

## **Minnesota Families United**

### Guidelines for Supervised Visitation/Parent Education Participants

**SUPERVISED VISITATION/PARENT EDUCATION GUIDELINES:** At Minnesota Families United our goal is to provide reputable, professional supervised visitation and/or parent education services to families in our community that are consistent and time-sensitive, held in relaxed and comfortable settings, with the least amount of interference. Visitation Supervisors/Parent Educators at Minnesota Families United are respectful, thorough, conscientious, and child focused. They also have the background and training to effectively monitor questionable situations, keeping the child's safety the paramount concern. Supervised visitation is an opportunity for children to spend time with their families in the presence of a trained, neutral observer. Parent Education Services will provide the family with information and skills needed to promote a healthy relationship between the parent and child/ren. To ensure the best outcome of supervised visits/parent education and the wellbeing of child/ren, there are certain basic guidelines that must be agreed upon. They are as follows:

#### **Confidentiality and Case Notes:**

1. Visitation Supervisor/Parent Educator will always be within sight and sound distance of the child/ren during the session.
2. Visitation Supervisor/Parent Educator will be present and documenting all observations during the session. This includes all conversations with both custodial and noncustodial parents that may occur during pick-up and drop off.
3. Case notes will remain confidential and will be emailed to the case managers within 72 hours of the session.
4. Custodial parent will only be given information about the child's wellbeing such as diapering, eating, and/or accident or injuries. MFU Staff will not share any additional details about the visit or visiting parent with the custodial parent.

#### **Scheduling:**

1. Sessions will be held Monday through Sunday between the hours of 7:30 am and 7:30 pm based on the availability of all parties.
2. Sessions will be held at a location decided upon by the county case manager and MFU Director. A request for a change of location must be cleared by both the county case manager and MFU Director at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled session.
  - a. Available locations include MFU offices and community spaces
  - b. Examples of community locations include libraries or playgrounds
  - c. For community visits, consideration must be given to past criminal convictions and additional risk assessment
  - d. Visits that begin in the MFU office may transition to community spaces
3. Only approved visitors are allowed to attend the session. Permission for additional visitors must be granted by the county case manager and MFU Director at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled visit.
  - a. No visitors are permitted during the first session
  - b. This policy applies visitors of all ages
  - c. Visitors over the age of 18 must provide photo ID at the first visit they attend

#### **Cancellation Policy:**

1. To cancel/reschedule a session, visiting parent must contact the visitation supervisor/parent educator at least 24 hours in advance via text message or phone call to coordinate. If a session is canceled less than 24 prior to the start of the scheduled session the session will not be made up. Late cancels and no shows will be charged in full.
2. **Visiting parent must arrive at the visit/session location 15 minutes before the scheduled start time (for both supervised visits and parent education) and be present for the entire scheduled session. If visiting parent is more than 15 minutes late the session will be canceled and not made up. Parties will be charged in full. Visits are not cancelled for late children.**
3. **If the visiting parent has 3 late cancels or no shows within a month's time, the visiting parent will be placed on a 30-day suspension.**
4. **If a parent misses 1 visit within the first 30 days following a suspension, the client will be terminated from the agency.**

### Conversation Conduct:

1. Visitation supervisor/parent educator must be able to hear all conversations.
  - a. Visiting parent will not engage in whisper conversations with the child/ren
  - b. All conversations must be held in English, any individuals that wish to speak in their native language may request a translator
2. Visiting parent will interact in a positive, active, and supportive manner with the child/ren.
3. There will be no communication or behavior that is emotionally or physically threatening to the child/ren or visitation supervisor/parent educator.
4. No verbal or physical attacks or threats upon anyone.
5. Visiting parent will not
  - a. Debate or argue with the visitation supervisor/parent educator in front of child/ren
  - b. Speak negatively about the other parent, foster parent, case manager, or family members/friends
  - c. Question the child/ren about the custodial parent's life, whereabouts, friends, or activities. Children are neither spies nor informants.
6. Visiting parent will not discuss
  - a. Adult issues, such as court proceedings with the child/ren
  - b. Unsupervised visitation or being reunited
  - c. Plans or promises for the future. These comments can be harmful to the emotional health of the child/ren.
7. Visiting parent will be responsible for parenting the child/ren
  - a. The parent will set limits and manage behavior appropriately
  - b. Physical punishment is not allowed
8. Conversations will be directed by the child/ren interests.

### Technology:

1. Personal phone usage is not allowed during visits. **Phones will be stored in lockers for the duration of the visit.**
  - a. Parents may not text, send emails, use social media, etc.
  - b. If approved by the case worker, pictures can be taken during the last 5 minutes of the visits
  - c. NO RECORDING, AUDIO OR VISUAL
  - d. Improper phone usage can result in termination from the agency
2. Exceptions are made for youth that are utilizing their own technology for educational purposes
3. Exceptions can also be made for technology that is interactive between the parent and child
  - a. This includes educational videos, music, guided meditation, etc.
4. Visiting parents are not allowed to give the child/ren cell phones, tablets, or other electronic devices as gifts.
5. Visiting parents will not exchange emails, phone numbers, or social media usernames with children.

### What to Bring:

1. Visiting parent will not bring any weapons or anything that could be used as a weapon to the session. **Bags will be stored in lockers for the duration of the visit.**
  - a. Any weapons confiscated from a visiting parent will not be returned and will instead be given directly to law enforcement
  - b. Once the visit begins, any weapons that are found will be confiscated and the visit may be terminated, this may also be grounds for termination from the agency
  - c. Any non-prescription drugs or alcohol found will need to be removed from the MFU center or the visit will be canceled
2. Animals, including pets, are not allowed.
3. Visiting parent agrees to be responsible for the child/ren's care during the session.
  - a. This includes providing supplies for meals, snacks, formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, etc.
  - b. MFU does not provide any food for visits
  - c. Provided food must be store brought and sealed upon entry, no homecooked food or Tupperware is permitted
  - d. Breastfeeding is not permitted without written documentation of approval from the caseworker
4. Visiting parent is responsible for the cleanup of the space after the session.
5. Visiting parents may bring familiar toys/items from home to the visit
  - a. Personal items cannot be stored at the MFU office

- b. Please limit the number of items to one bag
- 6. All items such as birthday cards, letters, and gifts will be checked by the visitation supervisor/parent educator prior to the child/ren's arrival.
  - a. Gift giving is limited to holidays and birthdays.

**Additional Safety Policies:**

- 1. Additional safety policies may be enforced by court order.
- 2. Touching, hugging, kissing, diaper changing, gift giving, or giving of any items including food and candy are not allowed in cases with sexual abuse allegations.
- 3. Children that are potty trained are encouraged to use the restroom privately. Visitation supervisor/parent educator and parent will wait outside the entrance to the bathroom to ensure the safety of the child. Visitation supervisor/parent educator will remain in the restroom if a child and parent are in the restroom together.
- 4. Physical activities such as wrestling or horseplay that could result in an unintended injury will not be allowed. Tickling, hugging, kissing, or holding must be initiated by your child/ren.
- 5. Visiting parent will not use non-prescription drugs, alcohol, nicotine products, or anything that impairs his/her ability to use sound judgment prior to or during the session.
  - a. Visitation supervisors have the right to cancel visitations or end visitations early for safety concerns (e.g., visiting parent is under the influence)
  - b. Visits that are canceled due to safety concerns will not be rescheduled

**Separate Exchange:**

- 1. Separate exchange of children will be done on a case-by-case basis as needed.

Minnesota Families United will not be responsible for accidents or injury to children or other participants. Parents release Minnesota Families United and visitation supervisors/parent educators from any liability.

I have read the GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISED VISITATION/PARENT EDUCATION SERVICES, and I agree to comply. I understand failure to comply may result in immediate termination of the service being offered.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_