



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

September 18, 2023

Use the FFA-Progress Update and Clinical Supervision to reassess and discuss the safety threats present in the family and what actions are necessary to keep the children safe during parenting time (DCS Policy and Procedure Manual: Family Functioning Assessment – Progress Update Chapter 3: Section 2.2)

A clear understanding of where, with who, when, and under what circumstances the dangers occur will assist in creating a safe and natural parenting time plan. The DCS Specialist must be able to articulate the dangers and how they occur in the family, including the following.

- **Duration:** the length of time the condition has been concerning or problematic.
- **Consistency:** how often the negative condition is an active problem or affecting parent/caregiver performance.
- **Pervasiveness:** the extent or intensity of the problem, how consuming is it to caregiver and overall family functioning.
- **Influence:** what stimulates or causes the threat to child safety to become active.
- **Effect:** the effects the negative condition have specifically on the ability of a caregiver to provide for the care and protection of the children.
- **Continuance:** the likeliness the negative condition will continue or get worse without DCS intervention?

## Parenting Time Supervision

**Unsupervised parenting time should occur well before reunification to assess the parent's ability to behave protectively and meet the child's needs. DCS policy does not require a Reunification TDM or Safety Planning TDM prior to unsupervised parenting time.**

When the parent has been successful meeting the child's needs during supervised parenting time, increase the parent's responsibilities a little at a time so the parent can practice new skills and behaviors. As early as possible, hold parenting time in the parents' home, where observation of the parent's protective capacities may be observed in the most natural way. A little at a time, increase responsibility for nutrition, supervision, nap time, physical health care, helping with schoolwork, and other needs. Slowly step responsibility up or back to ensure child safety and successful parenting. A DCS Case Aide, DCS Specialist, out-of-home caregiver, a responsible adult, or another supportive person can attend part of the parenting time to help the parent and child through hellos and goodbyes, make sure both are prepared for a positive time together, and that the Parenting Time Guidelines and the Parenting Time Plan are being followed.

**Plan the location, people present, time of day, and parent coaching support to manage dangers during parenting time.**

**Location (where)** – Use location of parenting time to manage dangers related to physical hazards, or criminal activity in the home, or perpetrator access to the child. Consider holding parenting time where a supportive person (such as kinship or foster caregiver) can check on the safety and well-being of the child without being physically present throughout the entire visit.

**People present (who)** – Eliminate or manage the safety threat or the likelihood that it will emerge during parenting time by controlling who attends parenting time. This is especially useful when the danger is created by a certain individual or a combination of people (such as in domestic violence situations). For example, a danger threat from domestic violence between parents may be managed by facilitating parenting time in an office with one parent at a time. The danger is managed by controlling who is present at the visit and who has access to the location.

**Time of day (when)** - Determine when the danger is most often present. Use this determination to arrange parenting time when the parent will not need to meet a specific need for the child, or to give the parent an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to meet a need. For example, if you know that after school is a difficult time for the parent and child, coach the parent on new skills for addressing the child's needs and introduce parenting time at this time of day when the parent is prepared to try the new skills.

**Parent coaching support and supervision (what)** – Provide supports to help the parent and child be successful. A young child may feel more calm and able to engage with the parent if the kinship or foster caregiver is nearby. A parent may benefit from a supportive person who can help plan activities, debrief after the parenting time, or be nearby if the parent needs a helping hand. Ensure that people providing support are fully aware of the safety threats in the home and the diminished protective capacities that could require action. Parent coaching support and supervision occurs on a continuum from highly supervised to unsupervised, individualized to the family's needs.

Children are not required to have an impending danger decision of Safe in order to have unsupervised parenting time.

Children who would be unsafe at home full time can often be safe for shorter periods of unsupervised parenting time with the right plan, actions, and support.

- A child identified as unsafe in the FFA, and requiring out-of-home care, might be able to have unsupervised parenting time.
- A child with unsupervised parenting time might not be able to reunify with the parent yet

**Arrange parenting time with the least amount of supervision needed to ensure child safety and well-being.**

Parenting time should be individualized to meet the family's needs. Parenting time support and supervision is established on a continuum from highly supervised (clinically supervised parenting time or person able to hear and see child and parent at all times) to unsupervised.

Parenting time and other visitation shall take place in the most natural, family-like setting possible and with as little supervision as possible while still ensuring the safety and well-being of the child (DCS Policy and Procedure Manual; Parenting Time and Family Contact Plan: Chapter 3: Section 6.1).

**Review the parenting time/visitation plan during each monthly contact with the parent and during monthly Clinical Supervision using the Parenting Time discussion guide.**

**Revise the plan as often as needed to move toward reunification or other permanency.**

Revise the plan as often as indicated by the parents' behavioral progress. The parent does not need to complete treatment services, complete parent skill-building services, have a set period of negative drug screens, or engage/participate for a certain number of months before unsupervised parenting time can occur.

**End the Parenting Time Services service referral when the service is no longer needed. Service approval may be ended before the service approval end date has been reached.**

Communicate with the provider agency if you determine supervision is no longer needed and the service will be ended. To end the service approval, sign the Closure Summary provided by the provider agency. It is appropriate to end the service approval under these circumstances:

- The parent has not attended three sessions in a row without a reasonable explanation and despite efforts to address barriers (such as helping the parent find transportation or supporting the parent through their feelings about parenting time).
- The parent is participating in parenting time that is supervised or overseen by a relative or other person in the family network at a frequency that meets the child's and parent's needs and complies with any court orders.
- The parent is able to meet the child's needs during parenting time (alone or with support), and safety threats can be managed through location, people attending, time of day, and/or availability of supportive people.

**For additional information:**

- *Practice Guidelines: Parenting Time (Visitation) Parts I and II*
- *Practice Guidelines: Parenting Time Planning*
- *Field Guide- Parenting Time Location*