

6.4 – Wake House Visitation Services Protocol

Chapter-Permanency



	Countywide		Department: Human Services	X	Division: Child Welfare
Supersedes: Prior Versions			Effective Date: 06/01/2019		
Authority: North Carolina Division Social Services Family Services Manual Volume I: Children’s Services Section 1201 Child Placement Services					
Originating Department/Division/Section: Human Services/Child Welfare					

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide the standards of practice for the provision of Wake House Visitation Services.

II. Description of Standard:

N.C.G.S. 7B-905.1 states if the juvenile is placed or continued in the custody or placement responsibility of a county department of social services, the court may order the director to arrange, facilitate, and supervise a visitation plan expressly approved or ordered by the court. The plan shall indicate the minimum frequency and length of visits and whether the visits shall be supervised.

State policy describes visitation between parents and their children as a right and responsibility retained by parents and as an “essential component” in working with families who are receiving Out of Home Services. Policy goes on to state that it has been “demonstrated that children who have more frequent, meaningful visits with their parents are more likely to return home.”

Wake House Visitation Center will provide supervised visitation between a parent and a child in the custody of CW to support, strengthen and assess the parent-child relationship resulting in shorter lengths of stay and higher reunification rates. The Center will provide the opportunity for parents to learn and demonstrate positive interactions and parenting of children in a home setting, including:

- Meal preparation;
- Bathing, personal care;
- Bedtime routine;
- Homework and morning preparation for school; and/or
- De-escalation and discipline.

Services will provide families the opportunity to have frequent, evening, extended, and/or overnight supervised and monitored visits to enhance and maintain familial bonds, support case plans goals, and provide parents with an opportunity to learn new skills. Family visitation will be in a safe, non-threatening home-like setting under the supervision and support of visitation coaches. The Visitations Coaches will observe age-appropriate activities, help parents develop and/or enhance parenting skills, model appropriate parent-child interactions, and discourage inappropriate parenting conduct within a controlled environment. The Visitation Center will also enhance the opportunity for parents to celebrate the food, music, and/or religious traditions that they practice, provided that doing so is safe for child(ren). The visitation Center facility will reflect the different age groups the center serves in terms of décor, toys and other items relating to day-to-day parenting. The Visitation Center will also ensure resources are available and accessibility

Visitation Services will include:

- Supervised Visitation
- Documented Observations
- Visit Coordination
- Parent Education
- Child Transportation
- Evening and Weekend Visits

Focus Population:

Wake House Visitation Center and Triangle Family Services will provide supervised visits for children birth to 18 years of age in the custody of Wake County Human Services.

Referral Process

1. Social Worker completes referral form and submits to HS-CW Visitation Services.
2. Visitation Supervisor and/or Visitation Coordinator receives and processes referral (within 72 hrs)
3. Social Worker is contacted within 72hrs to staff referral (deny, approve, date, time, location, Transportation needs, Visitation Coach assignment, special accommodations, etc.)
4. If approved, the assigned Visitation Coach will contact referred family within 24hrs of case assignment to provide introduction, location, expectation, etc.
5. Family visits will start within 5-Business days from approval date.

Service Delivery

Visits will be in 1.5 – 2.0 hour increments per week with additional hours per week provided to children and their siblings ages birth-5 years, upon approval from the assigned Social Worker or Supervisor, not to exceed 3 hours each week. Separate visits for birth parents will be determined by the assigned Social Worker or Supervisor. Visits will consist of: Observation & Assessment of parent & child interaction, Coaching, Child and adolescent development information, and Behavior management.

Parent Visitation Coaches will meet birth parent(s) 15 minutes prior to the arrival of their child(ren) and 15 minutes after the visit to discuss and process parenting skills utilized, interactions with their children and other related issues. Parents will be contacted by the visitation coach 24-hrs prior to the visit to confirm attendance. Parents will confirm attendance with Visitation Coach and notify Social Worker of confirmation.

Note: Guests (family members/friends) will only be able to accompany the birth parents to one visit per month upon approval from the assigned Social Worker or Supervisor. The Guardian Ad Litem can attend the first 15-min of the visit or the last 15-min of the visit. *****Family Members/friends and GAL's should not attend the initial visit. This will provide the Visitation Coach and Parent an opportunity to build a rapport.**

Termination of Services

Wake House Visitation Center and Triangle Family Services will terminate a family from participation, only after consultation with the Social Worker and not until a Child & Family Team or Team Decision meeting has been held, on the following conditions:

- a) Pre- and post-parenting skills assessment and activities and demonstrated parenting skills have resulted in increased capacity to be considered for monitored or unsupervised visitation;
- b) Parent/caretaker is non-compliant with program visitation guidelines and services, or ongoing inappropriate behavior and interaction with child(ren) as observed during visits;
- c) Elevated safety concerns on site between parents/caretakers that places other participants at risk;
- d) Reunification is no longer the permanency plan.

A Child Family Team meeting, called by the Foster Care Social Worker assigned to the family, will be held for all terminations.

Roles & Responsibilities

Visitation Services Supervisor

The Visitation Services Supervisor Provide oversight and management of Parent Training; recruit, train, and schedule visitation coaches, ensure services are safe, neutral and in compliance with policy. Work closely with the Visitation Coordinator to review/process referrals and schedule visits. Work closely with the transportation unit to ensure youth are transported to/from visits timely.

Visitation Coordinator

The Visitation Coordinator will be responsible for working with Social Workers in coordinating referrals to schedule visitation services and provide some supervised visitation. The Visitation Coordinator will also be responsible for oversight of visitation rooms to ensure they maintained as outlined by protocol and procedures.

Visitation Coach

The Parent Visitation Coach will provide weekly supervised parent visitation services by observing parent-child interaction, complete parent-child visitation reports, provide skill building activities with participating parents, and assist with ensuring visitation rooms are family- friendly and prepared for each visit. The Parent Visitation Coach may also provide child transportation as needed.

Foster Care Social Worker

Foster Care Social Workers will provide a comprehensive visitation plan; randomly attend and observe ongoing visits; receive & review visitation notes; notify Visitation Services Supervisor and/or Visitation Coordinator if court testimony will be needed; provide and coordinate ongoing services for family.

Upon receiving a new case assignment, WCHS Social Workers are required to observe at least 8 hours of supervised visitation within the first 60 days of the children entering Out of Home Placement. This observation can take place either during a scheduled visit with Wake House Visitation Center, or at a separate visit the Social Worker arranges and supervises themselves. Should a Social Worker intend to observe a visit that is being supervised by a Visitation Coach, they should notify the coach of their intent to visit no later than 48 hours prior to the visit. Their presence at the visit is only to observe, not intervene or discuss case specific items. Notes from these observations should be included in the Adjudication/Disposition Court Summary to include specific observations of parent/child relationship and interaction, sibling relationships and interaction, and any concerns regarding demonstrated parenting skills. These observations, along with the notes from the Visitation Coaches, should be used to make recommendations for services at disposition.

*****Please do not attend the initial visit. This will provide the Visitation Coach and Parent the opportunity to build a rapport.**

Hours of Operation

Wake House Visitation Center will offer a range of hours for visitation accommodating weekend, evening, and overnight visits in order to be inclusive of the varying types, hours, and places of employment for families using the service.

The Wake House visitation center will operate:

Monday – 8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

Tuesday – 8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

Wednesday – 8:30 AM – 8: 30 PM

Thursday - 8:30 AM – 8: 30 PM
Friday - 8:30 AM – 8:30 PM
Saturday – 8:30 AM – 8: 30 PM
Sunday – 12:00 NOON – 8:00 PM

III. Definitions:

- A. GAL-Guardian Ad Litem
- B. WCHS-Wake County Human Services
- C. SW-Social Worker

IV. Applicability/Exceptions:

This protocol is applicable to all employees of the Wake County Human Services, Division of Child Welfare.

V. Fiscal/Resource Impact

Staff will code services provided by on the DSS-4263 (Via Daysheet Automated System-DAS). Staff will code based on the client's service eligibility (IV-E, TANF, and MAC)

VI. Data Description

Data Collection

- Customer Services Satisfaction Survey
- Parent Assessment of 5-Proteceive Factors
- Changes in Visitation (Supervised to Monitored to Trial Home Placement)
- Reunification
-

Desired Outputs/Outcomes/Goals:

1. Increase rates of reunification within 15-months
2. Parents will exhibit effective parenting skills
3. Parents will demonstrate safe and nurturing parent-child engagement
4. Parent will demonstrate effective communication that will enhance child's growth and development in all settings.
5. Parents will develop and utilize a natural support network

VII. Protocol Responsibility and Management:

- A. This protocol is reviewed annually by the Division of Child Welfare, Continuous Quality Improvement Section.

VIII. Subject Matter Consultants:

- A. Visitation Supervisor
- B. Permanency Planning, Prevention, and Placement Program Manager
- C. Child Welfare Permanency Planning & Prevention Asst. Division Director
- D. Child Welfare Division Director

IX. References:

- A. eWakeTalent
- B. HR Policy
- C. State Policy

- D. State Statute
- E. Federal Legislation

X. Related Documents:

- A. [Wake House Visitation Center Referral Form 11.07.2018.docx](#)
- B. [Wake House Visitation Center Documentation \(002\).docx](#)

XI. Appendix/Form:

- A. [Provide Link When Possible](#)

XII. History

Effective Date	Version	Section(s) Revised	Author/Reviewer
06/01/2019	First	Initial Development	Child Welfare Leadership Team