anyone are not tolerated during visitations. All parties must conduct themselves in a manner that clearly demonstrates that the well-being of the child is the highest priority. A threat of physical violence will result in termination of services.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

8. Cell Phones: The use of cell phones or other communication devices are allowed only to further the enjoyment of the visit or in cases of emergencies. Cell phones will be prohibited if the use is inappropriate or your DSS caseworker does not allow them. Your DSS caseworker determines if photos or videos are permitted. **If unauthorized photographs, video recordings, or audio recording do occur, the media become property of UNITED FAMILIES.**

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

9. Sexual/Violent Offenders: United Families has the discretion to decline services to any client if United Families feels the client poses a danger to staff.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

10. Gifts: Your DSS caseworker determines if gifts may be given and what the restrictions on such gifts are.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

11. Right to Inspect: United Families reserves the right to inspect any items brought by the delivering party or any item from the visiting party prior to presentation to the children.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

12. Staff Discretion: The staff has the right to determine appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and versation with the children. **Parties are to comply with the limits set by the staff without complaint, comment, or further explanation during the visit.** Parties may contact United Families during business hours to set up a meeting time to discuss any complaints, concerns or questions. The time to do this is NOT in front of your child(ren).

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

13. Inappropriate Contact: Parties are not to place their hands on the children in any way the staff deems inappropriate. Unless limited by the court, parties may have appropriate contact with the child. Visiting parties will not be allowed to touch children on their genitalia unless they are changing an infant. The parties are to ensure the children to not expose their genitalia or undergarments during the visitation. If parties encourage the children to assume a position that reveals their genitalia or undergarments the visit may be terminated.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

14. Physical Examinations: Children may not be physically examined. Do not ask staff to physically examine your child. DO not interrogate your child regarding marks or bruises. If staff sees signs of abuse, we will contact DSS.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

15. No Pets: Pets or other animals are not allowed in the facility unless they are assisting the disabled or unless United Families has granted special permission prior to the visitation.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

16. Involving Staff in Disputes: Parties are not to involve the staff in discussions disparaging DSS, the Court, or other parties or getting staff to try to “take sides,” or discussing their opinion of DSS, the Court, or anyone else. United Families is completely **NEUTRAL** party. We have one role and that is to facilitate visits and ensure safety. Decisions involving your case are for you caseworker, your attorney and the Court to decide. United Families does not judge any client or decide if supervised visits are fair or appropriate in any case. United Families simply facilitates supervised visits that are referred.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

17. Attorney Client Privilege: Attorney Kelly Peterson cannot represent you in your legal case. There is no attorney client privilege when you speak to Kelly Peterson regarding your case. Kelly Peterson may be called to testify in your case and if that is the case she testify to all statements made to her by the parties.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

18. Food and Drinks: Your DSS caseworker determines if food and/or drinks are permitted during visits and if so, the restrictions. **ONLY WATER IS ALLOWED IN UNITED FAMILIES.** **All drinks brought to United Families have to be new and unopened until the visitation begins. This is to prevent allegations of alcohol use while in the United Families facility.**

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

19. Time: United Families’ clocks determine the correct time concerning appointments, services, late fees, and cancellations.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

20. Termination of Services:

- a. If ongoing contact appear too stressful or traumatic for the child (crying, begging to leave, etc.) for more than 5 to 10 minutes, United Families has the right to end the visitation early.
Initial: _____ Initial: _____
- b. If United Families determines that it cannot effectively address safety or other issues involved in the particular case.
Initial: _____ Initial: _____
- c. If the case places an undue demand on the United Families' resources.
Initial: _____ Initial: _____
- d. If a person is rude or disrespectful staff, volunteers, or other parties, United Families has the right to terminate services and/or contact the Court directly to report the party's conduct.
Initial: _____ Initial: _____
- e. One or both of the parties have failed to comply with the rules of the service.
Initial: _____ Initial: _____

21. Appropriate Attire: The custodial parent must dress the children in appropriate and unrevealing clothing, or clothing that is not likely to reveal the child's genitalia or undergarments. Children wearing skirts or dresses must have shorts under their dresses. **All parties** must be dressed appropriately that does not reveal their genitalia or undergarments or have profanity or inappropriate content on them.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

22. Fragrances: Fragrances that may cause the children or adults receiving services discomfort are not allowed.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

23. Smoking/Alcohol Use: there is no smoking, illegal substance, or alcohol use allowed at any time during a supervised visitation. Smoke breaks are not permitted. **Any party who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to visit or exchange children and may be required to take a PBT test. If it is discovered that the parent is intoxicated he or she will not be permitted to drive home and will need to call for a ride.**

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

24. Weapons: Weapons are not allowed in the center with the exceptions of guards employed by United Families or by peace officer that are not current clients of United Families. Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, tools, pepper spray, mace, explosives, fireworks, acids, toxic chemicals, or any other similar object. United Families reserves the right to search any party by means that include but are not limited to frisking and metal detection.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

25. Update Information: The parties will keep United Families informed of any changes in attorneys, address, or telephone numbers.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

26. Contacting Staff Outside Work Hours: Attempting to contact staff or volunteers unrelated to United Families will be considered harassment and will be grounds for immediate termination of services and possible charges filed against the individual.

Initial: _____ Initial: _____

27. Reporting Abuse/Neglect: All staff are required by law to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. This includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and physical neglect. We will also contact the appropriate authorities if there is harassment, threats, or physical contact during exchanges.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

28. Arriving to United Families After Termination of Services: If services are terminated, the parties are not allowed on the premises for any reason without the consent of the staff. Violation will result in prosecution.

Initial: _____

Initial: _____

Concerns, Questions, and Complaint Procedures

During the intake and orientation process there will be time set aside to respond to any questions that parents might have.

After the orientation session all concerns, questions, or complaints by any party must be addressed in writing to United Families. No staff member will be able to discuss a concern or complaint with parties or take any action until the consideration is received in writing. Failure to follow this process will result in case management fees.

Grievance Process: If a client has a concern or complaint that is not addressed to the satisfaction of the client, the client may:

1. Address the concern or complaint with the Program Director via telephone or scheduled appointment.
2. If the client is unsatisfied with the manner in which the Program Director has addressed the grievance, the client may present his/her grievance to the Executive Director in written form.
3. If the client is unsatisfied with the manner in which the Executive Director has addressed the grievance, the client may present his/her grievance to the Board of Directors in written form.

Parties may request an appointment to discuss issues other than grievances, which should also be submitted in writing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF UNDERSTANDING OF SERVICES, RULES AND GUIDELINES

Parties are expected to comply with directive from United Families staff while that are on site. Although parties may not understand why an instruction is given or agree with the instruction they are give, the time to address questions and concerns is not during the time assigned for supervised visitation. In certain cases there may be changes to routine operation in order to accommodate unusual or unforeseen events or needs that may or may not relate to your individual case. Please remember that we are serving a number of families at any given time and that compliance with the rules outlined herein will enhance services to everyone.

These guidelines are not meant to be all encompassing. Additional rules or changes to rules may be appropriate in specific cases. This decision is left to the discretion of staff. Clients receiving services may be required to sign additional guidelines for services.

Print Name

Date

Signature

Print Name

Date

Signature