



FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY



The *Bar & Bench
Visitation Report*
is a publication of the
Clearinghouse on
Supervised Visitation

Institute for
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College of Social Work
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BAR & BENCH

VISITATION REPORT

A PUBLICATION ABOUT FLORIDA'S SUPERVISED VISITATION AND MONITORED EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Summer 2011

This newsletter has been created specifically for judges and lawyers who want information on Florida's supervised visitation and monitored exchange programs. Inside you will find the following:

- A current list of Florida's supervised visitation and monitored exchange programs;
- Information on earning continuing judicial education credit for taking online, free training on Florida's supervised visitation programs;
- Information on resources available through the Florida State University Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation;
- Recent research on the impact of the economy on families and child maltreatment/neglect;
- Guiding principles for ordering cases to supervised visitation and monitored exchange;
- The elements of an Agreement with the Court; and
- Much more!

Judges who have any questions about supervised visitation programs are invited to call 850-644-6303 for more information!

Judges can earn Continuing Judicial Education Credit for taking our online curriculum on supervised visitation referrals and sending a verification letter to OSCA.

Click on
[http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/
clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/
information-for-judges/
referrals-to-supervised-visitation-
a-manual-for-floridas-judges/](http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/information-for-judges/referrals-to-supervised-visitation-a-manual-for-floridas-judges/)



NEW RESOURCE

Frequently Asked Questions about Starting a Supervised Visitation Program in Florida

When judges are contacted by community members who are interested in starting visitation programs, there is a Clearinghouse resource to help. It answers many common questions, including the following:

- I would like to know about supervised visitation. What is it?
- Who funds supervised visitation programs?
- How do supervised visitation programs obtain clients?
- How does a program obtain a contract from a Child Protective Services Agency?
- How much does it cost to operate a supervised visitation program?
- Are there any rules or regulations I should know about?
- Is there any specific training or knowledge necessary for supervised visitation staff?
- Are there any risks associated with supervised visitation?
- What kinds of safety measures are used at supervised visitation programs?
- I think I can help! How do I get started?
- What if I don't have a building for my program? Can I go into people's homes, or meet them in public places for visits?

See the entire booklet at:

http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/messageboard/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/FAQ_Developing_a_Program.pdf

JUDGES SHOULD KNOW: THE EFFECTS OF THE RECESSION ON CHILD WELFARE

This article describes research on the effects of economic recession on child maltreatment and family dysfunction.

- Sudden change in economic well-being may be a primary cause of child abuse and neglect. Recessions affect families resulting in job loss and various possible consequences thereof: housing instability, food instability, and emotional strain. These families are then hindered in their ability to provide for their children both physically and psychologically (Huizar, 2010).
- Child maltreatment rates could be starkly higher than current reports as a result of budget shortfalls decreasing the ability of agencies to respond to maltreatment in the communities they serve.
- The greater impact of job loss during the recession fell on industries dominated by men (three-quarters of all jobs lost) but it should be noted that single mothers experienced a 68 percent increase in unemployment during the recession.
- In 2008, nearly 20 percent of children under 18 were living in poor households (Isaacs, 2009). At the end of 2009, 18.5 percent of households responding to the Gallup Household Wellbeing Poll claimed to have had trouble buying enough food during the year.
- Low-income families are frequently cited to bear an increased risk of contact with the child welfare system (Adrian and Coontz, 2010; Cancian, Slack, and Yang, 2010; Sell et al., 2010).
- Job loss has been shown to cause a 44 percent increase in mortality of men (who have been hit hardest in this recession) within four years and 15 to 20 percent over 20 years. High unemployment and the resulting fears of loss of pay or jobs also increase the rates of depression, sleep disturbance, and stress among those who are able to retain employment (Adrian and Coontz, 2010). Increased duration of unemployment

is predictive of increased levels of depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Adrian and Coontz, 2010; Goldman-Mellor, Saxton, and Catalano, 2010; Howe, Levy, and Caplan, 2004; Mossakowski, 2008; Mossakowski, 2009). Unemployment also increases the risk of domestic violence, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline notes an increase of nearly 50 percent in calls in 2009 over the previous year. Finally, by the end of 2009 one in seven children was living with a recently unemployed parent (Adrian and Coontz, 2010).

- Divorce has been decreasing in recent years. Delaying dissolution of marriage may increase the negative effects on children during recession by prolonging their exposure to high levels of conflict and by the impact of the conflict on parenting itself (Adrian and Coontz, 2010). This delay in divorce would be particularly damaging in separations occurring because of domestic violence. Domestic violence rates also increased during the Great Depression, despite a similar fall in divorce rates (Adrian and Coontz, 2010).
- Berger (2004) found that income was associated with maltreatment risk and with five factors reviewed: medical care, dental care, cognitive stimulation, emotional support, and spanking. Berger concluded, as did Cancian et al., that higher incomes would provide a protective effect for children at risk of maltreatment. Another study suggested that maternal depression is causally associated with increased



psychological aggression with children.

- In high-risk populations, utility shut-off, housing instability, food insecurity, and economic stress increase the risk of involvement with child services. The Cancian et al. report references studies that show income loss and a corresponding increase in contact with child welfare services, and details a randomized trial with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients in a city of around 600,000. In the experimental group, mothers were permitted to keep child support payments in addition to their TANF benefits. In this experiment, the inverse of the relationship was demonstrated – that **even a small increase in income** has a substantial impact on the risk of contact with child services with about a **ten percent drop in the rate of maltreatment reports**.
- There is already some evidence that abuse rates could be increasing due to the recession. Sell et al. (2010) discuss a study indicating that a one percent increase in unemployment rates consistently predicted an at least .05 percent increase in confirmed child maltreatment reports during the following year using National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) state-level data between 1990 and 2008. Zagorsky et al. made a point to mention that the NCANDS data is an estimate, and that true rates of maltreatment may far exceed these numbers.
- Berger et al. show a near doubling (from 4.8 to 9.3) in the mean rate of monthly cases of unequivocal AHT (head injury) in three of four hospitals. This evidence strongly suggests that there has been an increase in child maltreatment because of the recession.

Risk factors for child maltreatment:

- (a) Caregiver stress,
- (b) Caregiver depression,
- (c) Caregiver history of maltreatment,
- (d) Limited social supports,
- (e) Stressful life events: relationship transitions and job loss,
- (f) Change in income.

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Understanding Program Operations

It is essential for referring judges to have a basic understanding of the services offered by the local supervised visitation program. If you do not know about your local program, have your judicial assistant use the circuit list at the end of this newsletter to call the director and ASK FOR THE FOLLOWING!

- The name of the program and where it's located. It also helps to know the program director's name.
- The date and time that the program is open for visits:
 - Some programs operate daily; some only a few days a week.
 - Some programs offer extended hours and night time visits.
 - Sometimes judges order visits to start on a Wednesday, but the program is closed on Wednesdays.
- The program's basic visit schedule:
 - Many programs limit each family to one (or sometimes two) visits each week, in order to accommodate a larger number of families.
 - Some programs offer dependency cases on particular days and dissolution and domestic violence cases on other days.
 - Some programs can only afford security personnel on-site during certain days. Therefore, higher risk cases should be scheduled during those days.
- Whether the program maintains a waiting list:
 - When a program has limited resources, it may resort to a waiting list keeping the court and families apprised of their place on the list and the length of time it may take for the families to begin using the program.
- The types of cases the program accepts:
 - Some programs do not accept cases involving child sexual abuse allegations.
- Fees, if any, charged by the program:
 - Most programs charge nominal fees to help defer program costs.
 - Programs funded by the federal government

under the Safe Havens provisions of the Violence Against Women Act are not allowed to charge any fees to victims of domestic violence.

- Some programs use sliding fee scales which are based on income.
- Programs usually rely on the court to decide how to divide the costs between the parties in the court order.
- Some programs ask judges not to waive visitation fees entirely, and set a minimum fee even for indigent clients. Programs can not operate without some source of income.
- The length of time a case can be referred for visits:
 - Most programs have a time limit for families using the program.
 - Most programs will supervise cases over a period of six months or a year.
 - Very few programs accept open-ended referrals

due to a concern that they may be forced to turn away new families because of space and resource restrictions.

**TELL YOUR LOCAL PROGRAM
THAT YOU WANT TO BE UPDATED
WHEN THE PROGRAM MAKES SIGNIFICANT
CHANGES TO ITS SERVICES**

- The continuum of on-site security measures offered at the program:
 - The majority of Florida supervised visitation programs have on-site security during at least some visits. However, judges should be familiar with the continuum of security measures offered by local programs. Some programs only have security on site during visits in cases involving domestic violence allegations, not during dependency cases. This is true even though research indicates that there is often a high correlation between child maltreatment and domestic violence, and domestic violence may not have been identified in the child abuse case.

- Some programs use private security guards, who do not carry weapons. Other programs use off-duty law enforcement during visits.
- Despite the fact that critical incidents are common to supervised visitation programs in Florida, there is currently no requirement that programs provide security personnel on-site during visits. The current Minimum Standards only require that programs have written security measures and emergency protocol/procedures.
- Other security measures may include the use of metal detectors to screen for weapons (note: these may be used in programs by non-law enforcement staff to screen for weapons), walkie-talkies, cellular phones, panic buttons, one-way mirrors in visitation rooms, cameras in parking lots, alcohol detection tests, and rules regarding bringing packages or gifts on site.
- **Basic program rules:** Judges should be generally aware of the rules by which the program is administered. For instance, many programs prohibit the use of corporal punishment, the use of alcohol and non-prescription drugs, smoking, profanity, and bringing knives or guns onto the premises.
- **Expertise of staff:** Judges should know the general levels of expertise of staff. Very few directions are licensed mental health professionals. In fact, most program staff in Florida have bachelor's degrees, but many programs rely extensively upon community volunteers to monitor visits. These volunteers are often trained by program directors prior to monitoring visits but typically do not have prior experience or formal education in working with the types of families that are court ordered to receive services.

Programs do not physically force a child to spend time with his or her parent.

Supervised visitation programs are governed by Florida Statutes 753.01 to 753.05

753.01

Definitions.

753.02

Clearinghouse responsibilities and authority.

753.03

Standards for supervised visitation and supervised exchange programs.

753.04

Interim minimum standards for supervised visitation programs.

753.05

Referrals involving child sexual abuse.

RESOURCES ON SUPERVISED VISITATION

The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation website

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/>

**Training Manuals for Supervised Visitation Staff
and other professionals**

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/information-for-supervised-visitation-programs/training-manuals/>

**Child Sexual Abuse Issues Training that complies with
Florida Statute 39.0139 requirement that supervisors in child sexual
abuse cases have special training in the issue.**

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/SV/csa/index.php.htm>

Judge's Training on Supervised Visitation

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/information-for-judges/referrals-to-supervised-visitation-a-manual-for-floridas-judges/>

County-by-County Social Services Listing

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse-on-supervised-visitation/resources/county-by-county-social-services/>

**Past Issues of All E-Presses, Newsletters, Posters,
and Monthly Trainings**

<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/messageboard/wordpress/>

**List of Florida's Supervised Visitation Programs,
updated monthly**

http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/messageboard/wordpress/?page_id=7

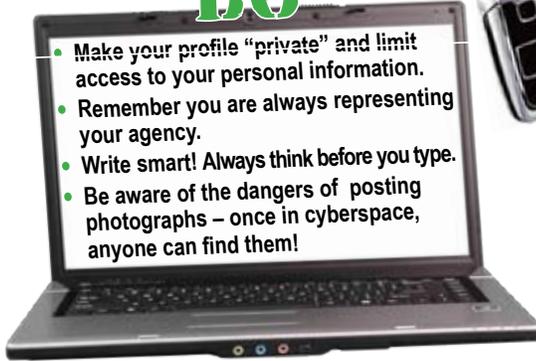
**Contact the Clearinghouse for help
koehme@fsu.edu, 850-644-6303**

Representing Yourself and Your Agency Online:

Why it is Important to be Cautious About Using Social Media

DO

- Make your profile "private" and limit access to your personal information.
- Remember you are always representing your agency.
- Write smart! Always think before you type.
- Be aware of the dangers of posting photographs – once in cyberspace, anyone can find them!



Protection

- Protecting clients' personal information, even if you think no one will see it
- Divulging too much information may lead to threats, violence and/or loss of employment
- Protecting your program from misrepresentation, loss of credibility, respect and even funding
- Protection from lawsuits



Florida's Supervised Visitation Programs: Protecting Children, Connecting Families
The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation, Institute for Family Violence Studies,
College of Social Work, Florida State University
<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu>



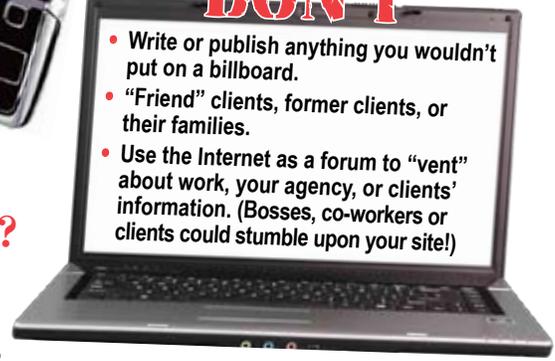
What is

Social Media?

Any online communication used by individuals for the purpose of social interaction & networking. This includes, but is not limited to: Facebook[®], MySpace[®], YouTube[®], LinkedIn[®], Foursquare[®], Wikipedia[®], Twitter[®], Yelp[®], Flickr[®], Blogs, etc.

DON'T

- Write or publish anything you wouldn't put on a billboard.
- "Friend" clients, former clients, or their families.
- Use the Internet as a forum to "vent" about work, your agency, or clients' information. (Bosses, co-workers or clients could stumble upon your site!)



Professionalism

- Agencies and staff are bound by law and professional ethics, including:
 - Treating clients with dignity and respect
 - Honoring clients' rights to confidentiality
 - Maintaining appropriate boundaries with clients
- Representing yourself online should be done with the same level of professionalism displayed in any other public arena

New Poster!
Contact us if you would like a copy for service providers in your area. We will mail them to you.

SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAMS

SUBSECTION 753.02(D), FLORIDA STATUTES, REQUIRES THAT THE CLEARINGHOUSE COMPILE A DIRECTORY OF STATE-SUPERVISED VISITATION PROGRAMS CONTAINING REFERRAL INFORMATION. BECAUSE THE CLEARINGHOUSE DOES NOT REGULATE THESE PROGRAMS, THIS DIRECTORY SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO IMPLY CLEARINGHOUSE ENDORSEMENT OF ANY SPECIFIC PROGRAM(S) LISTED HEREIN.

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TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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