

Children & Family Services / Volunteer Visitation Services Program



***Take some time to help foster children -
you may find that you enjoy it!***

Employment and Human Services (EHSD) is seeking community support to help meet the visitation and transportation needs of children who are placed in out-of-home care in Contra Costa County.

Every year over a hundred children in Contra Costa County enter child welfare system as a result of abuse or neglect. Under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court system, some of these children are separated from their parents and placed in out-of-home care to ensure their safety and well-being. Before parents can be permanently reunited with their children, they are often required to participate in supervised visitation as part of their Family Reunification plan. Supervised parent-child visitations are critical to the process of bringing parents and their children back together. These visits not only provide feedback to the court on the progress of a family, but more importantly, they allow the participants to maintain their familial bond.

Each day there are foster children who belong to our communities desiring to have a safe and nurturing place to visit with their parent(s).

You can help!

Become a visitation volunteer and assist social workers in delivering visitation and transportation related services to children and families involved with Children and Family Services (CFS) via its Supervised Visitation Program.

What is the supervised visitation program?

The Visitation Volunteer Services Program provides visitation and transportation services that support families with children in out-of-home care to participate in a visitation program that promotes progressive and improved parenting skills with a systematic reduction in the need for structured supervision. The program is based

on a strengths-based approach involving increased interaction, mentoring, role-modeling and constructive feedback. The planned outcome is to improve parenting skills and move families to a least restrictive setting as they make progress towards Family Reunification. For more information on supervised visitation, please visit the Supervised Visitation Network website at <http://www.svnetwork.net>.

Why is Family Visitation Important?

Family visitation supports the overall well-being of children placed in out-of-home care while encouraging and motivating parent's to overcome the challenges that necessitated the removal of their children from their care. Frequent and quality visitation is critical to placement stability and timely reunification. Read more on the reasons and goals for family visitation by [clicking here](#).

What are the different Volunteer Duties?

Visitation volunteers will work with EHSD, Children and Family Services (CFS) to meet the transportation and visitation needs of children who are placed in out of home care. The visitation volunteer will work directly with child welfare case workers assigned to each family, reporting observations of supervised visits. Transportation services entail transporting court dependent children to and from supervised visits and/or scheduled appointments.

Visitation Volunteers play an essential role in the success of Family Reunification and is expected to maintain a non-judgmental and friendly attitude. Specific activities that volunteers may expect to perform include:

1. Transportation.
2. Observing parent-child interaction during supervised visits.
3. Serve as a role model by demonstrating appropriate parent/child interaction during supervised visits.
4. Demonstrating and modeling parenting skills when interacting with families.
5. Recording observations after the visitation has ended.

What are the qualifications to visitation volunteer?

1. Demonstrate adequate verbal and written communication skills.
2. Demonstrate an ability to maintain boundaries.
3. Keep a positive attitude.
4. All volunteers must be adults capable of acting with authority when needed.

What are the requirements to visitation volunteer?

- 1 Complete and pass a Criminal Records Clearance through the Department of Justice
2. Complete Red Cross certified CPR and First Aide training
3. Complete the Visitation Volunteer Program training.
4. Be willing to consult with assigned CFS caseworker as necessary.

5. Keep information confidential and sign a confidentiality agreement.
6. Make a minimum commitment of 6 months to the program.

When and where would a volunteer provide services?

Parent/child visits will occur in either public location or in a county child welfare office. Volunteers will not supervise a parent/child visit in a private home. There are four CFS district offices throughout Contra Costa County where volunteer services are needed. Schedules vary between the four offices. Once registered, a visitation volunteer will be assigned to a particular office based on need. CFS will aim to accommodate specific preferences. CFS is requesting that all volunteers make a six-month commitment to the program to better serve families and provide continuity.

Training Information?

Visitation Volunteers will participate in volunteer training sessions (led by CFS) which will teach volunteers when and how to:

1. Encourage age-appropriate activities.
2. Recognize and discourage inappropriate conduct.
3. Intervene with the visitation or terminate if it becomes necessary.

Visitation Volunteer training topics will include but are not limited to:

1. The purpose of supervised visitation.
2. The different roles of the volunteer.
3. Supervised visitation procedures.
4. Cultural competency.
5. Care for children, birth to 18 years of age.
6. The ability to handle children in crisis.
7. Management of potentially violent situations.
8. Understanding, recognizing, and reporting child abuse and neglect.
9. Complying with child abuse reporting and confidentiality laws.
10. Understanding the role of CFS in protecting children from abuse and neglect;
11. Understanding and implementing Supervised Visitation Network guidelines available at ESHD, 40 Douglas Drive, Martinez, CA. or at <http://www.svnetwork.net>.

How to get started?

If interested, please contact:

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