



# Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

## DECEMBER EPRESS

### QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

*I am a new director, and I need to get a Letter of Agreement with the Court here. I work a lot with the Family Court manager, and he knows all about my program. Can I get him to sign the agreement?*

The answer depends on whether the Chief Judge has designated the Family Court Manager to sign your agreement. The Minimum Standards say that the Chief Judge or his/her designee can sign supervised visitation program agreements with the court. The Family Court Manager knows whether he or she is the designee for that purpose. The Letter of Agreement should be signed before you accept court referrals. If you are already taking cases from individual judges, you must get the Agreement signed.

One of the most asked questions is "How do I get the Agreement signed." That answer depends on the relationship you have with the court system. Chief Judges do NOT have to sign agreements. They are not compelled. You can't force them. That's why the Clearinghouse always encourages Program Directors to develop relationships with the court system before they open their doors for business. Chief Judges want to feel comfortable with the program: some judges send staff or court managers to check out the program; to visit; to get a list of services; to meet program directors; to review the program rules. Call the Clearinghouse if you still have questions, or review our FAQs online: <http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/faq-for-developing-a-supervised-visitation-program/>

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

BELOW ARE THE FINAL ANNUAL STATEWIDE REPORT (WE DISCUSSED A DRAFT OF THE REPORT IN THE PHONE CONFERENCE LAST MONTH) AND THE FINAL PROGRAM NARRATIVE REPORT, A RICH COLLECTION OF UNIQUE DATA ABOUT EACH PROGRAM (THAT REPORTED TO THE CLEARINGHOUSE).

THERE ARE ALSO TWO “THINK PIECES” THAT PROVIDE TRAINING FOR STAFF,  
AS WELL AS SUGGESTED CRAFT ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AT VISITS.

Happy Holidays from the Clearinghouse!



# **The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation Annual Report: Supervised Visitation Database Case and Client Statistical Analysis**



November, 2017

Karen Oehme, J.D.

*Director*

Kelly O'Rourke, MSW

*Database Manager*

# Case and Client Statistical Analysis Results 10/1/2016 to 9/30/2017

**Cases: 2,230   Clients: 8,921   Services: 35,504**

In this report we present the results of the annual Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation's Database Case and Client Analysis. This report covers October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, the 12 months since the last report. A total of 37 supervised visitation programs in Florida contributed information to the database during this time span.

For the year, from 10/1/2016 to 9/30/2017, the total number of documented cases was 2,230, the number of clients served was 8,921 (3,978 children, 2,677 visitors, 2,266 custodians/others), and the number of services provided was 35,504. This is the number of completed or terminated services only, and does not include scheduled but cancelled services or no-shows.

The amount of missing data has *continued to decline* over the last five years, probably due to Clearinghouse training on the database, periodic reminders to programs to enter all data correctly, and requirements within the database to enter specific information before being allowed to move forward.

Percent vs. Valid Percent - The Percent shown in each table is the percent of the total number of cases showing one particular answer, factoring in any cases for which the data is missing or is zero. The Valid Percent is the percent of the total number of cases showing one particular answer but *not including* any cases with blank cells or missing data. If there are no missing data for a particular variable, then the Percent and Valid Percent will be identical.

## Referral Source

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Dependency Case	1,620	73.0	<b>73.0</b>
	DV Injunction	267	12.0	<b>12.0</b>
	Dissolution of Marriage	200	9.0	<b>9.0</b>
	Never Married / Paternity	98	4.0	<b>4.0</b>
	Criminal Case	1	.00005	<b>.00005</b>
	Self-Referred	19	1.0	<b>1.0</b>
	Other	27	1.0	<b>1.0</b>
	Total	2,230	100	<b>100</b>

In the database, there are seven options for the variable Referral Source. This is a mandatory variable, in that database users cannot continue until this information is inserted. For the most part, the trends have remained steady as Dependency Court continues to be the most common referral source. Domestic Violence Injunctions account for the next largest source of referrals.

## Reason for Referral Condensed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Child Abuse / Neglect	442	20.0	<b>20.0</b>
	Domestic Violence	806	36.0	<b>36.0</b>
	Parental Substance Abuse	754	34.0	<b>34.0</b>
	Parental Mental Health	165	7.0	<b>7.0</b>
	Parental Criminal Activity	9	.004	<b>.004</b>
	Other Parental Misconduct	39	2.0	<b>2.0</b>
	Other	15	.9	<b>.9</b>
	Total	2,230	100.0	<b>100.0</b>

For each case, multiple reasons can be cited for the referral to supervised visitation. However, the database user is required to enter the primary reason for the referral. The

number of DV referrals stayed constant from the previous year. Also of note, the percentage of Parental Substance Abuse cases rose from 29% in 2014, to 33% in 2015, to 32.1% in 2016, and is now at 34.0%. The percentage of Child Abuse/Neglect cases fell from 21.6% in 2016 to 20% this year. In addition, a new category was added under Other Parental Misconduct called *Environmental Hazards* which was noted as the primary reason for referral in four cases. **Remember that this is the *Primary Reason for Referral* and may reflect only the main issue of the case as noted in the Referral document.**

### **Reasons for Referral**

Year	Substance Abuse	Domestic Violence	Mental Health Issues
2015	33%	37%	5.4%
2016	32.1%	36%	6.4%
2017	34%	36%	7%

**Mental health issues continue to increase at programs.**

## **Additional Allegations**

<b>Additional Case Allegations</b>		
	Frequency	% of all cases
Valid		
Child Abuse / Neglect Issues	386	17.0
Domestic Violence	546	26.0
Parental Substance Abuse	478	22.4
Parental Mental Health Issues	362	17.0
Parental Criminal Activity	146	7.0
Other Parental Misconduct	193	9.0
Fear of Abduction	71	
Prolonged Parent Absence	52	
Undermining Custodial Parent	63	
Pornography	7	
Other	37	1.6
Total	2,148	100.0

The table above lists the allegations noted **in addition to the primary allegation** or reason for referral. As many items may be checked for each case as needed. While 36% of all cases this year were referred to supervised visitation primarily for domestic violence, 26% of the remaining cases listed domestic violence as an additional allegation, making it the most common issue facing clients. In addition, while roughly 34% of cases were referred primarily for Parental Substance Abuse, almost 22.4% of the remaining cases alleged that Parental Substance Abuse was an additional issue in the case.

## Primary Service Requested

This chart identifies the primary service for which the client was referred. The most common reason for referral remains Supervised Visitation followed by Monitored Exchange. Most clients also receive parent education and assistance as a secondary service.

Primary Service Requested

	Frequency	Percent
Valid		
Monitored Exchange	131	<b>5.8</b>
Supervised Phone/Internet	9	<b>.004</b>
Supervised Visitation	1,981	<b>88.8</b>
Therapeutic Supervision	98	<b>4.3</b>
Additional Service Only	11	<b>.005</b>
Total	2,230	<b>100.0</b>

## Description of Services

**Services Provided 10/1/2015 – 9/30/2016**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Monitored Exchange	1,583	4.5	<b>4.5</b>
Supervised Visitation	33,411	94.1	<b>94.1</b>
Additional Service Only	95	.28	<b>.28</b>
SV Phone/Internet Service	131	.38	<b>.38</b>
Therapeutic Visitation	261	.75	<b>.75</b>
Supervised Internet	23	.06	<b>.06</b>
Total	35,504		<b>100.0</b>

The above chart identifies the distribution of service types provided to clients. The most common service remains Supervised Visitation followed by Monitored Exchange. Most clients receiving Supervised Visitation service also receive Parent Education as a secondary service. Note that Supervised Internet services are on the rise, although still a small percent of overall services.

## Person Providing Service

**Person Providing Service**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Paid Staff	30,598	86.0	<b>93.5</b>
	Intern	1,628	5.0	<b>5.5</b>
	Volunteer	326	1.0	<b>1.0</b>
	Total	32,552	92.0	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	2,952	8.0	
Total		35,504	100.0	

Paid staff members continue to be the main provider of services in Florida’s supervised visitation centers, followed by interns, and last, volunteers. However, once again there was a noticeable increase in the use of volunteers and interns this year. Up from 1,374 in 2014 and 1,560 in 2015 to 1,843 in 2016, and now to 1,954 in 2017. The number of Interns increased dramatically from 2.9% to 5%. It is possible that dwindling budgets have forced centers to utilize more unpaid labor.

## Child’s Gender



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	1,999	50.25	<b>50.28</b>
Male	1,977	49.74	<b>49.72</b>
Unknown	2	.01	<b>100.0</b>
Total	3,978		

As in previous years, the number of females and males is roughly even.

## Child's Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	2,253	56.6	<b>57.5</b>
	Hispanic	383	9.7	<b>9.2</b>
	Black	959	24.1	<b>24.5</b>
	Asian / Pacific Islander	8	.2	<b>.2</b>
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	13	.3	<b>.8</b>
	Two or More Races	305	7.7	<b>7.8</b>
	Total	3,921		
	Missing	57	1.4	
Total		3,978	100.0	<b>100.0</b>

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 78% of the U.S. self-reports as white, 16.7% as black, and 23% as Hispanic (some people choose more than one race.) In comparison, blacks appear to be generally over-represented and whites underrepresented as supervised visitation center clients. Compared to the previous year, a slightly lower percentage of Hispanic children and a slightly higher percentage of white children were served with little change in the number of children identifying as Black/African American.

## Child's Age

### Child's Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	0~3	1,347	33.9	<b>34.6</b>
	4~6	833	20.9	<b>21.0</b>
	7~9	740	18.5	<b>18.9</b>
	10~12	544	13.7	<b>13.9</b>
	13~15	308	7.8	<b>7.9</b>
	16+	145	3.7	<b>3.7</b>
	Total	3,917	98.5	
Missing	System	61	1.5	
Total		3,978	100.00	<b>100.0</b>

Most children at visits are under age 13.

## Parents' Marital Status

### Parent's Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Unmarried	2,666	67.0	<b>67.0</b>
Married	449	12.1	<b>12.1</b>
Separated	480	11.3	<b>11.3</b>
Divorced	305	7.7	<b>7.7</b>
Unknown	78	1.9	<b>1.9</b>
Total	3,978	100.0	<b>100.0</b>

According to the collected data, a larger percentage of parents receiving Supervised Visitation services were never married to each other, and this percentage rose considerably from 45% in 2015 to 65% in 2016 and continues to rise to 67% in 2017.

## Visitor Gender

The following data represents information on the *primary* visitor in the case. The Visitor is normally someone who does not have custody of the child, but the person with whom the child will have supervised visits.

**Primary Visitor's Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Female	1,299	58.3	<b>58.3</b>
	Male	930	41.6	<b>41.7</b>
	Total	2,229	99.9	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	1	.004	
Total		2,230	100.0	

In past years, men and women have been almost equally represented as visitors participating in supervised visits. While the percentage of women was approximately 10% points higher over the two years previous to 2017, this year's numbers have held fairly steady. **There were 447 additional visitors served by the centers for a total of 2,677 visitors served.** Additional visitors may include another parent, step parents, siblings, and grandparents, among others. However, if both parents are non-custodial visitors, we urge sites to establish a separate case for each.

## Visitor Race

**Primary Visitor's Race**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	1,407	63.1	<b>63.7</b>
	Hispanic	249	11.8	<b>11.8</b>
	Black	493	22.1	<b>22.3</b>
	Asian / Pacific Islander	1	.04	<b>.05</b>
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	7	.03	<b>.3</b>
	Two or More Races	43	1.9	<b>1.9</b>
	Other	9	.4	<b>.4</b>
	Total	2,209	99.1	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	21	.9		
Total		2,230	100.0	

The majority of primary visitors continues to be white. In previous years, the number of black visitors was slightly higher than Hispanic visitors, while this year there were almost twice as many black visitors as Hispanic visitors. The percentage of visitors

claiming Asian /Pacific Islander or American Indian / Alaska native has fallen slightly. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 78% of the U.S. self-reports as white, 16.7% as black, and 23% as Hispanic (some people choose more than one race.) As visitors, Blacks are somewhat overrepresented compared to their general population, Hispanics are somewhat underrepresented as are Caucasians/Whites.

## Visitor Relationship to Child

By far, the most common primary visitor was a parent to the child client (96-98%). As in all previous years (with the exception of 2011) mothers showed higher representation as visitors than fathers. Women are the most common head of single parent households and therefore, more susceptible to poverty and the issues that accompany it. It is not surprising that women are the most common visitor in Dependency cases and fathers are the most common visitors in cases referred via Domestic Violence sources.

**Primary Visitor's Relationship to Child - Grouped**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	1,273	57.1	<b>57.3</b>
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	912	40.9	<b>41.0</b>
	Grandparent	26	1.2	<b>1.4</b>
	Sibling	4	.2	<b>.2</b>
	Other Family Member	2	.09	<b>.09</b>
	Non-Relative Caregiver	1	.04	<b>.04</b>
	Other	4	.2	<b>.2</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	8	.4	
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,230</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The following chart represents the 447 additional visitors to the primary visitors. More than 70% are parents demonstrating cases wherein both parents are non-custodial visitors. The Institute encourages database users to separate those cases into two different cases, one for each parent. This way, with each parent categorized as a primary visitor, we can more accurately report all parent data in A&V reports.

**Other Visitor's Relationship to Child - Grouped**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	164	36.7	<b>36.9</b>
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	153	34.2	<b>34.6</b>
	Grandparent	35	7.8	<b>7.9</b>
	Sibling	10	2.2	<b>2.2</b>
	Other Family Member	30	6.2	<b>6.3</b>
	Non-Relative	52	11.4	<b>11.5</b>
	Other	3	.6	<b>.6</b>
	Total	443	99.1	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	4	.9	
Total		447	100.0	

## Visitor Annual Income

**Visitor Income**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 10,000	1,224	54.9	<b>58.5</b>
10,000 - 19,000	374	16.8	<b>18.0</b>
20,000 - 29,000	386	17.3	<b>18.4</b>
30,000 - 39,000	66	3.0	<b>3.5</b>
40,000 and above	28	1.1	<b>1.6</b>
Total	2,078	93.1	<b>100.0</b>
Unknown	152	6.9	
Total	2,230	100.0	

As in previous years, the majority of visitors are below the poverty level – approximately 76% below \$20,000 and perhaps as much as 94.9% if the family poverty line is used (includes less than \$29,000.)

## Custodian Gender

The following data represents information on the *primary* custodian in the case.

### Custodian Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Female	1,554	69.7	<b>77.4</b>
	Male	395	17.7	<b>19.7</b>
	Unknown	58	2.6	<b>2.9</b>
	Total	2,007	90.0	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	223	10.0	
Total		2,230	100.0	

Clearly women were, by far, the most common custodian, the person having legal custody of the child client. This may be in part due to the fact that most Foster Parents are listed as females.

## Custodian Race

### Custodian Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	1,317	59.0	<b>65.4</b>
	Hispanic	238	10.7	<b>11.8</b>
	Black	382	17.1	<b>19.0</b>
	Asian / Pacific Islander	9	.4	<b>.5</b>
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	5	.2	<b>.3</b>
	Two or More Races	59	2.6	<b>2.9</b>
	Other	3	.1	<b>.1</b>
	Total	2,013	90.3	<b>100.0</b>
Missing		217	9.7	
Total		2,230	100.0	

The majority of the custodians continue to be white. This year, the number of custodians identifying as *two or more races* increased slightly while the number identifying as Hispanic decreased about 3%.

# Custodian Relationship to Child

**Custodian's Relation to Child - Grouped**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	527	23.9	<b>25.3</b>
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	270	12.1	<b>12.9</b>
	Grandparent	232	10.4	<b>11.0</b>
	Sibling	4	.1	<b>.1</b>
	Foster Parent	697	31.3	<b>33.4</b>
	Other Family Member	202	9.0	<b>9.7</b>
	Non-relative Caregiver	137	6.1	<b>6.5</b>
	Other	10	.4	<b>.4</b>
	Group Home	15	.6	<b>.7</b>
	Total	2,094	93.9	<b>100.0</b>
Missing	System	136	6.1	
Total		2,230	100.0	

By far, the most common custodian was a parent to the child client (38.2%) but it has dropped from last year (42.9%.) The increase is represented in the number of Foster Parents and Other Family Members listed as custodians. Mothers have significantly higher representation as custodians than do fathers. This may be due to the fact that mothers are more likely to have original custody of children. Following parents, foster parents and then grandparents were the most common categories.

# Custodian Income

**Custodian Income**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 10,000	357	16.2	<b>17.9</b>
10,000 - 19,000	391	17.5	<b>19.7</b>
20,000 - 29,000	671	30.0	<b>33.7</b>
30,000 - 39,000	373	16.7	<b>18.7</b>
40,000 and above	201	9.0	<b>10.0</b>
Total	1,993	89.4	<b>100.0</b>
Unknown	237	10.6	

Total	2,230	100.0
-------	-------	-------

Because many programs and case managers do not have access to this information, there is some missing data in regard to custodian income. However, this reporting year, database users made a concerted effort to acquire this information as required. It appears that almost 40% of the custodians earn less than \$20,000 per year, up from about 25% last year. With federally designated poverty levels (Feb. 2016) at \$24,250 for a family of four, a significant number of clients fall beneath the poverty threshold. Also, 71% percent of custodians fall below the 125% of poverty level mark.

## Domestic Violence Reported in Referral

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	925	41.5
	No	1,305	58.5
Total		2,230	100.0

In each case, the person entering data is required to note whether domestic violence (DV) was a component of or was present in the case upon intake (according to the referral,) and 41.5% indicated Yes. As the cases progress and staff learn more about the family dynamics, cases that are referred for other reasons are often found to also have family violence issues – in the end, approximately 62% checked DV as an issue in the case.

## Critical Incidents: Serious Disruptions in Service

A *Critical Incident* is a serious disruption in service: an event that occurred before, during, or immediately after the service that was so severe as to require the cancellation or termination of the service or the removal of the offending party from the premises.

Year	Critical Incidents Reported
2014	90 (3.4% of all cases)
2015	151 (6.2% of all cases)
2016	202 (9.3% of all cases)
2017	239 (10.7% of all cases)



From 2014 to 2017, the number of cases with critical incidents has risen consistently from 90 to 239 or from 3.4% to 10.7% of all cases. This may be in part due to the researchers redefining “critical incident” to include *any serious disruption of services* following the 2014 reporting year. This year, as in previous years, the increase in the number of these incidents is concerning.

While the overall percentage of incidents per total number of services reported is still fairly low, it is evident through discussions that these events are often underreported, especially if the incident has a smooth outcome. The number should also represent a commendation to the well-trained staff of Florida’s SVCs who are quite successful in preventing critical incidents from occurring as well as handling them safely and quickly. Those centers with proper security measure in place often have more successful outcomes in cases of critical incidents.

But a rise in the number of cases with critical incidents is concerning and may be quite dangerous. An intoxicated and angry visitor can pose a substantial threat not only to those present for the visit but also anyone else in the office, agency, or vicinity of the visit. Proper security measures are always necessary to prevent potential tragedies from occurring.

Number of cases with Critical Incidents: **239 (10.7% of all cases)**

Total number of Critical Incidents: **284 (.8% of all services)**

<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Type of Incident</b>
9	Visitor threatened the staff
16	Visitor showed favoritism
9	Visitor threatened other adult
7	Visitor is arrested on-site
6	Child accidentally injured
117	Visitor refused to follow the staff's redirection
4	Visitor physically harmed child
6	Visitor threatened child
28	Visitor came to the visit intoxicated
11	Visitor used corporal punishment
8	Visitor became ill
21	Child refused to participate
12	Child abuse observed
6	Child became ill
2	Custodian refused direction
1	Custodian threatened staff
1	Act of God
20	Other
<b>284</b>	<b>Total</b>

The data since 2014 indicate increased reports of critical incidents monitored by supervised visitation personnel with the leading causes of 2017 including: visitors ignoring redirection, visitors arriving intoxicated, and the child refusing to participate. In addition, this year saw the addition of the Visitor Showed Favoritism option and sadly, 16 of this type of incident were reported. Data from 2017 shows not only an increase in the number of incidents, but an increase in the number of cases experiencing these critical incidents overall. Critical Incident outcomes are listed below. These are the actions taken by programs following an incident. Several items may be checked for each incident. Of note is the fact that law enforcement or emergency personnel were called 82 times.

### **Critical Incident Outcomes**

Below are the noted actions taken in each case experiencing a critical incident. Several action might have been taken for a particular incident, therefore allowing for a higher number of actions than incidents themselves.

<b>#</b>	<b>Result</b>
82	Case worker was notified
66	Incident report was written
212	Incident was discussed with the violator
36	No action taken
12	Police/sheriff/emergency personnel were called
51	Service Terminated
8	Staff called abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE)
7	Violator was arrested
0	Case Closed due to Critical Incident
20	Other

### **Parties Responsible for Cancellation of Visit**

Scheduled visits are often cancelled before they can take place. Below is a cumulative list of those responsible for cancelling services. Most often, the visit is cancelled by the visitor for various reasons.

<b>Party responsible</b>	<b>Number of Times</b>
Visitor	4,461
Custodian (Not Foster Parent)	1,003
Foster Parent	299

DCF/CBC	1,030
SV Program	656
Other	270
Missing	4,351
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,070</b>

Reasons for cancellation are varied and listed below. Most often, no reason is given, especially when cancellation message are left on center voicemail. In addition, one or more parties are often reported as “No Show” for a service, meaning they did not officially cancel and did not show up for the scheduled appointment time. Of interest is that 123 visits were cancelled due to staff resources, meaning there was no staff available – a more common problem with dwindling budgets. Also of note is the number of services cancelled for Non-Confirmation (413) has nearly doubled. Many sites are requiring confirmation to ensure their program resources are not wasted on no-shows.

<b>Reason for Cancellation of Scheduled Service</b>	<b>Number of Times</b>
Conflicting Appointment	479
Transportation	736
Work	616
None Given	5,867
Illness	975
Other	278
Holidays	160
Weather	327
Death	33
Child’s Activities	133
Incarceration	178
Vacation	191
Change in Court Order	88
Child Refusal to Visit	76
Staff Resources Unavailable	123
Emergency	170
Security Unavailable	1
Non-Confirmation	413
Missing	1,226
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,070</b>

## Reasons for Case Closure

In the 2016-2017 analysis period, 1,256 cases were closed. It is noteworthy that centers often forget to close cases, especially if clients simply stop coming over time. The Clearinghouse has made an effort to remind centers to review and close cases no longer active.

	Frequency	
Excessive No-shows/cancellations	313	
Completion of Court Ordered Term of Service	318	
Moved to unsupervised visits (per court order)	171	
Termination of Parental Rights or Court Ordered Cessation of Visits	94	
Loss of Contact with Visitor or Custodian	75	
Family Re-unified	65	
Refusal of Child to Visit	25	
SVP Program's time or visit limit reached	35	
Safety concerns	55	
Termination for Violation of Other Rules	40	
Excessive demands on program resources	17	
Clients moved away	14	
Refusal to pay fees	1	
Other (please specify)	33	
Total	1,256	

### Case Closures Due to Safety Reasons

Year	Case Closures
2015	59
2016	52
2017	55

The number of cases closed for safety reasons (4-6%) has remained fairly constant.

## Additional Closure Variables

Since the 2014 reporting year, additional closing variables have been part of the database. Centers were asked to report on substance abuse and arrests for violent crime before, during, and after the completion of services. If the center answered yes, they were provided the opportunity to expand on their information. Below is the summary of this data from the 1,256 cases closed this year and the percentage of closed cases the numbers represent.

### Substance Abuse (SA)

	Yes	% of closed cases indicating S/A was present	No	Unknown
SA Present	311	24.7% of cases closed	945	
SA Prior to Services	299	96%	193	587
SA While Case was Open	41	13%	222	816
SA During a Service	8	2.5%	59	1,012
SA Known After Services	3	.9%	34	1,042

About 34% of clients came to supervised visitation this year with prior issues of substance abuse. The actual number is probably much higher as substance abuse is known to be severely underreported. These substance abuse issues continue during the SV services, sometimes even during a service. As more cases are regularly closed, this data, over time, will reveal a larger picture of how substance abuse permeates the client base of supervised visitation programs.

It appears that a majority of the substance abuse in cases occurs before SV services and might in fact contribute to a client's placement in an SV program. On the bright side, data show that during services, substance abuse may be, at least for a time, decreasing. Note that many programs do not have the resources available to track clients after they leave.

### Arrests for Violent Crime (AVC):

	Yes	% of closed cases indicating AVC was present	No	Unknown
Arrests for Violent Crime	317	37.6% of cases closed	939	

AVC Prior to Services	302	95.2%	152	622
AVC While Case was Open	9	2.8%	233	834
AVC During a Service	3	.9%	67	1,006
AVC Known After Services	0	-	44	1,028

In the over 1,200 cases that programs closed in the 2016-2017 year, almost 38% of cases included a client who had been previously arrested for a violent crime. Fortunately, the percentage of those perpetrators becoming violent during supervised visitation services is low. While the number of known offenses post services reported is 0, this may be due to the fact that many centers do not have access to records after their clients complete services. In addition, some centers do not have the time or funding to follow up with their clients post services.

Yet, previous data which included a review of client arrest records for two years post services did indicate a significant decrease in reported violent crimes. This may also be reflected in the decreasing numbers above as, based on previous Institute research, arrests for violence decrease dramatically during and after SV services.

## Implications and Recommendations: Safety and Funding

Consistently for the past five reports, the gender of the children, the race/ethnicity of the families, and the income of the parents who use Florida’s supervised visitation (SV) programs has remained constant.

However, as the Clearinghouses tracks the provision of supervised visitation services over the years, we note some troubling trends that warrant attention.

The most striking outcome of data analysis this year is the number of critical incidents reported at SV programs. These incidents –serious disruptions in service -- have increased markedly and an analysis of the descriptions of the incidents reveals potentially dangerous dynamics at programs: parents refusing to accept direction from staff, parents showing up at visits under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and parents threatening staff or other parents (among others). The presence of security personnel -- once a common sight at SV programs, but now a rare part of SV services because of chronic underfunding – would no doubt make visitation safer across the state.

Achieving increased security presence at Florida's SV programs was a part of the call to the Florida Legislature in the 2008/2009 Report to the Florida Legislature (available at [http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Final\\_Report\\_to\\_Legislature.pdf](http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Final_Report_to_Legislature.pdf) ). Those recommendations, created by a statewide task force mandated by the legislature as part of Florida Statutes 753, have never been acted upon by the legislature (despite several individual legislators' attempts for such reform). Because of this, the recommended comprehensive Standards have not been enacted.

A related finding in this year's data analysis is the increase in the number of cases sent to supervised visitation mainly because of a parent's substance abuse. The data base captures the primary and the additional reasons that cases are sent to SV. As more cases are sent primarily because of a parent's substance abuse, our SV data reflect national trends in individuals' struggles with addiction. The need for security at programs to keep vulnerable children and families, as well as staff and the surrounding community, is again demonstrated in this data.

The Clearinghouse list of Florida SV programs includes both non-profit and for-profit programs. There has never been a mechanism to monitor or certify any of these programs to ensure that they follow the current or recommended Standards. As in years past, the Clearinghouse will alert DCF and the Office of the State Courts Administrator to both the need for the implantation of standards statewide and increased funding, especially for onsite security personnel, to keep families safe at SV programs.

Overall, this annual report again reflects the fact that supervised visitation programs in Florida provide a valuable service to the community statewide. DCF funds ongoing training for all programs in an attempt to augment safe practices for families and communities. However, there is much more work to be done to provide the support that these crucial programs need.

*Submitted by Karen Oehme, Director  
Institute for Family Violence Studies  
November 2017*



2017

**Florida Supervised Visitation Program Narratives**  
**From the Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation**

Introduction:

*The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation at Florida State University invited all supervised visitation programs in the state to share information about their crucial work serving vulnerable children and families. These short summaries educate and inspire us.*

Every program is doing something unique and wonderful for families. When you review the report, see if you can identify the following programs:

1. Which program won the IKEA Challenge, that provided a free makeover including furniture for two visit rooms?
2. Which three programs held Christmas parties or provided gifts for all their child clients?
3. Which program has a new historic home donated and maintained by the county as a supervised visitation site?
4. Which programs have custom painted murals -- Jungle, Sea Creatures, and Horses -- on their visitation room walls to make their programs child-friendly?
5. Which program has a new video monitoring system to ensure safety donated by the Rotary Club?
6. Which program has law students volunteering (a year at a time) at the program?
7. Which program has offered Trauma-Sensitive Yoga and Coping with Crying classes to prevent Shaken baby Syndrome?
8. Which programs offer the Safebridge program (for kids witnessing DV), the ABC Parent Training Program, and the Healing Arts program for clients which features musical instruments?
9. Which program has full time security donated by the County?

(Answers are at the end of the report)



**Circuit 1**

**Safe Connections Supervised Visitation Center**

PO Box 436, Shalimar, FL 32579

Program Director: Sharon Rogers 850-609-1850

Contact E-mail: sharongrogers@hotmail.com

Number of Sites: 3 Counties Served: Okaloosa, Walton



Safe Connections, formerly the Judge Ben Gordon, Jr. Family Visitation Center, celebrated their 20th anniversary of providing supervised visitation services for Okaloosa County. The year was made even more special by the relocation of two of their three sites. The Shalimar site moved from its longtime home in donated space in a local church into a centrally located and completely remodeled house from the 50's. The space is set up to accommodate a separate parking area, entrance and waiting room for custodial parents, ensuring the highest level of safety while still maintaining a comfortable atmosphere for the families.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Defuniak Springs SVC**

986 S. US Hwy 331, Defuniak Sps, FL 32433 850-951-0177

The Safe Connections DeFuniak Springs Visitation Center has now been open for more than 11 years serving the northern more rural end of Walton County. The County Commissioners recently commissioned the complete remodel of an historic home in downtown DeFuniak Springs to serve as the new home for Safe Connections. Walton County is providing this space and all associated costs in-kind to ensure the viability of maintaining this much need service to their community. The remodel was designed to provide for the optimum safety and comfort for the families. We continue to work hard to meet the needs of a growing military presence in north Okaloosa County.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Site: Crestview SVC**

618 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. Crestview, FL 850-609-1850

The Safe Connections Crestview Family Visitation Center has now been open for more than 8 years serving the rural areas of northern Okaloosa County.

**Children's Home Society FVC – Pensacola**

1300 N. Palafox St, Pensacola, FL 32501

Program Director: Brandi Hicks 850-266-2743

Contact E-mail: brandi.hicks@chsfl.org

Number of Sites: 2 Counties Served: Escambia, Santa Rosa

The Family Visitation Center is located inside the Children's Home Society, Western Division. We serve nearly fifty families a year, with several cases ending due to the visiting parent being granted unsupervised visitation. The visitation center is operated by a single director with an occasional intern from the University of West Florida. We have a jungle themed room and a seas creature themed room that the kids absolutely love. We have tables, a television with a DVD player, and all kinds of toys and movies for all age groups to enjoy. We continue to be one of the area's only SV centers and pride ourselves on providing a safe and homey place for families to reconnect.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Milton FVC**

5357 Stewart St. Milton, FL 32570 850-983-5486

The Milton site was added several years ago to the Children's Home Society Family Visitation Center of Pensacola. With this new site available, the CHS FVC can offer supervised visitation and other services to those families living farther away from Pensacola. This enables many more new families to receive services. Florida has many rural areas that need services, and the Milton Program helps meet that need for noncustodial parents.

## **Circuit 2**

### **DISC Village, Inc. Supervised Visitation Program**

3333 W. Pensacola St. #310 Tallahassee, FL 32304

Program Director: Angela Lindsey 850-574-8814

Contact E-mail: alindsey@discvillage.com

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Leon, Wakulla, Liberty, Gadsden, Jefferson, Taylor, Calhoun, Gulf (8)

The Disc Village Supervised Family visitation center currently has an order of agreement with the second judicial circuit to services family law cases in the Big Bend Community. We create a more enhanced family-like setting for the children and families we serve. In addition to that we have a life-skills curriculum for parents. Our goal is to help these families increase resilience, build on their current strengths and overcome barriers. We are honored to serve our families and look forward to fourth year of providing excellent service to children and families in the Big Bend Community.

## **Circuit 3**

### **Family Visitation Center of Alachua**

1409 NW 36th PL Gainesville, FL 32605

Program Director: Beverly Jones 352-334-0882

Contact E-mail: Beverly.jones@chsfl.org

Number of Sites: 2 Counties Served: Alachua, Suwanee

The Family Visitation Center of Alachua County continues to provide supervised visitations to families in both the dependency and family courts. More than 140 families visited for over 1500 hours in the last year. In addition, a monthly average of 8 volunteers and interns from the community and University of Florida provided over 3,350 hours towards supervising visits.

With assistance from Alachua County, the center was fortunate to be able to provide full-time on-site security. Also, numerous volunteers from the community continue to provide

many hours of monitoring visits. This has allowed more families to utilize the services and to increase the visit time for many families.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Family Visitation Center of Suwanee (Circuit 8)**

620 SW Arlington Blvd, Lake City, FL 32025 386-758-0591

Program Director: Kathleen Goodish 386-758-0591

Contact E-mail: Kathleen.goodish@chsfl.org

Number of sites: 1      Counties Served: Alachua, Gilchrist, Dixie, Levy,  
Bradford, and Union

The center is fully a part of the community's help for families. It was the recipient of a new video monitoring system from the Rotary Club. Members of the Rotary Club have volunteered at the Family Visitation Center "sprucing up" the playground and grounds. The community fully understands how crucial it is to have a safe place for families to spend time together in a loving, caring, child-friendly environment. Our services are crucial to this community. Currently we average 268 families' visits in the last year. We are working with local agencies to provide an awareness of our services as well as provide community education as needed. Most recently, several United Way community partners have also adopted our FVC to upgrade the facility in keeping with making it a safe warm place for children to come and visit. Those partners include: Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, Troop 2224, Wayne's Flooring, Vann Flooring, and Flooring Zone, all of Lake City, Florida.

**Chances for Children**

405 E. Duval St. Lake City, FL 32055

Program Director: Sandy Tice 386-752-4453

Contact E-Mail: [ChancesforChildren@comcast.net](mailto:ChancesforChildren@comcast.net)

Number of Sites: 1      Counties Served: Columbia, Suwannee , Hamilton,  
Lafayette, Madison, Taylor, Baker, Union

Each year our entire community comes together to throw a Christmas party for the kids. Various churches and organizations sponsor the event and we are able to give gifts to 120+ kids. Each of our 22 sponsors puts up a tree at the event for the children to decorate and have fun. Also, each group hosts a crafts booth where the kids can make gifts they can give, such as picture frames, ornaments, and other crafts items. When they leave, each child gets a gift food bag so they have enough to eat during the holidays when not a school for breakfast and lunch. The highlight is the fact that the whole community works together on this!

In house, we also have our own Build-A-Bear system. Each child begins by building an animal of their choice to keep and hold in therapy sessions. This is a friend they always

have with them when things get rough. Throughout their sessions, they can get clothes for their animal as well. This is by far the kids' favorite thing!

## **Circuit 4**

### **Family Nurturing Center of Florida - Bartley**

2759 Bartley Cr. Jacksonville, FL 32207

Program Director: Elaine Jacobs 904-389-4244

Contact E-mail: [elaine@fncflorida.org](mailto:elaine@fncflorida.org)

Number of Sites: 3 Counties Served: Duval, Clay, Baker, Nassau, St. Johns

**2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Fleming Isle:** 2075 Town Center Blvd. Fleming Isle, FL

**3<sup>rd</sup> Site: Nassau:** 86029 Pages Dairy Rd. Yulee, FL

The Family Nurturing Center and Florida Coastal School of Law have been partners for several years to provide a variety of services pro bono. FNC selects interns that have expressed an interest in practicing family law to work with our families. FNC FCSL pro bono interns make a minimum of a yearlong commitment and give their time several hours per week providing programmatic assistance to the court and parties during domestic violence injunction hearings and reviewing contracts for new client admissions. In doing so, Florida Coastal Law students fulfill hour requirements and gain invaluable on the job training with families from all walks of life who may be experiencing a difficult time as their family restructures. Several of our pro bono FCSL interns remain with FNC beyond the required timeframe and continue to aid the program in various capacities. FNC is proud of the ongoing relationship we have with FCSL and appreciates the support their interns provide.

## **Circuit 5**

### **LifeStream Best Practices SVP Wildwood**

901 Industrial Dr. #101 Wildwood, FL 34785

Program Director: Melinda Musick, (352) 348-7999

Contact E-mail: [judy.shelton@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:judy.shelton@kidscentralinc.org) [melinda.musick@chsfl.org](mailto:melinda.musick@chsfl.org)

Number of Sites: 2 Counties Served: Sumpter, Lake

**2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Best Practices SVP Tavares:** 1300 S. Duncan Dr. Tavares, FL

### **Youth and Family Alternatives Best Practices SVP**

201 S. Howell Ave. Brooksville, FL 34601

Program Director: Melissa Atkinson (352) 754-1111

Contact E-mail: [melissa.atkinson@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:melissa.atkinson@kidscentralinc.org)

Number of Sites: 1      Counties Served: Hernando, Citrus

Utilizing our SV program and its services YFA has been able to be a constant leader within our Circuit for timely reunifications at 40.36% average, above the state and federal averages. In addition, with the intense services and supports received while our parents participate in the program our recidivism rate is amongst the lowest at 95.8% if our reunified children do not re-enter care. YFA staff are dedicated to working with our families to help strengthen and build their resolve so they do not re-enter our system after addressing the issues that brought them to the department's attention.

**The Centers, Inc. Best Practices SVP**

3300 SW 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. #101 Ocala, FL 34473

Program Director: Robin Lanier (352) 867-1536 x5312

Contact E-mail: [Robin.Lanier@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:Robin.Lanier@kidscentralinc.org)

Number of Sites: 1      Counties Served: Marion

**Circuit 6**

**Family Partnerships – New Port Richey**

8044 Old County Rd. 54 New Port Richey, FL 34654

Program Director: Tina White 727-807-9826

Contact E-Mail: [familypartnershipssouth@gmail.com](mailto:familypartnershipssouth@gmail.com)

Number of Sites : 2      Counties Served : Pasco, Pinellas

Family Partnerships does a great job of using volunteers and interns. We use Master of Social Work interns, Psychology and Counseling interns. I think they make the program better by constantly asking questions and making suggestions. It's great to have new thoughts and ideas. I also believe that they make our program better because it enables us to offer free groups and counseling to the community because our interns are unpaid. We even have an MSW intern that is yoga certified. She provides trauma sensitive yoga for free to dependency clients. We also receive volunteers from the community college and many have changed their major to social work after volunteering with us.

We work with our clients to do domestic violence safety plans, and we cross train with our local DV center and child protective services agencies. We also do local presentations to community groups about child safety. Local law enforcement does periodic walk-throughs of the facility to ensure everything is safe.

Our staff is also exemplary. We have one Spanish speaking staff member and one of my employees is becoming certified in ASL. We also do cross training with the local court and DV center or child protective agency. We teach Coping with Crying to every family with a child under the age of three due to a child dying from shaken baby syndrome. Whenever possible we hold a Christmas and holiday parties for our clients.

To make our center more like a home, we had a local artist paint every wall in the center. We also use the local performing arts middle school to do our murals. They design them and then we have an art showing in which they dress in formal attire and the community votes on the mural that wins. Our theme in each room is hope and each contains inspirational messages. The middle school artists can design the room in any manner that says hope to them. In addition, we throw a Christmas party every year and collect gifts for the children.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Family Partnerships - Clearwater**

1421 Court St. #B, Clearwater, FL 34657 727-234-7795

### **Sustainable Family Services**

8487 9<sup>th</sup> St. North St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Program Director: Brandice Almeida 727-318-3224

Contact E-mail: [Brandice@susfamservices.com](mailto:Brandice@susfamservices.com)

Number of Sites: 1            Counties Served: Pinellas

Sustainable Family Services offers a home like environment for safe, comfortable, and nurturing visits. Our visitation center includes multiple visitation rooms, kitchen, lush backyard, sensory garden, butterfly garden, chicken coop! We engage with families to identify barriers to success and work to increase supportive factors and positive relationships between visiting parent and child.

## **Circuit 7**

### **Deland Harmony House SVC**

247 W. Voorhis Ave. DeLand, FL 32720

Program Director: Debra Whites 386-740-3839 x226

Contact E-mail: [debra.whites@cshfl.org](mailto:debra.whites@cshfl.org)

Number of Sites: 3            Counties Served: Flagler, Volusia

Harmony House is a Children's Home Society Visitation Center located in the city of Deland, Florida. Harmony take dependency cases only. We are so proud of the work we do for the families we serve. We are rewarded each day knowing we make it possible for the visits to happen in a safe environment.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Family Tree House SVC**

525 S. Ridgewood Ave. Daytona Bch, FL 32114  
Program Director: Stephanie Pete 386-323-2550  
Contact E-mail: [Stephanie.Pete@chsfl.org](mailto:Stephanie.Pete@chsfl.org)

Tree House is a Children's Home Society Visitation Center located in Daytona Beach, Florida. The Tree House take dependency and Family Law cases. We at the Tree House feel honored that because of the work we do, children and their parents can visit in a safe and fun environment.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Site: Sally's House**

103 E. Moody Blvd. Nummell, FL 32110  
Program Director: Christine Heichel 386-263-8771  
Contact E-mail: [Christine.Heichel@chfl.org](mailto:Christine.Heichel@chfl.org)

Sally's Safe Haven in Flagler County has Domestic Violence only cases, Dependency Cases with Domestic Violence and Dependency only cases. Every Thursday morning the Sally's Safe Visitation Support Workers sit in on the DV cases at the court house to make it easier for families to complete orientation right then and there. Program Supervisor and staff are also involved with The Domestic Violence Summit in Flagler County where agencies have gotten together to make the community more aware of DV and to try and combat the issue with the ideas from several different focus groups. On October 2, 2017 Children's Home Society's Regional Program Director Eric Loscial accepted a Proclamation from the city for the stellar work that Sally's Safe Haven does when it comes to Domestic Violence.

### **Kid's Bridge**

238 San Marco Ave. St. Augustine, FL 32084  
Program Director: Sandy Acuff 904-824-8810  
Contact E-mail: [lynnandmatt@bellsouth.net](mailto:lynnandmatt@bellsouth.net)

Number of Sites: 2    Counties Served: St. John's, Putnam

Our program offers the Healing Arts therapeutic program which includes various musical instruments and art supplies/projects for the children to use. It is by far their favorite part of each visit. In addition, we offer parenting classes/coaching, BIP, and divorce stabilization classes for kids.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Children's Connection**

1139 St. Rd. 20 #A Interlachen, FL 32148  
Program Director: Sandy Acuff 386-684-2400

This site was recently acquired from a former owner who could no longer operate it. Kid's Bridge is working hard to keep the site open as it is a much needed safe haven in this rural area.

### **Family Resource Connection**

309 Main St. Palatka, FL 32177

Program Director: Stephanie Morrow 386-385-5093

Contact E-mail: [stephanie@familyresourcefl.org](mailto:stephanie@familyresourcefl.org)

Number of sites: 5      Counties Served: St. John's, Duval, Putnam, Clay

Our main center is in Palatka, but we offer visits at 4 other sites as needed. We are now in a new building donated by TD Bank which has been a wonderful addition to our service abilities. We have several community organizations that donate gifts via Christmas Trees around town. They have also been recognized as the Charity of the Season which brings in many special perks for the kids.

Our staff is incredibly dedicated in good times and bad. They do so much for too little and without their dedication and compassion for the children, we wouldn't be in operation.

### **Circuit 8**

#### **FVC Alachua Site: Family Visitation Center of Suwanee**

620 SW Arlington Blvd, Lake City, FL 32025 386-758-0591

Program Director: Kathleen Goodish 386-758-0591

Contact E-mail: [Kathleen.goodish@chsfl.org](mailto:Kathleen.goodish@chsfl.org)

Number of sites: 1      Counties Served: Alachua, Gilchrist, Dixie, Levy, Bradford, and Union

The center is fully a part of the community's help for families. It was the recipient of a new video monitoring system from the Rotary Club. Members of the Rotary Club have volunteered at the Family Visitation Center "sprucing up" the playground and grounds. The community fully understands how crucial it is to have a safe place for families to spend time together in a loving, caring, child-friendly environment. Our services are crucial to this community. Currently we average 268 families' visits in the last year. We are working with local agencies to provide an awareness of our services as well as provide community education as needed. Most recently, several United Way community partners have also adopted our FVC to upgrade the facility in keeping with making it a safe warm place for children to come and visit. Those partners include: Girl Scouts of Gateway Council, Troop 2224, Wayne's Flooring, Vann Flooring, and Flooring Zone, all of Lake City, Florida.



## **Circuit 9**

### **Family Support and Visitation Center (Devereux)**

118 Pasadena Place, Orlando, FL 32803

Program Director: Sylvanita Trevino 407-999-5577

Contact E-mail: [strevino@devereux.org](mailto:strevino@devereux.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Orange

In operation since 1997, not only do we provide supervised visitation, we also provide the nationally acclaimed Nurturing Parenting Program to the interested parents. This is a 15 week family program that includes the whole family, whether they are reunified or not during the program. We afford the parents the ability to “graduate” in front of their children, a proud event for the first time for many of these parents.

### **Osceola FVC**

2653 Michigan Ave. Kissimmee, FL 34744

Program Director: Erika Ramos 407-846-5077

Contact E-mail: [Erika.ramos@chsfl.org](mailto:Erika.ramos@chsfl.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Osceola

Florida has a diverse population, and our site has bilingual staff that are fluent in Spanish as well as English. We also have terrific volunteers from the Foster Grandparents program who do a wonderful job of making the children feel comfortable and at home. One room has a large mural on the wall depicting an outdoor scene with horses – this seems to be a favorite of our 3 visit rooms, as is our video game room.

We are very proud of our ability to provide transportation for children attending the center. We pick them up from home or school and bring them to the center for their visits. The Nurturing Parent program is also used in our center where parents learn better parenting skills. This program has been a tremendous success in helping our clients achieve reunification.

### **Family Ties Visitation Center**

425 N. Orange Ave Room#330 Orlando, FL 32801

Program Director: Valerie Tolentino 407-836-0426

Contact E-mail: [ctfcvt1@cnjcc.org](mailto:ctfcvt1@cnjcc.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Orange

The Family Ties program just celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of helping families reunite and rebuild their lives together. Our visitation site is at a public school so we are able to provide a large variety of activities for kids including art, music, games, and a nice playground. We have the most incredibly talented and dedicated staff, many who have

been with us for over ten years. They do this work with compassion and a passion for helping others. Without them we would not be able to serve the community as we do.

## **Circuit 10**

### **United Way Family Fundamentals**

1021 Lakeland Hills Blvd. # 2 Lakeland, FL 33805

Program Director: Carolyn Ivey 863-686-1221 x222

Contact E-mail: [Carolyn.Ivey@uwcf.org](mailto:Carolyn.Ivey@uwcf.org)

Number of Sites: 1      Counties Served: Polk, Highlands, Hardee

Our supervised visitation program is modeled on the parent training program, Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC). The goal of the ABC training is to enhance parents' capacities for interacting with their children in nurturing, synchronous, and non-frightening ways. HFC is the lead agency for Community Based care in Polk Hardee, and Highlands Counties. HFC partnered with United Way of Central Florida to bring this program to the Polk County community, both organizations also collaborating with Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, a local case management organization for the benefit of creating an opportunity for parents who are going through the dependency court process to be able to visit with their children in a home like setting that is supervised by an unbiased individual who then reports the interaction to the court.

The primary purpose of these supervised visits is to allow the children to preserve relationships with their primary caregivers, giving children the reassurance that they have not been abandoned and in allowing the children to see and interact with their parents on a weekly basis. The supervised weekly visits also reassure the parents that the agency wants the family to be unified and is not trying to separate them from their children. Upon completion of the weekly visits, the children are each given an age appropriate book by the visitation coordinator to promote early learning and literacy.

The weekly visits take place at Family Fundamentals, which is a parent resource center and a project of Success by 6, an early childhood education and literacy program sponsored by United Way of Central Florida that promotes early childhood development; the physical, emotional, social, and mental foundation to succeed in school and in life.

**What makes Family Fundamentals stand out** is that we are partnered with a health care facility, Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine (LVIM) that provides free medical care to uninsured and the underinsured. Additionally, Family Fundamentals serves a diverse population with over forty-six community agencies that partner to provide free services to children and their families with the idea of strengthening families with resources such as child and caregiver interactive classes, while offering many ideas and activities to promote brain development and family relationships children need to enter school ready to succeed. Recurring activities for parents and children include pre-school story and activity

time, Mommy and Me Playgroups, consisting of various ages and stages of children from under 12 months to 3-5 year olds.

## **Circuit 11**

### **Children's Home Society FVC Miami**

800 NW 15th St. Miami, FL 33136

Program Director: Harold Hankerson 305-755-6574

Contact E-mail: [Harold.Hankerson@chsfl.org](mailto:Harold.Hankerson@chsfl.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Dade

The Family Visitation Center of the Children's Home Society serves the visitation needs of parents and children in the dependency court system of District 11, and has always done so completely without charge to the parents. We provide both supervised and therapeutically supervised visitation for families. We view as our greatest accomplishment the positive role we play in aiding in the re-unification of families and children by providing a safe, home-like environment for visitation.

## **Circuit 12**

### **Youth & Family Alternatives**

5729 Manatee Ave. West

Bradenton, FL 34209

Program Director: Tiffany Vandemark 352-754-1111 x4342

Contact E-mail: [tvandemark@sarasotaymca.org](mailto:tvandemark@sarasotaymca.org)

Number of Sites: 2 Counties Served: Manatee, Sarasota

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Site: Y&F Alt. – Sarasota**

1500 Independence Blvd. #200

Sarasota, FL 34243

The program is currently serving children and families in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. We have served over 800 children in the last 18 months. The number of children coming into care has increased significantly over the last 18 months due to the Heroin epidemic. Staff work closely with families to ensure they maintain a strong connection with their children as they work their way to reunification.

In Sarasota, we have piloted the Early Childhood Court Model which allows children achieve permanency more quickly. Our transport staff work closely with the foster parents and the parents to ensure visitation is consistent and meaningful. This model is likely to roll out soon in Manatee and when it does, the transport staff will be working toward the same goal of quality visitation.

## **Circuit 13**

### **Children's Justice Center**

700 E. Twiggs St. Suite 102 Tampa, FL 33602  
Program Director: Trish Waterman 813-272-7179  
Contact E-mail: [watermpl@fljud13.org](mailto:watermpl@fljud13.org)

Number of Sites: 1                      Counties Served: Hillsborough

The program has an advocate to work with caregivers and children who have been exposed to domestic violence. The program is called Safebridge and the advocate who helps navigate the parent through the system, provides referrals, and safety planning. Communication is face to face, through emails and phone calls and the advocate assist the family as long as there is a need. Another of our program highlights is Hillsborough County Sherriff's Office (HCSO) annual toy drive and gift wrapping event. It provides gifts for over 135 children at the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit's Children's Justice Center – Supervised Visitation Program (CJC).

In early November, CJC provides HCSO with a list of all the children's ages and gender connected to a number only. HCSO purchases gifts and CJC sponsors a gift wrapping party. Once gifts are wrapped and tagged with an identifying number, CJC staff matches to the gift to each child visiting and presents the gift after the visits during the two weeks before Christmas!

## **Circuit 15**

### **Children's Home Society – West Palm**

4100 Okeechobee Blvd. West Palm Beach, FL 33409  
Program Director: Julie Demar 561-352-2500  
Contact E-mail: [Julie.demar@chsfl.org](mailto:Julie.demar@chsfl.org)

Number of Sites: 1                      Counties Served: Palm Beach

## **Circuit 17**

### **SAFE Visits - Kids in Distress**

819 N.E. 26<sup>th</sup> St. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305  
Program Director: Cindy Fuller, 954-390-7654 ext. 1507  
Contact E-mail: [cindyfuller@kidinc.org](mailto:cindyfuller@kidinc.org)

Number of Sites: 1                      Counties Served: Broward

Kids In Distress Visitation Program is the only accredited program in all of Broward County. KID receives funding via ChildNet through the Access and Visitation Grant

Program. This funding provides Therapeutic Visitation to families with children ages birth through 17 years of age who reside in Broward County who have been removed from their homes.

Our program has one full time Visitation Specialist who is a Master's level therapist. She lends her expertise to help the families process the therapeutic visits as well as facilitate the supervised visits.

The quality of work that our program provides is recognized by other agencies in the community. We work closely with ChildNet to provide therapeutic and supervised visitation.

Our campus provides a fun site for visits with two beautiful playgrounds, and visitation rooms full of toys for every age group. Our two visitation rooms were recently redone by IKEA as Kids in Distress recently won the IKEA challenge.

Kids In Distress prides itself with quality programs and the best staff and the visitation program reflects that in every way.

## **Circuit 18**

### **Eckerd Youth – Brevard Family Visitation Services**

2226 Sarno Rd/ #107 Melbourne, FL 32935

Program Director: Talia Bryant 321-307-5102 Stanley Brizz

Contact E-mail: [tbyrant@eckerd.org](mailto:tbyrant@eckerd.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Brevard

We offer Four (4) Levels of Visitation

1. Therapeutic Supervised Visitation (Most Intensive Level)
  2. Standard Supervised Visitation (Intermediate Level)
  3. Group Visitation (Moderate Level)
  4. Intermittent Visitation (Lower Level)
- All of our visitation clients are offered the opportunity to participate in a Parenting Assessment if indicated (parents with a recommendation for a Parenting Assessment and or Parenting Classes indicated on their Dependency Court case plan)
  - All of our visitation clients are offered the opportunity to participate in a 16-week parenting program if indicated (parents with a recommendation for a Parenting

Assessment and or Parenting Classes indicated on their Dependency Court case plan)

Supervised family visitation, or supported family visitation, is an important component in child welfare cases in which children have temporarily been removed from their parents' or guardians' homes for abuse or neglect. This service allows a parent to visit with their child in a safe, home-like environment with visits monitored and documented by licensed counselors. The program offers an objective approach to giving parents and families a second chance at unification. We provided two forms of therapeutic visitation via two contracts with our local Community-Based Care Organization. One format involves intense coaching and mentoring as part of the visitation process, which is focused on helping the parents develop and improve beneficial parenting skills through phases of development. The other format is standard therapeutic supervised visitation which aims to ensure the safety of the children during the visit and redirect the parent to correct behaviors when necessary. We also do local presentations to community groups about child safety.

Visits are conducted in a safe environment conducive to parent-child bonding. The licensed counselors also participate in Family Team Conferences. Eckerd provides services designed to help families reintegrate children into their homes after they have been in foster care or other out-of-home placements. Reunification services typically begin with the family while the child is still living outside of the home, helping to create a safe and successful transition.

### **Safe House of Seminole – The YANA Project**

901 S. French Ave. Sanford, FL

Program Director: Tina Eudell 407-302-1010

Contact E-mail: [teudell@safehouseofseminole.org](mailto:teudell@safehouseofseminole.org)

Number of Sites: 1 Counties Served: Seminole

The YANA Project honors a beautiful two-year old named Yana who was murdered by her father here in Seminole County after he received unsupervised visits. Yana's name stands for "You Are Never Alone". The fact that we have not had any major incidents to take place at The Y.A.N.A Project, along with the overall satisfaction from the families served has been outstanding. The staff at The Y.A.N.A. Project goes far and beyond assisting families by providing them with additional services such as information and resources about jobs, housing, clothing, food and toiletries', both male and female.

As all team members at The Y.A.N.A. Project are Core Comp and are trained as Victim Advocates against domestic violence, through the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV); safety planning is a number one priority. To ensure the safety of everyone, families with allegations of domestic violence are provided with separate visiting times. Oftentimes we find ourselves providing crisis counseling, empowerment-based advocacy and encouragement to some of our families; both English and Spanish

speaking. The Y.A.N.A. Project also provides armed security on property to ensure everyone's safety.

The YANA Project, a program of the Seminole County Victims' Rights Coalition, Inc., dba Safe House of Seminole, a private, non-profit domestic violence center. The YANA Project, designed to help families who have experienced domestic violence or other types of abuse, is the newest program of the Safe House of Seminole.

YANA Project has six different visitation rooms painted and decorated in a variety of entertaining themes by AAA of Lake Mary. Each room has a different theme and features age appropriate toys and games. Highlights include an art room where children can paint or draw with their visiting parent and a game room featuring a foosball table, a frogger video game and a pool table which converts to ping pong or table hockey. A child who comes to YANA painted and decorated a picture in our art room, the picture reads: "The YANA Place", come and be happy! The picture is now located in our front lobby and is YANA's featured theme.

## **Circuit 19**

### **Devereux CBC**

10570 S. Federal Hwy #300 Pt. St. Lucie, FL  
Program Director: Tavaris Williams  
Contact E-mail: [tavaris.williams@devereuxcbc.org](mailto:tavaris.williams@devereuxcbc.org)

Number of Sites: 1                      Counties served: Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River,  
Okeechobee

The Family Support Workers of the Treasure Coast do a tremendous job in ensuring that supervised visitation is available for all Devereux families. Children are transported from our four counties to locations that are safe and accessible for each visiting party. Parents are given multiple confirmation attempts to secure their visits, and scheduling change requests are accommodated whenever possible. Through Devereux's supervised visitation program, families are able to safely transition into less restrictive visitation arrangements, which aid in faster reunifications as each case's circumstances dictate.

### **The Toby Center**

100E. Linton Blvd. #104B Delray Beach, FL 33483  
Program Director: Meredith Schlegel 855-862-9236 x1  
Contact E-mail: [MSchlegel@tobycenter.org](mailto:MSchlegel@tobycenter.org)

100 E. Linton Blvd.

Number of Sites: 12                      Counties Served: Pinellas, Hillsborough,  
Broward, Palm Beach, Polk, Orange, Seminole, Highlands

The Toby Center for Family Transitions, Inc. is 501c3 non profit agency founded by Dr. Mark D. Roseman in South Florida in 2008 as a one stop child centered model for serving single, separate, divorced and never married parents and their children. All services are available during the week, weekends and holidays. The Center staff hours are flexible to accommodate our client family needs.

Fifteen professional and clinical staff throughout Florida offer supervised and therapeutic supervised visitation services and electronic phone monitoring, family therapy, the Florida mandated co-parenting education course both online and in classes, in several counties and serve seven circuit courts for family and dependency (foster children) custodial and reunification needs. The Toby Center also provides trainings for parents in high conflict divorce with an online course, High Conflict Solutions.

The staff firmly believes that when children are able to properly adjust to the trauma of separation and conflict between their parents, they are more likely to experience a better quality of life. Standard and therapeutic visitation services are provided both onsite and offsite with the goal to normalize parent and child bonds with valuable, and enjoyable parenting activities in order for your children to have the best possible transition through your changing family situation.

## **Circuit 20**

### **Lutheran Services**

2285 Victoria Ave. Ft. Myers, FL 33907

Program Director: Cheryl Green-Ervin 239-461-7651

Contact E-mail: [cgreen-ervin@childnetswfl.org](mailto:cgreen-ervin@childnetswfl.org)

Number of Sites: 1      Counties Served: Lee, Charlotte

Lutheran Services Florida Visitation Program has been in existence since 2007. We provide services to families that are a part of the dependency system, working to regain custody of their children. Our staff receives some training from the training unit of the CBC Lead Agency. We are planning a Christmas party for the clients and their children in the visitation program. This year we held another Easter Egg Hunt for the children. The food, eggs, and prizes were donated.

Our visitation rooms were painted by members of the Lutheran congregation church. A private donor donated flat screen TV's, DVD/VCR combos, and paint for each visitation room. The donor has also donated pampers, wet wipes and some gift cards to the program as well.

The Lutheran Church also raised monies to help purchase furniture for the visitation rooms. We have partnered with SIYA, a program that helps teens to transition out of foster



care. They have assisted with getting toys donated, helping to move furniture and with some gently used children's clothing.

### **Family Resource Center of SW Florida**

P.O. Box 07248 Ft. Myers, FL 33919

Program Director: Tina Friedman 561-706-6715

Contact E-mail: TFriedman01@comcast.net

FRC has served the community for the past seven years. FRC holds an annual fundraiser in collaboration with The Association of Family Law Professionals of Lee County. The agency's Masters level therapist works in conjunction with Masters level Psychology interns from Hodges University as well as community volunteers.

Until last year, we operated through the generosity of The Children's Advocacy Center, in Fort Myers, where we had use of that facility on Saturdays and Sundays only. In January, 2016 and again, because of another generous community member, a highly respected, medical professional, FRC was incredibly fortunate to have been offered a space of our own. Since this November, we have our own lovely, comfortable, family friendly, six room center and have been able to offer Supervised Parenting Time during the week, weekends and holidays. The Center staff hours are flexible to accommodate the client family needs.

FRC is gradually expanding the scope of services offered to include Reunification Therapy and Therapeutic Visitations. FRC's long range goal is to offer a wide array of family enhancing services, classes and community resources in support of the entire family system. We seek to successfully transition families from the effects of trauma, pain and chaos that prevails in broken homes.

Over the past several months, a collaboration of seven family law professionals, FRC board members and FRC alumni have volunteered hours of personal time to create and develop a Supervised Parenting Time Model for Best Practices for the Lee County Court. This model has been created with the intention of providing the Judicial System and the family with a template or unified formula for measuring and determining the level of supervision necessary for the family system. The model pays special attention to goal achievement during Supervised Parenting Time and is meant to serve as a road map for all concerned to move effectively and productively through the process while offering a projected time line for completion. The Model was just recently, unanimously accepted by the 20th Circuit and is being launched in the near future. This has been a very positive and productive year at FRC and we anticipate more good things to happen in support of the community we serve.

## **Answers**

1. Kids in Distress - Circuit 17
2. Lutheran Services - Circuit 20, Children's Justice Center – Circuit 13 Chances for Children –Circuit 3
3. Safe Connections, Defuniak Springs – Circuit 1
4. Children's Home SVC Society Pensacola/Jungle theme and Sea Creatures theme – Circuit 1 and Osceola Family VC/ Outdoor scene with horses – Circuit 9
5. FVC of Suwanee – Circuit 8
6. Family Nurturing Center – Circuit 4
7. Family Partnerships, New Port Richey – Circuit 6
8. Children's Justice Center – Circuit 13; United Way Family Fundamentals -- Circuit 10, and Kids Bridge –Circuit 7
9. Family Visitation Center of Alachua – Circuit 3

*Submitted to DCF November 22, 2017 by Karen Oehme, Director koehme@fsu.edu*

## Focusing on Protective Factor 2: Knowledge of Child Developmental Stages

# Brain Development Throughout the Lifespan: An Overview

By Elena Simonsen

### Introduction

The brain is one of the most critical components of the human body. It houses our thoughts, helps us make decisions, and controls the reflexes needed to survive. The brain even controls things that we don't consciously think about, like digestion and breathing. Our brain begins to develop before we are even born, and continues to grow and change throughout childhood and into early adulthood. As parents and social service providers, knowledge of what brain development looks like at different stages of life can be useful in understanding children's behavior and making sure that their brains are developing appropriately.

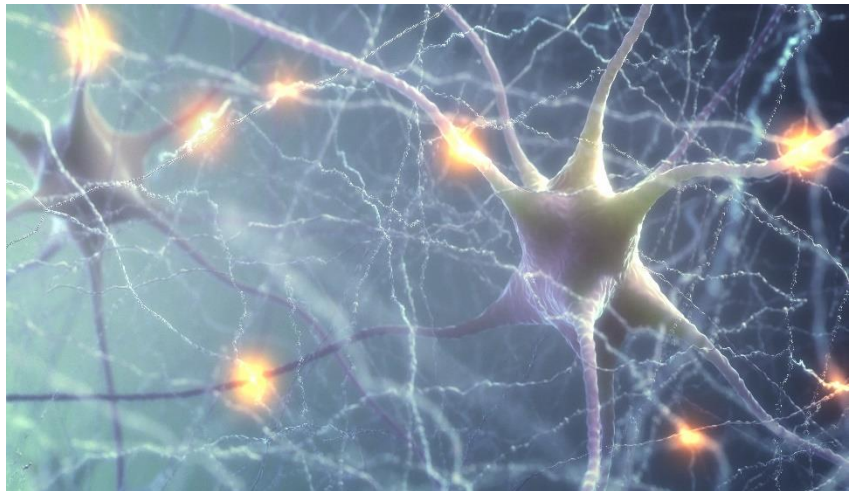
### Objectives

This E-press serves to provide parents and social service providers with a basic understanding of brain growth and development.

### A Timeline of Brain Development

**Before Birth:** The essential parts of the brain are formed by eight weeks of pregnancy. These components include:

- Brain cells, which are called **neurons**, begin to develop and move to the area in the brain that they belong.
- Connections between neurons, called **synapses**, start to form as well.
- Some of the cells, especially those in the brain stem and spinal cord, begin to form a coating called **myelin**. Myelin helps to insulate neurons and to quicken the speed at which signals are sent between them.



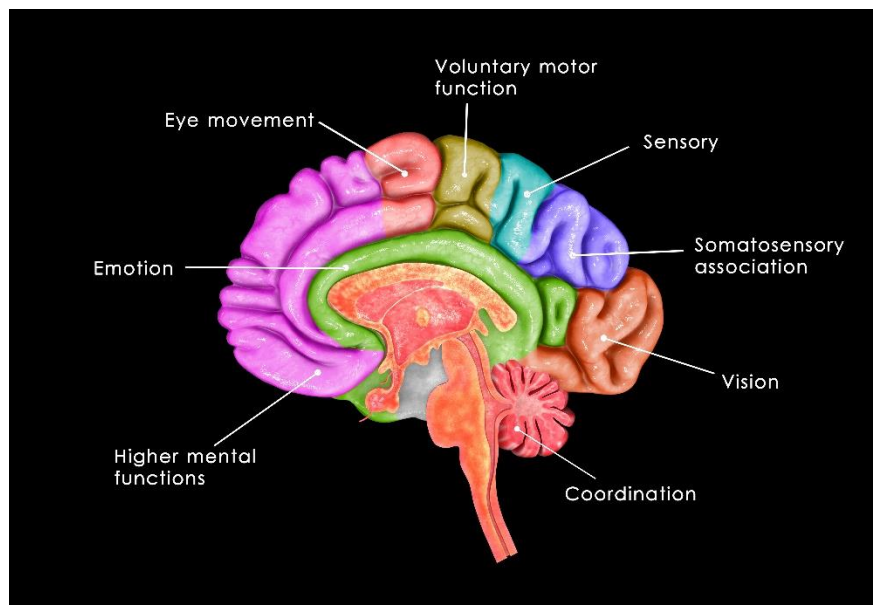
**Infancy (Birth-2 years):** Babies' brains grow rapidly after birth. Several different areas experience a significant amount of growth at this time:

- The **cerebellum**, which is related to *motor skills*, triples in growth the first year of life.
- When babies are first born, their vision is limited. Their *sight* improves as the **visual cortex** grows, and their vision capability matches that of adults by the time they reach the age of one.
- At about three months the **hippocampus**, the part of the brain responsible for *memory*, grows, leading to an increase in the baby's ability to recognize things.
- The **amygdala**, which is responsible for *emotional memories*, grows until a child is about eighteen months old.
- The part of the brain that controls **language** also develops during the first year, and this is influenced by the language the baby hears. For the first few months of life, a baby can distinguish between the sounds of a foreign language. Thus, it is easier to learn a new language earlier in life than later on.

**Toddlerhood (2-4 years):** By the time a child is four years old, his or her brain has reached 80% of its adult size. At about age two, the neurons in the *language* area of children's brains continue to form connections. This may be related to the improvement in children's language abilities which typically occurs around this time. The **hippocampus** continues to develop until the age of three. Myelin begins to form around brain cells at a faster rate, which allows the brain to perform more demanding tasks such as the development of *self-awareness*. These abilities continue to strengthen through age four as synapses continue to form.

### Early and Middle Childhood

**(4-12 years):** The brain reaches 90% of its adult size by the time a child is six years old. Experience is an important factor in brain development at this stage. Connections are still being formed and refined through a process called **pruning**, in which connections that are not needed are eliminated. The more that children use connections in their brains, the stronger they become. Connections that aren't used as often weaken and may even disappear.



**Adolescence (12-18 years):** The brain reaches its adult size by the age of fourteen. The continued formation of myelin and the pruning of unnecessary synapses allows adolescents to develop better *insight, judgment, inhibition, reasoning, and social conscience*. The brain's **frontal lobes** become more active, which enables adolescents to compare several things at the same time. Connections between neurons continue to grow and get stronger, and pruning continues until about age 16. The brain can perform better, and as a result of the pruning, more room is created for existing connections to strengthen and become more involved.



**Adulthood (18 and up):** Myelin sheaths continue to form in the frontal lobes as late as age twenty-five or thirty. This area of the brain, which is responsible for tasks such as judgment, assessing risks, planning, and making choices, is the last to finish developing. Even after the brain has completed its development, it continues to grow and change throughout adulthood. Connections between neurons are still made but are formed much more slowly than in childhood. Connections formed in adulthood are based solely on the specific experiences that an individual has been through.

## Conclusion

Having an understanding of how different parts of the brain grow at different periods of life can be helpful to parents and social service workers in their interactions with children. For instance, parents who want their children to be bilingual may benefit by starting to teach their children both languages around age one to two, when the area of the brain responsible for language is growing the fastest. The brain begins to develop before one is even born and continues to grow and change throughout all ages of life. Knowing what typical brain development looks like for each age group can help parents and social service workers to better understand where children are at developmentally based on their ages and tailor their actions to meet children's developmental needs.

## References

- Adcock & Tucker (n.d.). Counseling Children and Adolescents [PDF]. Retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/ecs13c/Downloads/Adcock%20&%20Tucker%20Brain%20Development%20p63-83.pdf>
- Better Brains for Babies (n.d.). Adolescence. Retrieved from <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/brainTimeAdolescence.php>
- Better Brains for Babies (n.d.). Adulthood. Retrieved from <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/brainTimeAdulthood.php>
- Better Brains for Babies (n.d.). Brain Anatomy. Retrieved from <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/brainAnatomy.php>
- Better Brains for Babies (n.d.). Early and Middle Childhood. Retrieved from <http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/brainTimeEarlyChild.php>
- Jeppson, J., Myers-Walls, J. A., & Love, D. (n.d.). Brain Development. Retrieved from <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/providerparent/child%20growth-development/braindev.htm>
- Kirkwood, C. (2015, Marche 24). Myelin: An Overview. Retrieved from <http://www.brainfacts.org/brain-basics/neuroanatomy/articles/2015/myelin/>
- Stiles, J., & Jernigan, T. L. (2010). The Basics of Brain Development. *Neuropsychology Review*, 20(4), 327–348. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11065-010-9148-4>
- The Urban Child Institute (n.d.). Baby's Brain Begins Now: Conception to Age 3. Retrieved from <http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/why-0-3/baby-and-brain>

# Object Permanence

By Rose Antoine

## Introduction

Young babies don't know if their parent still exists as they hide behind their hands while playing the game "Peek-a-boo." It takes a few months for babies to realize that their parents haven't simply stopped existing, but that they are not in their line of vision. This realization is called object permanence, and it is a pivotal part in a baby's developmental process. Parents and supervised visitation monitors can help babies deal with this transition, and make it easier for them to understand the new concept.

## Objectives

After reading this article, parents and supervised visitation monitors will know:

- What object permanence is
- How to help the child develop their object permanence skills
- How object permanence contributes to separation anxiety
- How to help children remain calm when their parent or caregiver leaves the room



## What is Object Permanence

The concept of object permanence is the ability to recognize the existence of objects and people once they are out of sight, giving objects their own permanent existence. Object permanence progresses alongside visual and motor development.

At about four months, babies are able to reach and grasp for items and track movement with their eyes. They are on their way to understanding object permanence.

Four to eight months old is when babies begin to grasp for things that are partially covered, because they can still see it

although the object is not fully within their sight.

Babies still aren't able to be aware of objects completely out of their eyesight until eight to twelve months. At this age their memory has begun to develop enough to where they can remember the presence of a missing object. This is when feelings of separation

anxiety may occur. They will cry when mom or dad leaves the room, because they realize that their parents are out of the room.

From twelve to eighteen months, children have an adequate comprehension of object permanence because they are able to find and retrieve hidden items from their usual location. They don't stray from their normal search patterns until about eighteen months. Eighteen months is the golden age when babies are said to have a full grasp of object permanence. They have the ability to visualize the item although it isn't in their sight, and understand that the objects continue to have their own existence outside of when they see them.

Object permanence is a skill used to understand abstract and concrete topics in daily life, so it is important for this skill to be developed. It allows children to realize the existence of things and places outside of their own experiences with them. For example, although someone may have never been to outer space they can still comprehend the existence of space, without seeing or experiencing outer space.

## Separation Anxiety

After babies have grasped the concept of object permanence they usually go through their first phase of separation anxiety. Before, they simply didn't remember their parent after they were out of their sight, but now they know their parent exists, and they become upset that they aren't with them. They tend to protest the departure of their parents through crying and whining.

Parents and supervised visitation monitors can help ease a baby's separation anxiety by:

- Continually returning into the child's line of sight when they are out of the room. This shows the baby that the person is nearby and will be returning soon. It is best to play this game as frequently as possible, and each time increase the time between reappearances.
- Make sure children have a daily routine they can stick to, this provides them with stability and trust. It is important that children feel comfortable with their caregiver, because that will determine if they feel safe while the parent is gone. When children feel safe, secure, and are able to predict what's next they are less likely to be anxious when their parent isn't present.
- Play Peek-a-boo! A game of peek-a-boo goes a long way, it's a fun way for children to develop their object permanence skills.





- Test the child's ability to retrieve missing objects. Place a toy underneath a blanket and see if the child retrieves the toy. If the child doesn't retrieve the toy, make an exaggerated act of uncovering it. Repeat this activity often. It tests the child's object permanence skill, but also continually sharpens his or her understanding by showing that the toy still exists even when it leaves his or her sight.

## Conclusion

Object permanence is a skill that is developed in early childhood and it holds great importance in how children understand and interpret the world around them. Children with a clear comprehension of object permanence are able to understand the existence of objects outside their line of sight and experience. When babies begin to develop their sense of object permanence they go through a short phase of separation anxiety. Social service providers can talk with parents about activities they can do with their child in order to sharpen their object permanence skills, and alleviate separation anxiety.

## References:

Early Milestones. (2011). Why Didn't Anyone Tell Me That? Retrieved from:

<http://www.earlymilestones.com/babies-why-my-world.aspx>

Grace, E. (2012, August 29). Object Permanence and Infants. Retrieved from

<http://www.kidsdevelopment.co.uk/ObjectPermanenceInfants.html>

Baudin-Griffin, J. (2017). Out of Sight Out of Mind: The Development of Object

Permanence. Retrieved from <http://blog.intellidance.ca/blog/8-10-2011/out-sight-out-mind-development-object-permanence>

**On the next page are some Winter Crafts that parents and children can do together!**

## Winter Crafts

### Snow Globe Snowman

**Material:** You will need a paper plate, some orange and black construction paper, 2 buttons, some sequins, sparkles, contact paper, scissors, double stick tape, a stapler, and some ribbon.

- Cut out a nose from the orange paper, a hat and some coal for the mouth from the black paper.
- Cut a rectangle of contact paper and fold it in half. Make sure it's big enough to cover the hole you will be cutting in the plate.
- Peel back the contact paper backing and shake the sparkles on it.
- Add some sequins.
- Fold the contact paper so it sandwiches the sparkles and seal it. You may have to use some tape to make sure it's sealed and nothing falls out.
- Cut out the middle of the plate.
- Add glue to the cutout middle for the coal mouth, nose and hat.
- Add the hat, face pieces and button eyes.
- Use double stick tape to attach the contact paper to the inside of the paper plate ring. Double stick tape was used because it holds contact paper well.
- Staple or glue the face to the belly.
- Add the ribbon as a scarf to cover the staples.



### Paper Plate Robin

**Material:** 2 paper plates, brown paint, red and yellow tissue paper, wiggle eyes, and glue.

- Paint the back of the plates brown and leave to dry.
- Cut one plate in half and staple the two halves to the back of the other plate to form the wings.
- Rip the tissue paper into small pieces and scrunch into balls.
- Cover a circle in the center of the body with glue and stick on the red tissue paper balls to make the chest.
- Glue a triangle for the beak and stick on the yellow tissue paper balls. Finish with two wiggle eyes.



### Popsicle Stick Snowflakes

**Material:** popsicle sticks, plastic confetti snowflakes, glitter, glue, glue gun and hot glue, and some paper towels for easy clean up.

- Hot glue your popsicle sticks together and let it dry for an hour or so.
- Add the white glue unto the popsicle sticks and add the glitter and confetti.
- Let it dry.



### Snow Globe Craft

**Material:** construction paper, scissors, finger paint, and markers.

- Cut a circle out of blue paper and the bottom of your snow globe out of black paper.
- Dip your pointer finger in white paint and make the shape of a snowman.
- Once the white paint is dry, add "snowflakes" around the snow globe as well as a snowman nose, arms, scarf, buttons, and a mouth!

