



# Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

## JUNE EPRESS

### QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

***A father who lives in another state has a court order that says he can have supervised visits in Florida with his child. He sent me the court order, but it does not name any particular program. He is coming down next week and wants to have three hour visits each day for four days. I wonder: what should I do to prepare?***

Out of state cases are relatively common. However, if all you have is a general, out of state court order, you need to do a lot more to be able to provide a safe visit. The case is being supervised for a reason. Right now, you have no idea what the reason for the supervision is. Obtain copies of the court file, and interview each of the parents separately. Find out what the issues are and what the dangers might be. The risk of abduction is also a concern. But there are plenty of other reasons why I think you should postpone this visit. I simply can't see how you would be able to prepare adequately for it. Are there substance abuse issues? Is domestic violence an issue? When is the last time the father saw the child? You could set up Skype visits so that the child can see the father before the visit. A three hour first time visit is a long time when there has been long term parental absence. There are so many problems with this scenario that I must ask you to consider stepping back and thinking about whether your presence at these visits would be meaningful at all if you don't really know anything about the case. I don't think law enforcement would feel compelled to abide by such a general out of jurisdiction order, so what would you do if the father abducted the child? These and other questions are part of the case review that can only happen when you know more about the risks and issues with the case. Do your due diligence, just as you would if this case came from your local court, before you accept the responsibility of monitoring it.

***I have seen the template that the Clearinghouse created for MOUs with local police departments. Do you have any fully executed MOUs on file for any programs?***

No, we don't. However, if any director has an MOU that they would like to share, please send it to [koehme@fsu.edu](mailto:koehme@fsu.edu). Thank you!

***Are there any in-person trainings planned by the Clearinghouse for 2016?***

In the past, we have traveled to hold in person trainings in different parts of the state and are willing to do so again if there is enough interest. Most people tell us they prefer the phone conferences, because they are easier to attend. The issue for programs has been getting funding for such travel: directors have told us that they do not get mileage reimbursement or hotel stipends for such trainings. In addition, smaller programs have difficulty remaining open while staff attend trainings. However, since you've expressed an interest in holding a training, we will send out a survey to determine if directors and staff would attend. Here is the link. If there is enough interest from SV staff, we may plan an in-person training.

[https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_6XWOQs2HKA0yHT7](https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6XWOQs2HKA0yHT7)

## **OSCEOLA WINS AWARD!**

**CONGRATULATIONS to the Osceola Family Visitation Center for being selected for the 2016 Best of Kissimmee Awards for Social Services Organization!**

**For details and more information please view our website:**

**[2016 Best of Kissimmee Awards - Social Services Organization](#)**

**If you are unable to view the link above, please copy and paste the following into your web browser:**

**[http://kissimmee.encountry.org/sgtgcccv\\_OSCEOLA-FAMILY-VISITATION-CENTER](http://kissimmee.encountry.org/sgtgcccv_OSCEOLA-FAMILY-VISITATION-CENTER)**

# Lack of Sleep Putting Teens at Risk

By Kirsten Castillo

## Introduction

In our fast paced world, sleep deprivation and fatigue can seem commonplace for most working adults. But how does sleep deprivation affect developing teens and adolescents? Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control conducted a study to investigate the link between sleep duration and injury-risk related behaviors in high-school students in the United States, and found that students who reported sleeping less than 7 hours on school nights were *significantly* more likely to also report engaging in a number of behaviors linked to injury risk, when compared to students who reported sleeping 9 hours on school nights.

## Objectives

- Educate Parents and Monitors about the negative effects of sleep deprivation and deficiency among teens
- Recommend ways to improve sleep habits and reduce associated risk factors among teens

## Background

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adolescents, ages 14-17, get 8-10 hours of sleep each night. Unfortunately, they often don't. One might assume that teens are resilient and are therefore largely unaffected by a lack of sleep. However, that is not always the case.

**In fact, a lack of sleep, poor sleep quality, and irregular sleep patterns are often associated with negative consequences in adolescents' lives, including:**

- Academic Problems
- Other sleep problems
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Depression, anxiety, and other mood problems
- Health problems, including a greater risk for obesity, and cardiovascular disease later in life



**Insufficient and irregular sleep habits in adolescents also lead them to engage in risky behaviors more frequently. For example:**

- Physical inactivity
- Substance use (alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana)
- Physical fighting
- Depression, anxiety, and other mood problems
- Feelings of sadness
- Contemplation of suicide

## **Research**

**According to current research findings, teens' risk of injury also increases when they do not get adequate sleep.**

- Teen athletes are more likely to suffer sports injuries.
- Adolescents are also more likely to experience work-related injuries.
- Teens and young adult drivers are at *significantly* higher risk for motor-vehicle accidents.



**CDC researchers investigated how sleep duration on school nights affected 5 common risk behaviors that can lead to injury:**

- Infrequent bicycle helmet use
- Infrequent seatbelt use
- Riding with motor-vehicle drivers who'd been drinking
- Drinking and driving
- Texting and driving

Among the high-school students included in the study, less than a third—31.1percent--reported sleeping eight or more hours on an average school night. The analysis revealed that the majority of high school students surveyed were not getting the sleep recommended, and that their lack of sleep was linked to increases in each of the five risk behaviors investigated.



## Why aren't teens getting the rest they need?

Teens' schedules are often packed with extracurricular activities, social engagements, and schoolwork. Late night homework sessions and early morning school start times impede teens from the benefits of a full night's rest. As if that weren't enough, research has shown that during adolescence, the body's circadian rhythms make a significant shift toward a later cycle, leading to a biologically driven preference to stay up later and wake up

later. All of these factors combined lead many teenagers to remain awake well after bed times that would ensure sufficient sleep, and awake the next morning tired.

## How to Help

**Encourage consistency.** In order to ensure their teens are prepared to conquer the day, and reduce injury and risky behaviors, parents should foster a regular, consistent sleep schedule. Ensuring that teens' sleep schedule is fairly consistent, meaning that it not vary more than one hour from weekdays to weekends, is essential. For their part, monitors can encourage teens to stick to a sleep schedule and check in to see how consistent that schedule is at home.



**Encourage healthy eating habits and regular physical activity.** A healthful, moderate, balanced diet supports healthy sleep patterns at any age, but is especially important during adolescence. Teens should avoid eating too heavily in the hours before bedtime, or going to bed hungry, which both inhibit restful sleep. Regular exercise should also be encouraged, as it can actually strengthen sleep cycles, enhance sleep quality, and increase sleep duration.



**Lower lights and store electronics before bedtime.** Parents can help reinforce consistent sleep cycles by limiting artificial light exposure during the hours before bedtime. For example, parents might consider using dimmer switches and adjustable lamplight to bring light levels down in the evening. Parents and teens should also store any electronic devices and avoid t.v. before bed, as the light emitting from these devices actually intrudes on the body's natural progression toward sleep by delaying the release of melatonin and shortening the sleep hormone's duration throughout the night. Additionally, the stimulation that these devices provide impedes relaxation and rest.

## Conclusion

Getting regular, adequate, restful sleep is essential to the healthy development and functioning of adolescents. Parents and monitors can work to ensure teens are getting the rest they need by following some of the tips provided in this article. First, it is essential to develop and maintain a regular sleep schedule. Second, electronic devices should be stored and ambient lighting should be reduced in the hours leading up to bedtime, in order to encourage the release of melatonin and a restful night's sleep. Finally, teens should maintain a healthy, balanced diet, and avoid eating heavy foods before bed, or going to bed hungry. These tips will help to reduce the negative consequences of inadequate sleep, and reduce the risk of injuries.



## References

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-michael-j-breus/low-on-sleep-teenagers-behave-in-risky-ways\\_b\\_9760506.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=healthy](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-michael-j-breus/low-on-sleep-teenagers-behave-in-risky-ways_b_9760506.html?utm_hp_ref=healthy)

# Developing Protective Factors: Supportive Social Connections

By Alexander Sullivan and Aundrea Dilanchian

## Introduction

Supportive social connections are those connections parents make with neighbors, friends, and family members the parent can lean on in times of stress. Social support can come from many types of people such as family members, friends, colleagues, faith based community, or neighbors. Social support for parents who are going through a stressful life event is known to reduce stress and promote positive mental health.

## Objectives

This E-Press provides tips for families and visitation monitors on how to:

- Understand what healthy social connections look like in a family
- Explore skills to help parents build supportive social connections
- Recognize the importance of supportive social connections

## The Importance of Supportive Social Connections

Supportive social connections help parents stay emotionally healthy and feel satisfied in their role as parents. Parents who spend time exploring their own interest and working with others are better able to process stress and to care for their children.

These parents are:

- More willing to seek and accept help
- More likely to experience greater levels of satisfaction in life
- Less likely to have consistent, negative interactions with their children



Supportive social connections can take many forms. It may be a neighbor watching a single mother's child while she works overtime, a brother discussing parenting challenges with his sister, or parents in the same neighborhood take turns carpooling their children to school. Supportive social connections can help parents and families stay healthy by providing satisfaction. Parents can use social supports as a way to process through stressful life events or to assist with day to day life. Social supports are considered a protective factor

for this very reason and parents can benefit greatly by feeling supported. Below are a few forms of social support:

1. Emotional Support: A form of communication that meets a parent’s emotional needs.
2. Practical Support: Physical assistance provided by others, such as having someone help with day to day life activities, cooking, cleaning, or child care.
3. Informational Support: An individual who can provide a parent with useful or needed information for a particular situation.

## The Role of Supervised Visitation Providers

For parents in supervised visitation, developing supportive social connections can be a valuable asset. Supervised visitation providers have a unique opportunity to open up the channels to communication with parents. Visitation monitors can utilize intake and follow-up to establish some of the below skills.

### Skills

In order to help parents develop healthy social support, visitation providers can help parents with the following skills.

<p><i>Learn about pre-existing social networks</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify social supports that they may already have: family members, friends, neighbors, or acquaintances serving as social support.</li> <li>• Ask “who do you look to for advice, emotional support, or connection?”</li> <li>• Explore volunteering opportunities or parent-involved roles in the child’s school</li> <li>• Start conversations with other parents at the playground, community events, or church.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Explore interests and identify relevant activities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify interests, hobbies, and what they like to do for fun.</li> <li>• Explore activities parents like to do with children in the community.</li> <li>• Look into volunteering, gym classes, seeing what the local community center has to offer, attending faith-based institutions to further expand social networks.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Identify additional supportive social networks in the community</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with parents about any gaps in his or her networks and work to fill in the gaps.</li> <li>• Refer parents to external support networks where they can meet new people.</li> <li>• If there is access to a computer, encourage parents to explore.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Explore potential barriers to supportive social connections</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential barriers include lack adequate social skills, language barriers, or limited access to reliable childcare.</li> </ul>

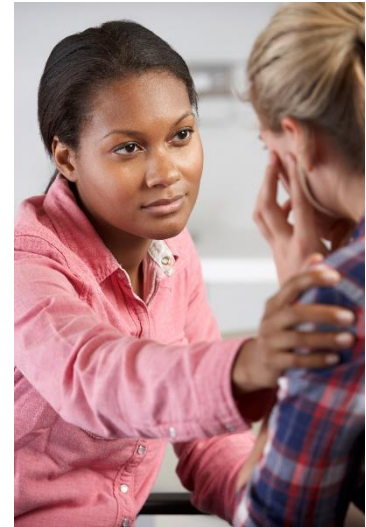


## Tips for Getting Support

Monitors can provide parents with a few simple tips that will help them build social supports in their lives.

The monitor can encourage parents to reach out to their peers or loved ones for emotional support. The monitor can also provide parents with local events or resources that can help the parent engage more in the community or find the assistance they need.

- Make a list of different support systems such as family members, friends, neighbors, or faith based organization.
  - Create a schedule to contact (call, text, or e-mail) people on the list for support.
  - When talking, be open and honest.
  - Be social! Attend events out in the community, exercise, or join a meet up group with similar interests or experiences.
  - Search for caregivers that can offer respite care.
  - Avoid negative relationships.
- Reach out - try reaching out to the people in your life. Different relationships offer different kinds of support.
  - Offer a helping hand! Make sure you keep your friendships active with offering a helping hand to others every once in a while.
  - Follow your interests. Attending different local meet ups or clubs tailored to the parent's interests provides an outlet for self-care as well as an opportunity for a parent to make friends with someone who shares the same interests.
  - Join a support group. Meeting with other adults who are experiencing similar problems offers a safe space for parents to speak their mind without the fear of judgement or disapproval. A parent can look for a support group to attend in their community or over the internet.



## Maintaining Supportive Social Connections

Social connections take time and energy to establish, and maintaining healthy social connections is a balance which takes time to figure out. Too much attention on a social support can burn the other person out, and too little attention could put a strain on the relationship. Below are some tips to maintaining healthy relationships:

- Go easy – don't overwhelm friends, connections can be as brief as a quick 5 minute chat or go on for multiple hours. Also try to develop multiple connections rather than relying on one person.
- Respect the other person's space and boundaries.

- Encourage friends to be honest with you. Learn what they are and are not comfortable with, and allow them to provide feedback. Openly accept their feedback.
- Don't compete for someone's attention, give them space to focus their attention where they want. This also means when their attention is on you, it's genuine.
- Remain positive and constructive. Look for solutions to problems and avoid absolutes.
- Be the kind of friend you would like to have in them.



Other social connections may not be so positive. Some people may be more draining on a parent's time and energy, therefore having a negative impact on them. Some things to remember in these situations are:

- It's ok to limit social connections if they're more detrimental than healthy.
- Limit time spent with old friends who continue in habits you are trying to overcome, such as substance abuse.
- Be aware of friends that may place a heavy demand on you and your time, such friends may add stress to your life and cause frustration. In this case it's ok to limit time with, or express your need for some space with these friends.

## Conclusion

Going through a difficult life event is never easy. It is important for parents to realize that they do not need to tackle these conflicts on their own. It is often easy for a parent to feel isolated, discouraged, or alone while dealing with a conflict but, in retrospect, other parents are more than likely to be going through similar situations. Monitors can work with parents to seek social supports when they are facing difficult issues to build a families' protective factors. Encouraging parents to seek out support will increase their well-being as well as help them get through challenging times.

Included in this EPRESS is a handout that supervised visitation providers can give to parents in an attempt to establish or strengthen supportive social connections. The activity intended to give parents a tangible way to put these skills into action.

## References

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## Supportive Social Connections Activity

Supervised visitation providers can print out and give this activity to parents to facilitate the process of establishing supportive social connections.

Make a list of family and friends you find supportive, or want to remain connected with, such as parents, neighbors, or community members.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Narrow the list down to 3-5 core connections, list them below, with contact information, and a scheduled time to connect with that person. Can be weekly, every other week, or any regular interval that works with your schedule and theirs.

Who	Contact information	When
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Make a commitment to make genuine contact with your connections.

How to genuinely connect with others:

- Share what is on your mind openly and honestly.
- Talk about your concerns in a direct and honest way, but stay constructive. Try saying “I’m not sure what to do next, what do you think?” instead of “It’s hopeless”.
- Be direct and reasonable about what you need, and ask for it
  - A sympathetic ear
  - Advice
  - Help solving a problem
  - To blow off steam
  - New ideas
  - A fresh perspective
- Listen to what they have to say.
- Be a good friend in return. Ask about their day, listen to their problems, and provide your own advice when asked.
- Make plans to do things together! Go see a movie or out to dinner.

# Summer Child Safety 2016

by Lily McLaughlin

## Introduction

Florida has many environmental hazards that may threaten children's safety during the summer. Water activities can lead to drowning, the intense sun can lead to sunburn, and the high heat and humidity can lead to dehydration and/or heat exhaustion. However, when efficiently prepared, parents can tackle the effects of nature to keep their children happy and healthy.

## Overview

This document provides the following information on child safety during the summer:

- Water safety tips to prevent drowning
- Sun safety tips to prevent sun damage
- Heat safety tips to prevent heat-related illnesses

## Water Safety

### Supervision

The state of Florida loses more children under 5 to drowning than any other state in the country. Someone should *always* be actively watching children in the pool. This means being undistracted by cell phones and intense conversation. A good tip is to designate a "Water Watcher" to constantly concentrate on watching the children by the pool. In open bodies of water, "touch supervision" should be used for young children, in which the child is no more than an arm's length away.

### Barriers

Install barriers to physically prevent children from accessing pools and other water areas alone. Remember that Florida law requires barriers for all home pools. Barriers include:

- Child-proof locked doors
- Pool fence with self-latching and self-closing gates
- Door and pool alarms
- Professionally fitted pool covers

### Tips on pool fences

- *Fences should surround all four sides of pool and stand at least 4-feet high*
- *If the house serves as the fourth side of the fence, an alarm on the house door can alert when the pool area has been accessed*
- *Pool gates should always open outward*

### Swimming Lessons

It is recommended that children 4 years and older receive swim lessons to prevent drowning. Additionally, exposure to swim instruction for children ages 1 to 3 has been shown to reduce drowning.



## Emergency Preparedness

There is a critical window of time where resuscitation of a child can occur. Knowing CPR may be the difference between life and death. Additionally, keep rescuing equipment, such as a shepherd's hook, near the pool to assist in quick removal from water. Make sure to always have a phone handy by the pool to call 911 if there is an emergency.

## Dry and Secondary Drowning

Dry and Secondary drowning can occur after a child has been pulled from the water. In dry drowning, although there is no water in the lungs, water in the airway has caused spasms, which can lead to difficult breathing and suffocation. In secondary drowning, water has reached the lungs and can cause life-threatening breathing problems. Here are the steps you can take to prevent these types of drowning after a slip **into the water:**



1. **Be watchful hours after the incident has occurred** because signs of breathing troubles may not show immediately. It is important to pay attention to a child's breathing, even if they were under the water for only a few seconds.
2. **Look for symptoms.** Signs of dry and secondary drowning are coughing, fatigue, and trouble breathing. Early detection is essential to its treatment.
3. **Ensure proper pool safety.** Take the normal precautions against drowning to prevent dry and secondary drowning. Engage in thorough supervision, have efficient pool barriers, and give children proper swim instruction.

## Sun Safety

The sun's ultra-violet waves can cause sun burn and irreversible damage that can lead to skin cancer. Follow these simple steps to protect children's skin from the sun:

1. **Limit sun exposure.** Stay in the shade whenever possible and limit activities in the peak high-intensity hours – from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
2. **Cover up!** Clothing acts as a barrier between children's skin and harmful UV rays, and hats will protect the face.
3. **Apply and reapply sunscreen.** Sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more and UVA and UVB protection is recommended for adequate sun protection. Sunscreen will be most effective when reapplied every two hours or after sweating and/or swimming.

## Heat Safety

When having fun in the outdoors, prevent dehydration and heat-related illnesses through these steps:

1. **Stay hydrated!** Children should drink a glass of water thirty minutes before outdoor activities and then take water breaks after every twenty minutes of play to ensure sufficient fluid intake.
2. **Dress cool.** Dressing children in light-colored and light-weight clothing will keep them cool and facilitate healthy perspiration.
3. **Look for signs of heat exhaustion.** Move children to cooler environments if signs of heat exhaustion occur, such as dizziness and nausea.



## Hot Cars

The temperature of a hot car can increase by twenty degrees in just ten minutes. This can be deadly for children, whose body temperature rise five times faster than adults. Children can be easily left in cars when caregivers are distracted, in a rush, or have a change in routine.

Here are some tips on how to prevent this:

- Leave a personal item such as a purse or brief case in the back seat to ensure the back seat is checked.
- Children should not play near vehicles because they may accidentally lock themselves.
- If there is a change in plans and someone out of the ordinary is dropping off a child, having them call you after the drop off is a good way to ensure a safe trip.

*Remember that it is against Florida law to leave a child unattended in a vehicle!*

## Resources for Summer Safety

- For swim lessons contact your local YMCA or go to [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)
- To learn more about CPR or find a CPR training course, contact your local American Red Cross or go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- For more information on summer safety, visit <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/summer-safety-tips> or [www.cdc.org/family/kids](http://www.cdc.org/family/kids)
- For more information on any services, dial 2-1-1.

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**Below is Part 1 of the Chronic Illness and Developmental Disabilities Chapter. To view all of our manual chapters, go to our website at <http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse/newtrainingmanual2015/>**

