



NH Department of Health & Human Services
Division for Children, Youth & Families

DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

1503.2 MAINTAINING YOUTH/PARENT CONNECTIONS-JJS

Policy Directive: **20-32**

Effective Date: **August 2020**

Implements Policy: **1503**

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

This SOP defines Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) procedures for maintaining a youth's connections through parent/child contact when a youth is in placement.

Procedure

The following information is to support the implementation of the above referenced policy. This document shall not preclude staff from using their professional judgement based on individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the policy.

- I. The Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer (JPPO) should work with the family to help strengthen the parent/child relationship, regardless of placement status.
 - A. This may include, but is not limited to, engaging community resources or paid services as appropriate.
- II. When placement is necessary to ensure safety, JPPOs are expected to assist the youth in maintaining/strengthening their connection to their parents/guardians.
- III. Efforts to maintain/strengthen the parent/child relationship may include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Placing youth in their community, or as close to their community as possible (less than an hour drive);
 - B. Placing youth with appropriate relative caregivers when possible;
 - C. Providing youth an opportunity to talk with their parents/guardians the night they are placed (as appropriate);
 - D. Providing parents/guardians with contact information for where their child is placed the day of their removal from the home;
 - E. Developing a plan and providing realistic opportunities for contact/parenting time;
 - F. Assessing needs/barriers and utilizing caregivers, family, community supports, and if necessary, paid services, to facilitate parenting time or other contact; and
 - G. Setting the expectation with caregivers that youth will have regular visitation with their parents/guardians (as appropriate) and that they will celebrate holidays,

birthdays, and other special occasions together (to the extent that safety can be assured), and supporting them in understanding the importance of these connections to the youth's well-being.

- IV. The plan for parent/child contact (parenting time) should take into account:
 - A. The reason for JJS involvement and risk of re-offense;
 - B. Risk to the youth;
 - C. Risk to the family;
 - D. Risk to the community; and
 - E. What supports are needed to facilitate contact and appropriate parenting time.
- V. The need for supervision should be based on input from:
 - A. The parents/guardians;
 - B. The youth (as age/developmentally appropriate);
 - C. The placement provider;
 - D. Mental health providers; and
 - E. The GAL (if applicable).
- VI. Parenting time must be supervised if it has been determined that the youth may be unsafe without it.
 - A. When it is determined that parenting contact needs to be supervised, expectations need to be clearly identified and discussed with the family and youth.
- VII. Circumstances or conditions that may temporarily suspend visitation include:
 - A. Safety cannot be assured with available resources;
 - B. Pre-existing court orders that prohibit visitation;
 - C. The youth refuses to attend;
 - D. A mental health provider involved advocates that visitation/parenting time is not in the best interest of their client (parent/guardian or youth); or
 - E. A service provider (or assigned GAL) makes a compelling argument that visitation is not in the best interest of the youth due to:

1. Safety factors not presently mitigated; or
 2. The youth's well-being needs.
- VIII. If parenting time is temporarily suspended, the JPPO is expected to use alternative means of maintaining the parent/child connection. This may include:
- A. Telephone contact/videoconferencing;
 - B. Email or other forms of written correspondence; or
 - C. Utilizing social media (as age and developmentally appropriate).
- IX. Efforts to maintain parent/child contact and provide opportunities for parenting time are documented in the case record.

Glossary and Document Specific Definitions

A - B C - D E - F G - I J - L M - N O - Q R - S T - V W - Z

Document Change Log			
PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date