

Affiliate Assumed Visitation Guidelines

NOTE: These guidelines were developed in answer to concerns and uncertainty as to whether affiliate agencies executing a finalization unit of service could conduct supervisory visits in lieu of the county visits. These guidelines were developed using the legislation and OCYF policy set forth for foster care and adoption practice.

- **County Requirements for Visitation:**
 - Act 50 of 1999 which amended the Child Protective Services Law established minimum requirements which apply to both children who remain in their own homes or are placed outside the setting in which the abuse occurred.
 - County agency shall monitor the safety of the child.
 - Contacts are made with the child, parents and service provider.
 - Contacts may occur either directly by a county agency worker or through purchase of service, by telephone or in person.
 - Face-to-face contacts must occur as often as necessary for the protection of the child.

- **County Relationship with Purchase of Service Providers (Affiliates):**
 - Protective Services Regulations (55 PA Code, Chapter 3490.61 (c)) defines an agent of the county as a person who provides a children and youth social service either directly or under contract or through agreement with a county agency.
 - Both the CPSL and regulations allow for the provision of face-to-face contact with children and families by private agency.
 - County agencies are encouraged to include minimum training and educational requirements in their contracts with private providers to ensure their competence in assessing safety of children at risk.

- **Finalization Visitation Requirements:**
 - Adoption Services Regulations (55 PA Code, Chapter 3350.13 (i)) require a minimum of three supervisory visits between the child and adoptive parents during the 6 months resident period.
 - The finalization unit includes all services provided to the child, the pre-adoptive family and the county agency with custody of the child prior to the issuance of a decree.
 - Benchmarks require placement supervision services which include monthly supervisory visits, a minimum of three supervisory reports, and the ongoing monitoring of the child's safety.

- **Policy Clarification on Using Purchase of Service Providers to Meet Visitation Requirements:**
 - Visits may be made by the county agency or by a private agency with whom the county has an agreement to provide the services to implement the FSP and, if applicable, the permanency plan.
 - In fulfilling its case management responsibilities, the county agency must have clearly defined expectations regarding how private agencies report situations in which child's safety is jeopardized and the manner in which county agency staff respond to these reports.
 - OCYF will hold the county agency responsible with these regulations regardless of whether the county itself or a private provider is making the visits.