

Parenting Time Policy
September 2017



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<http://www.family-houseinc.org>

Family House Parenting Time Policy

Family House, Inc. is a safe haven for children. Our goal at Family House is to create a supportive atmosphere in which families can spend time together. Although you may not have chosen to partner with Family House, we hope you will use the time with us to interact with your child(ren) and let them know how special they are. Our policies are intended to ensure the safety of all parties, facilitate positive family interactions, and promote family bonding.

Visit Supervisors will be present during the parenting time to supervise and document the visit, and offer parenting guidance and support when needed or requested. They may request that the visiting parent meet after the conclusion of the visit to discuss what occurred during visitation and any challenges that arose. Visit Supervisors do not offer “on-call” or after hours clinical consultation, nor do they offer crisis management services, although they will assist if a crisis occurs during a visit. Family House staff cannot transport clients or provide case management. In addition, Visit Supervisors must have management’s approval prior to starting or extending service. Family House staff are mandated reporters and if child abuse and/or neglect is suspected, they are required by law to notify the appropriate authorities. Family House strives to protect the privacy of our clients. However, if Family House staff believes that a client presents with a serious threat of harm to themselves or others, Family House staff may have to disclose sensitive information about that client to help them stay safe.

General Rules/Conduct

1. For Family House to best serve you, we request that Orientation sheets be completed in their entirety. If you do not feel comfortable giving certain information, speak with a staff member and let them know that you are choosing to leave certain sections blank. You may be asked to update some or all of the information provided annually.
2. Family House serves families dealing with private and sensitive issues. Engaging in conversation outside the agency about any family utilizing services is prohibited. If at any time it is reported that you have done so, Family House has the right to terminate your services immediately. You must agree to respect and protect the privacy of all past and present families at Family House.
3. You are responsible for your child(ren)’s behavior during visitation. Physical discipline or the threat of physical discipline is not permitted. Striking a child will result in the immediate termination of the visit. Staff will offer guidance on discipline when necessary.
4. Custodial parents may request that they be the ones to provide meals, snacks, and drinks for the children during parenting time. If they have not requested this, non-custodial parents are welcome to provide their own meals, snacks, and drinks for their parenting time. In addition, non-custodial parents are encouraged to plan activities and supply games and toys for use during the visits.
5. Non-custodial parents are responsible for any clean up during the visit. For visits at Family House, please remember that multiple families use this space throughout the week. You are responsible for cleaning up/putting away any Family House supplies, toys, food, and dishes used during your parenting time. If you do not clean up, you may be assessed a cleaning fee of \$25.00 or more depending on damage or circumstances.

6. Please use appropriate language during visitation. No whispering is allowed. Conversations with your child(ren) must be appropriate and non-threatening. Conversations about court, testimony, timelines (example: "You can see me at my house in two weeks."), bad mouthing of other parent, relatives, or service providers, disrespectful comments about anyone, or anything staff deems is inappropriate will not be allowed. Staff may ask that you re-direct the conversation if it is uncomfortable for the children. Written communication may be copied and filed, and/or noted in the report.
7. Video cameras, tape recorders, laptop computers, and electronic games are not allowed at Family House at any time unless otherwise authorized by the Office Manager. For on-site visits, you may utilize the Greg Karas Resource Center, computer, and/or a laptop if available for homework or projects, as long as it is approved by a staff member.
8. At the Family House, you may only use your cell phone or camera to take still photographs and show photographs, unless the custodial party or DCS caseworker request otherwise. When not taking photographs your cell phone needs to be turned off and put away. If you plan to show your child(ren) photographs during any visitation, a staff member needs to review and approve them beforehand.
9. All media used during any visitation (video games, apps, TV, etc.) must be approved by the visit supervisor and will need to be in full view of Family House staff. All calls between the visiting child(ren) and approved persons will be conducted over speaker phone for supervision purposes. In addition, visits that use a video call service (e.g., Skype, FaceTime) will need to be on speaker and in full view of Family House staff.
10. No pets allowed on the Family House premises. Please inform staff if you have a pet prior to starting off-site visitation. Family House staff may ask that you restrict your pet's access to certain areas of the home during visitation.
11. No weapons or anything perceived as such are permitted on the Family House property or allowed during visitation.
12. No smoking is permitted on the premises or during visitation.
13. Family House operates under a drug and alcohol free policy. If there is a belief that you are not sober during visitation, the visit will be terminated immediately. If staff suspects that you are under the influence of alcohol during visitation, we will ask that you obtain a breathalyzer test. The Valparaiso Police Department can assist you with a breathalyzer test. Immediately before each subsequent visit, you may be required to take a breathalyzer and present a clean test paper to Family House before the visit can occur. This will be for a period of no less than three months.
14. If staff suspects that you are under the influence of drugs, you will be asked to complete a rapid drug screen. Porter Starke Services offers drug screens. Family House will not be responsible for any costs associated with drug screens. Should the initial screen be positive or if you refuse to have one, you will not be able to resume visitation until a clean test result is provided. Any additional services or drug screens beyond the initial test will be at your own expense.

15. Parenting time may take place on-site, at Family House, or off-site. Visit locations will need to be approved by the custodial parent or DCS caseworker, and are at the discretion of Family House. The location of the visit must be agreed upon no later than the Friday the week before the visit. There will only be one location per visit.
16. The visiting parent(s) and child(ren) agree to remain at the visit location for the entire visit. The visit will begin as scheduled with staff supervising the visit until the child(ren) are picked up.
17. Visiting parties at Family House are able to use a locker as they are available during their parenting time. Family House is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged belongings that you choose to store in a locker. Locks and keys are available for your use and must be returned each time before leaving the facility. You are responsible for cleaning your locker and may ask a staff member for cleaning supplies as necessary.
18. At the Family House, parking for the custodial party is on the East or North side of the house, and the children should enter through the front door and REMAIN in the living room until staff assists you. Parking for visiting parent(s) is on the South side of the house and they should enter through the back door and REMAIN in the kitchen until staff assists you. Please keep the child(ren) with you at all times. Once you enter the facility for your parenting time, you may not leave without permission from a staff member. This includes going out to your car for any reason.
19. If the non-custodial party is dropped off at the Family House for their parenting time, they need to be dropped off in the back parking area, designated for non-custodial parents. Your transportation may not wait in Family House's parking area during parenting time.
20. For off-site visits, Family House staff will meet both the custodial parent/transporting party and the non-custodial parent at the agreed upon visit location and at the agreed upon time. If the custodial parent/transporting parties arrive prior to the start time, they will be asked to wait in their vehicle until the agreed upon time. The staff will escort the child(ren) from the transporting party to the non-custodial parent.
21. For all visits, the custodial party should leave the visit location once staff escorts the child(ren) through to start their visit. We ask that the custodial party return to the visit location no more than ten minutes prior to the end of the visit, if possible. If for any reason you have to return to the visit location earlier, please be mindful of where the visit is taking place and wait in an area that will not disrupt the visit. If the visit is taking place outside on the playground at the Family House, please go inside to wait.
22. If a child needs assistance in the bathroom during the visit, the visiting parent will assist this child. The bathroom door will remain open, and the Visit Supervisor will enter the bathroom for supervision purposes.
23. If a non-custodial parent would like to bring other family members to their parenting time, prior approval is required from the custodial party or the DCS caseworker. Family House reserves the right to refuse or limit guests at the visit. Two guests are allowed at once during

visits at Family House. Special arrangements for birthday or holiday parenting time may be approved by the Visit Supervisor. Any guest attending the parenting time with you needs to be present at the start of your parenting time. Any guest above the age of 18 years old will be required to complete an orientation form.

24. At the end of the parenting time the custodial party will leave with the child(ren) first. During off-site visits, Family House staff will escort the child(ren) to the custodial parent/transporting party. For on-site visits, the non-custodial party must remain in the facility until the custodial party has then left the parking area, and staff clears them to leave.
25. If someone other than the custodial parent is picking up the child(ren) after their visit, Family House must be notified of this prior to the visit. Any person picking up children from a visit, who is not the custodial parent, will be asked to provide identification, which may be copied and kept on file and/or noted in the report.
26. Family House will relay information regarding the child(ren) between parties when necessary. However, Family House will not participate in the transferring of legal documents, cash/checks, insurance information, messages, gifts, mail, etc. from one adult party to the other that is not directly related to the parenting time. The child(ren) may not be used for this purpose either. Family House's parking area is not an acceptable area to do this either.
27. Visitors and children should not visit if they have been ill in the last 24 hours. Please advise staff of any medical issues that have arisen, so that appropriate procedures can be followed to ensure the safety and health of all parties. Family House may request documentation from medical personnel or suspend visitation due to medical concerns. Family House will make every attempt to provide make-up time for parenting time missed due to illness, weather, school functions, or other activities related to the children; however, make-up time is not guaranteed.
28. If you have questions or concerns regarding your parenting time, you may speak with a Visit Supervisor before or after parenting time. You may also contact the Office Manager or Director by phone or e-mail to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. If you would like to arrange a meeting with the Office Manager or Director, you may do so by calling Family House. Any concerns not directly related to your parenting time need to be focused towards your legal representative.
29. Your legal representative may request records for you. If you do not have legal representative, you may provide a subpoena for the records to Family House to obtain copies of your records. There is a \$1.00 processing fee for each page provided. Family House will not give you copies of records without a subpoena or request from a legal representative. If you or your attorney subpoena a Family House employee to go to court, you are responsible for paying a \$150 fee.

Scheduling/Payment

30. Family House will be closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Other closings will be posted in advance, or if weather related, on the Family House Facebook page. Family House follows the local school closing. If local schools are closed, then Family House is closed. In the event that weather declines during a visit, staff may contact the custodial parent/transporting party to pick-up the child(ren) early.

Staff will make every effort to call families to advice of Family House closings. Family House will make every attempt to provide make-up time for any parenting time missed due to holiday closures, but make-up time is not guaranteed.

31. Staff will coordinate with all involved parties and assign a standing parenting day and time after considering school and work schedules for all parties. Parenting time needs to be scheduled at least two business days in advance.
32. If you are unable to attend an appointment, please call 24 hours in advance. Same day cancellations will be charged a \$25.00 fee. The party responsible for the no show or same day cancellation will be assessed the fee.
33. If the non-custodial parent is late for parenting time, the person transporting the child(ren) will be asked to wait but is not required to do so. If you arrive late, you will only be offered the amount of time remaining. If either party is more than 15 minutes late, without giving notice of running late, Family House will cancel the visit and the party responsible will be charged a \$25.00 cancellation fee. If the child(ren) are late arriving for parenting time, the non-custodial parent may be offered make-up time at the end of the visit, if staff is available.
34. Services may be suspended at any time at the discretion of Family House.
35. If you fail to attend a scheduled parenting time without notifying Family House, you will be placed on the NO SHOW policy. From that point on, you must call 24 hours in advance to confirm each parenting time. If you do not call 24 hours in advance, your parenting time will be cancelled. This will be for a period of no less than three months.
36. If you are already on the NO SHOW policy, and you again fail to attend or cancel your parenting time, you will then be placed on the EXTENDED NO SHOW policy. You will still need to call and confirm your parenting time 24 hours in advance. In addition, if your visit is at Family House, you will need to arrive a half an hour before the scheduled parenting time, at which point staff will call the custodial party to inform them that you have arrived. If your visit is off-site, you will need to call Family House a half an hour before the start time to confirm you are at the visit location. The length of time you will be required to adhere to the EXTENDED NO SHOW policy will be at the discretion of Family House.
37. Payment is decided by the court order or referral source. If the court order/referral does not stipulate who is responsible for payment, both parties will split the fee. Family House accepts cash, personal checks, cashier's checks, and money orders. A \$50 fee will be assessed for any bounced check or nonsufficient funds assessed to Family House. Payments may also be made online at the Family House website through PayPal.
38. Payment is expected upon arrival before parenting time begins. If you do not make your payment, services will be suspended or terminated. Staff will provide a receipt upon payment.

Family House reserves the right to make changes or additions to this policy on a client by client basis. Failure to comply with Family House policy may result in the termination of services.