



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

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## Tips for developing a supportive, flexible, family-centered parenting time plan:

- Case plans must include behaviors that need to be observed during parenting time to transition to a less restrictive parenting time plan.
- To avoid continual requests to Court to modify parenting time orders, request the Court grant the Department discretion to increase parenting time and reduce supervision level and location restrictions.
- Make sure to notify the court and all parties if a recommended change to the plan is different from what was previously agreed upon.
- Parenting time plans should be developed with the family and based on the family's needs, so that the family understands how behavior changes may influence changes to the parenting time plan.
- Maintain communication with the parenting time monitor regarding the status of parenting time. If changes are recommended to the parenting time plan, allow two weeks for the changes to be implemented, especially if working with a Parenting Time Case Aide.
- Discuss the family's parenting time plan during regular clinical supervision. Changes to the number of hours being supervised by Parenting Time Services must be approved by the Program Supervisor.

## Parenting Time (Visitation)

### Planning Safe Supportive Parenting Time with Families

#### Purpose of parenting time:

- To meet the child's developmental and attachment needs
- To support and strengthen the parent-child relationship
- To allow the parent an opportunity to demonstrate new and positive parenting skills and abilities

Changes in the parenting time plan, such as scheduling more frequent parenting time or requiring a lower level of supervision, should be related to demonstrated improvements in a parent's ability to safely respond to the child's needs, not as a reward.

Parenting time should be changed progressively as a part of preparing the family for reunification.

Use information gathered from parenting time to help inform permanency planning decisions, such as:

- Whether Conditions for Return have been met
- Whether the parent's caregiver protective capacities have been enhanced
- Whether positive behavior changes have occurred, and areas that still need support

#### For Additional Information:


- *Field Guide- Parenting Time Location*
- *Field Guide- Parenting Time Supervision*

#### Parenting Time (Visitation) Progression:


- Parenting time will most often start with restrictions to ensure child safety, while an observation period of the parent-child interaction is completed, and an individualized parenting time plan is developed.  
Restrictions may include:
  - ▶ having a DCS Case Aide or other professional supervise parenting time; and
  - ▶ parenting time being held in a more secure setting such as a DCS office.
- When a parent and their child are successfully interacting during parenting time, the plan should allow for one element to be changed at a time.
  - ▶ One change at a time allows for an assessment of the parent's ability to meet the child's needs as restrictiveness is slowly lessened.
  - ▶ If problems arise from the change, go back to the last plan that was working. Once stabilized, implement a different element change accordingly.
  - ▶ When an issue is identified that is preventing progress, the issue should be addressed during parenting time support and/or through the treatment services for the parent or child.
- Increase the frequency and duration of parenting time when the parent has demonstrated the ability to respond safely and appropriately to the child's needs. Frequency and duration may regularly change in a steady progression if the parent is demonstrating protective nurturing behavior during parenting time and reunification remains the permanency goal.
- The goal is to slowly increase the parents' responsibility and move toward unsupervised parenting time in the parent's home or another safe location, while safely testing and assessing the parents' abilities in relation to the reason the family is involved with DCS.

*Safety · Accountability · Change · Family · Engagement · Compassion · Teaming · Advocacy · Equity*

Levels of Supervision

Low Level of Restrictiveness		High Level of Restrictiveness
Unsupervised	Partially Supervised	Supervised
<p>Danger is controlled during parenting time through location (where), timing (when), or people present (who) so that supervision is not needed. This may be near reunification or may be a circumstance where there is a danger in the home that cannot be managed all the time, but the parent is safe alone with the child for periods of time.</p>	<p>The level of supervision may vary depending on the individual parenting time plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It may include the parenting time monitor being present at the location of parenting time within sight and/or hearing most of the time, allowing for brief periods of alone time, such as going into another room to choose a toy or allowing the parent to take the child to the bathroom alone.</li> <li>• This level may also include allowing the parent and child longer periods of alone time where the monitor may not be within sight and sound. In these cases, it is important to ensure that the other components of the parenting time plan (i.e. location, people present, frequency and duration) are designed to ensure the safety of the child.</li> <li>• This level may also include situations where the parenting time monitor would observe parenting time for short periods to ensure that the parenting time plan is being followed, as well as being able to document information regarding the parent-child relationship, however, they would not remain present at the location the entire time.</li> </ul>	<p>Parent and child are within sight and hearing range of an objective person who can ensure the safety of the child, support the parent as needed, and ensure that the parenting time plan is followed. The family cannot be left alone at any time.</p>

Locations for Parenting Time

Low Level of Restrictiveness				High Level of Restrictiveness
Parent/Caregiver Home (Or other home-like environment)	Out of Home (OOH) Caregiver Home	Community	Visitation Center	DCS Office (Or another institutional setting)
<p>This is the most ideal location for parenting time to take place, as long as it is safe to do so. This location allows for the most natural interaction between the parent and the child, and allows the child to remain connected to a familiar place and many personal things that may be important to them (pets, toys, etc.)</p>	<p>Upon agreement with the OOH caregiver, parenting time in the caregiver's home can be inviting, and assist with rebuilding the parent-child relationship, as the child can visit in a location where they currently feel safe. It can also allow the child to see the parent and OOH caregiver interact positively with one another, easing any loyalty issues that may be stressing the child.</p>	<p>A park, grocery store, restaurant, mall, community center, library, etc. are locations that the parent may engage in real-life parenting opportunities with their child(ren), especially if the home has not been determined to be safe.</p>	<p>These locations are intended to be more inviting and family friendly than an office, as they often incorporate family rooms, playrooms, and kitchenettes for families to engage in more natural parent-child interaction. However, there is often greater structure and supervision requirements in these facilities as opposed to community locations or home-like environments. Further, there is often communal spaces where multiple families may be present, not allotting for privacy.</p>	<p>These locations should only be used if the danger threat cannot be managed elsewhere. As security is often present, these locations are often able to control who may be present during parenting time.</p>

## Parenting Time Monitors

Family members or other natural supports	DCS Internal Parenting Time Case Aide	Parenting Time Services (PTS) Providers
<p>Building a community of support is important for families. Identifying a natural support to assist with parenting time can help support the family during the DCS case, as well as build relationships, when the case is able to be closed. Here are things to keep in mind when identifying a natural support for parenting time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the individual has a significant relationship with the parent and child;</li> <li>• they meet the Responsible Adult Criteria;</li> <li>• they are willing to ensure that the parenting time plan is followed, including providing the recommended supervision level to ensure the safety of the child during parenting time; and</li> <li>• they are willing to communicate with the Department regarding their observations of parenting time.</li> </ul>	<p>DCS internal parenting time case aides have the flexibility to work with families who may not consistently engage in parenting time, or who have very specific needs regarding their parenting time plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents struggling to engage in a consistent parenting time schedule</li> <li>• Virtual Parenting Time</li> <li>• Parenting Time occurring in prisons or jails</li> <li>• Sibling visits</li> <li>• Partially supervised parenting time where the child and parent may be left alone for longer periods of time, and the case aide may only observe the beginning and end of parenting time</li> <li>• Partially supervised parenting time where the child may be dropped off, the relationship and interaction may be observed briefly to ensure that the parenting time plan is set, and the child is able to remain with the parent for extended periods, such as overnight or weekends</li> </ul>	<p>Parenting Time Services Providers work only with families that need supervision. Consider referring to PTS if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are engaged and consistent at the time of the referral;</li> <li>• Parenting time is planned and occurring at a frequency and duration that is expected to remain the same week to week;</li> <li>• Parenting time includes a level of supervision where the monitor remains within sight and/or hearing at all times; or</li> <li>• Parenting time includes brief periods where the parent and child can be left alone, such as to grab an item from another room, or go to the restroom.</li> </ul> <p>Do not refer to Parenting Time Services (PTS) in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parents are missing or not engaged;</li> <li>• Sibling visits;</li> <li>• Parenting time where the child and parent may be left alone for long periods of time; or</li> <li>• For transportation purposes only – such as to drop a child off for parenting time and then leave.</li> </ul>