

“MY CHILD WAS JUST REMOVED. WHEN DO I SEE THEM AGAIN?”

This statement creates feelings that no parent wants to feel. You are likely sad, angry and confused all at the same time. All you want is to see and hold your child again; but what will this look like? How can you make the most of this difficult time? How can you help get your child home sooner?

WHAT IS PARENTING TIME?

- Parenting time is scheduled time between you and your child while working towards returning your child to your care full-time.
- Parenting time may also include attending medical and/or school appointments, phone calls, virtual calls/story time, emails, etc.
- Parenting time keeps a strong relationship between you and your child.
- This is also your opportunity to demonstrate existing parenting skills along with those that you’ve developed or learned through parent education programs.
- Parenting time is an opportunity for DCS and the Courts to receive needed information about how you safely parent your child.



- Timely and frequent contact with your Parenting Time Case Aide and DCS Specialist is important to the success of your parenting time plan.
- Communicate current scheduling issues with your Parenting Time Case Aide as soon as you are aware.

DCS CASE MANAGER

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

PARENTING TIME CASE AIDE

Name _____

Agency _____

Phone / Email _____



PARENTING TIME SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

Keeping families connected while working towards reunification.



“A TIME TO BOND... A TIME TO HEAL”

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WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN PARENTING TIME?

- Parents and children involved with DCS have a right to parenting time together.
- Parenting time may only be stopped with a Court Order or due to safety concerns.
- Individuals with a significant relationship with your child may participate in parenting time if it is in your child's best interest.
- Each month, discuss with your DCS Specialist how parenting time is going, how to increase parenting time, and what is needed to transition toward unsupervised time.

HOW DOES PARENTING TIME GET STARTED FOR ME AND MY FAMILY?

- DCS staff should contact you quickly after your child is separated from you to begin creating a parenting time plan.
- Your parenting time plan provides you and your child the opportunity to spend time together as a family as naturally as possible, while ensuring the safety of your child.
- The plan includes
 - **Frequency** (how often) and duration (how long) of scheduled parenting time.
 - **Location** – Where parenting time can safely be held.
 - **Supervision Level** – The level of supervision needed to ensure that your child is safe.
 - **People involved** – Those identified to be present at the same time, while still maintaining the safety of your child
 - **Support** – The supports you need to be successful in parenting time.
- The plan does not have to be complete to start parenting time, but a plan should be developed quickly so that you understand how to move toward spending more time with your child, with less supervision.



HOW DO I PREPARE FOR POSITIVE PARENTING TIME WITH MY CHILD?

- Create goals to make the most of your time with your child during parenting time.
- Bring food, activities and other necessities to support your child and family throughout the parenting time.
- Prepare yourself - seeing your child during scheduled parenting time can make you feel awkward, sad, or angry. Identify people to call to help you through these difficult times. If you need help identifying a support, speak to your DCS Specialist or Case Aide.
- Understand that your child may act differently – this is a difficult time for them as well.
- Use this time to grow and bond as a family. Make the most of scheduled parenting time. Be consistent for you and your child – it will get easier.

Below is a link to Rise Magazine which is an excellent resource with contributions by parents who have been involved with child welfare. They have wonderful tips for making the most of parenting time with your child, as well as links to other resources. (risemagazine.org)



HOW WILL I BE SUPPORTED DURING PARENTING TIME?

Support can look differently for each family. While developing your plan with your DCS Specialist, share what you need to be successful.

- A natural support may be present to support you and your child during parenting time, as long as the person will be nurturing to your child.
- Developing a relationship with the out of home caregiver through, Shared Parenting, is a good way to stay connected regarding your child's daily activities during the time you are apart.
- A referral for a DCS Parenting Time Case Aide or Parenting Time Services (PTS) may be made to support with observation and/or supervision during parenting time.
- Family Connections (FC) services may support you with identifying resources to make the most of parenting time.
- Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP) may assist you in strengthening your ability to safely parent your child and can observe how you use those skills during your scheduled parenting time.
- Behavioral Health may support you in parenting time by providing Behavior Coaching, a Family Support Partner, or other therapeutic interventions to assist with parenting time.

There are many supports and resources available to help parents grow in their abilities. Below is an excellent resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Child Development as well as additional resources from community organizations throughout the country.

